



Children in the States

ALABAMA

September 2015

Child Population

1,107,571 children lived in Alabama in 2014; 41 percent were children of color.

- 59 percent were White
- 7 percent were Hispanic
- 30 percent were Black
- 1 percent were Asian
- 3 percent were two or more races
- 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

Child Poverty

Nearly 3 in 10 (27.7 percent) of Alabama's children were poor in 2014, a total of 302,736 children.¹

- Alabama ranked 47th in child poverty among states.²
- More than 1 in 8 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. More than 3 in 10 children under age 6 were poor; nearly half of the poor children were extremely poor.

Children of color in Alabama are disproportionately poor.

- More than 2 in 5 Black children and nearly 1 in 2 Hispanic children were poor in 2014, compared to more than 1 in 6 White children.

Child Hunger and Homelessness

Child poverty in Alabama leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.

- Nearly 30,000 Alabama public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, nearly 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in Alabama and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- More than 26 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. 35 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Alabama ranked 42nd of 50 states in child food security and 42nd in percent of children overweight and obese.
- Nearly 35 percent of Alabama children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 90 percent of Alabama children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Alabama 40th of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

Child Health

Although the majority of Alabama's children have access to health coverage, that does not guarantee enrollment in coverage or access to care, which can jeopardize their education and their future.

- In FY2013, 91.5 percent of eligible children participated in Alabama Medicaid or All Kids, Alabama's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 598,045 Alabama children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Alabama Medicaid, and 113,490 in All Kids.
- More than 48,000 Alabama children ages 0-17 (4.3 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 10th lowest rate of uninsured children among states.

¹ A family of four was poor if it was living on less than \$23,834 a year, \$1,986 a month, \$458 a week and \$65 a day, and extremely poor if living on less than \$11,917 a year, \$993 a month, \$229 a week and \$33 a day.

² The state ranked 1st is the best for children for that outcome and the state ranked 50th is the worst for children.

- In 2012, 40,000 children ages 0-18 were eligible for Alabama Medicaid or All Kids but not enrolled.

Early Childhood and Education

Lack of early childhood investments deprives children of critical supports in the early years and reduces school readiness.

- In 2013, the average annual cost of center-based child care for an infant was \$5,547 – 39.3 percent less than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Alabama.
- Alabama had 8,394 children on a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 41 percent of Alabama’s 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 32 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- Alabama’s state-funded preschool program met 10 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

Alabama’s schools fail to educate all children, closing off a crucial pathway out of poverty.

- In 2013, 69 percent of Alabama’s fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 70 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
 - 85 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 91 percent could not compute.
 - 85 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 77 percent could not compute.
- 75 percent of Alabama public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Alabama 50th among states. 68 percent of Black students and 67 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 80 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 16 percent of Alabama public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Alabama 45th among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 29 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

Children Facing Special Risks

Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In Alabama, 8,809 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 7.9 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 4,624 Alabama children in foster care.

Too many Alabama children are involved in the juvenile justice system.

- 1,026 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 58 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 2 percent were Hispanic, and 38 percent were White.
- 41 Alabama children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Alabama spent 1.9 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

Alabama ranked 31st out of 41 states in child and teen gun deaths.

- A total of 51 children and teens were killed by guns in Alabama in 2013 – a rate of 4.1 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit www.childrensdefense.org/cits