



Children in the States

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

September 2015

Child Population

115,305 children lived in the District of Columbia in 2014; 79 percent were children of color.

- 21 percent were White
- 15 percent were Hispanic
- 58 percent were Black
- 2 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 4 (26.0 percent) of the District of Columbia's children were poor in 2014, a total of 29,404 children.¹

- Nearly 1 in 8 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 the District of Columbia are disproportionately poor.

- Nearly 2 in 5 Black children and more than 1 in 5 Hispanic children were poor in 2014, compared to nearly 1 in 50 White children.

Child Hunger and Homelessness

Child poverty in District of Columbia leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.

- More than 3,700 District of Columbia public school students were homeless in the 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 District of Columbia and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- Nearly 31 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.
- Nearly 48 percent of District of Columbia children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- 41 percent of District of Columbia children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014.

Child Health

Although the majority of District of Columbia'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 2013, 97.6 percent of eligible children participated in Medicaid or Healthy Families, the District of Columbia's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 91,712 District of Columbia children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Medicaid, and 9,057 in Healthy Families.
- More than 2,600 District of Columbia children ages 0-17 (2.4 percent) were uninsured in 2013.
- In 2012, 2,000 children ages 0-18 were eligible for Medicaid or Healthy Families but not enrolled.

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.

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 \$21,948 – 202 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in the District of Columbia.
- The District of Columbia did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 75 percent of the District of Columbia's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013.
- The District of Columbia's state-funded preschool program met 8 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

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

- In 2013, 77 percent of the District of Columbia's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 72 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
 - 85 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 81 percent could not compute.
 - 77 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 77 percent could not compute.
- 71 percent of District of Columbia public high school students graduated on time in 2012. 70 percent of Black students and 59 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 98 percent of White students.

Children Facing Special Risks

Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In the District of Columbia, 2,050 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 18.4 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 1,310 District of Columbia children in foster care.

Too many District of Columbia children are involved in the juvenile justice system.

- 258 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 94 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 3 percent were Hispanic, and 2 percent were White.
- No District of Columbia children were in adult jails in 2013.

Fewer than 10 children and teens were killed by guns in the District of Columbia in 2013.

For sources please visit www.childrensdefense.org/cits