



Children in the States

CALIFORNIA

September 2015

Child Population

9,153,152 children lived in California in 2014; 73 percent were children of color.

- 27 percent were White
- 52 percent were Hispanic
- 5 percent were Black
- 11 percent were Asian
- 5 percent were two or more races
- <1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

Child Poverty

Nearly 1 in 4 (22.7 percent) of California's children were poor in 2014, a total of 2,047,259 children.¹

- California ranked 35th in child poverty among states.²
- More than 1 in 11 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. Nearly 1 in 4 children under age 6 were poor; more than 2 in 5 of the poor children were extremely poor.

Children of color in California are disproportionately poor.

- More than 1 in 3 Black children, more than 3 in 10 Hispanic children, and nearly 3 in 10 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2014, compared to nearly 1 in 9 White children.

Child Hunger and Homelessness

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

- Nearly 260,000 California public school students were homeless in 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, more than 3 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in California and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- More than 25 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. More than 30 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. California ranked 36th of 50 states in child food security and 26th in percent of children overweight and obese.
- More than 25 percent of California children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- More than 80 percent of California children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking California 12th of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

Child Health

Although the majority of California'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, 88.2 percent of eligible children participated in Medi-Cal or Healthy Families, California's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 5,318,080 California children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Medi-Cal, and 1,603,283 in Healthy Families.

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.

- More than 673,000 California children ages 0-17 (7.4 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 16th highest rate of uninsured children among states.
- In 2012, 570,000 children ages 0-18 were eligible for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families 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 \$11,628 – 28.7 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in California.
- California had local waiting lists for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 46 percent of California's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 37 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- California's state-funded preschool program met 4 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

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

- In 2013, 73 percent of California's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 67 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
 - 87 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 82 percent could not compute.
 - 84 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 81 percent could not compute.
- 82 percent of California public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing California 22nd among states. 70 percent of Black students and 77 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 88 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 9 percent of California public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing California 22nd among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 20 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

Children Facing Special Risks

Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In California, 75,641 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 8.2 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 56,947 California children in foster care.

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

- 120,891 children were arrested in California in 2012 – a rate of 2,913 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 9,810 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 24 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 60 percent were Hispanic, and 14 percent were White.
- No California children were in adult jails in 2013.
- California spent 5.1 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

California ranked 9th out of 41 states in child and teen gun deaths.

- A total of 252 children and teens were killed by guns in California in 2013 – a rate of 2.5 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit www.childrensdefense.org/cits