



# Children in the States

## COLORADO

September 2015

### Child Population

**1,246,372 children lived in Colorado in 2014; 43 percent were children of color.**

- 57 percent were White
- 31 percent were Hispanic
- 4 percent were Black
- 3 percent were Asian
- 4 percent were two or more races
- 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

### Child Poverty

**More than 1 in 7 (15.4 percent) of Colorado's children were poor in 2014, a total of 190,045 children.<sup>1</sup>**

- Colorado ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in child poverty among states.<sup>2</sup>
- 1 in 15 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. Nearly 1 in 6 children under age 6 were poor; nearly half of the poor children were extremely poor.

**Children of color in Colorado are disproportionately poor.**

- More than 3 in 10 Black children, more than 1 in 4 Hispanic children, and more than 3 in 10 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2014, compared to nearly 1 in 12 White children.

### Child Hunger and Homelessness

**Child poverty in Colorado leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.**

- Nearly 23,000 Colorado public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, more than 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in Colorado and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- Nearly 21 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2012. More than 23 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Colorado ranked 18<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in child food security and 2<sup>nd</sup> in percent of children overweight and obese.
- More than 20 percent of Colorado children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 91 percent of Colorado children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Colorado 43<sup>rd</sup> of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

### Child Health

**Although the majority of Colorado'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, 83.7 percent of eligible children participated in Colorado Medical Assistance Program or Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+), Colorado's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 446,943 Colorado children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Colorado Medical Assistance Program, and 90,397 in Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+).

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

- More than 102,000 Colorado children ages 0-17 (8.2 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 13<sup>th</sup> highest rate of uninsured children among states
- In 2012, 69,000 children ages 0-18 were eligible for Colorado Medical Assistance Program or Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+) 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 \$13,143 – 44.5 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Colorado.
- Colorado had 12 children on a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 49 percent of Colorado's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 38 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- Colorado's state-funded preschool program met 6 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

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

- In 2013, 59 percent of Colorado's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 50 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
  - 81 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 78 percent could not compute.
  - 77 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 70 percent could not compute.
- 82 percent of Colorado public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Colorado 22<sup>nd</sup> among states. 65 percent of Black students and 76 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 84 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 8 percent of Colorado public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Colorado 14<sup>th</sup> among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 16 percent and 12 percent, respectively.

## Children Facing Special Risks

### Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In Colorado, 10,161 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 8.2 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 5,992 Colorado children in foster care.

### Too many Colorado children are involved in the juvenile justice system.

- 32,048 children were arrested in Colorado in 2012 – a rate of 5,922 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 1,254 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 24 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 29 percent were Hispanic, and 41 percent were White.
- 1 Colorado child was in an adult jail in 2013.
- Colorado spent 3.3 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

### Colorado ranked 14<sup>th</sup> out of 41 states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.

- A total of 37 children and teens were killed by guns in Colorado in 2013 – a rate of 2.7 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit [www.childrensdefense.org/cits](http://www.childrensdefense.org/cits)