



Children in the States

MISSISSIPPI

September 2015

Child Population

731,269 children lived in Mississippi in 2014; 51 percent were children of color.

- 49 percent were White
- 4 percent were Hispanic
- 43 percent were Black
- 1 percent were Asian
- 2 percent were two or more races
- 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

Child Poverty

Nearly 3 in 10 (29.4 percent) of Mississippi's children were poor in 2014, a total of 211,726 children.¹

- Mississippi ranked 49th in child poverty among states.²
- More than 1 in 7 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; more than half of the poor children were extremely poor.

Children of color in Mississippi are disproportionately poor.

- Nearly 1 in 2 Black children and more than 1 in 4 Hispanic children were poor in 2014, compared to more than 1 in 7 White children.

Child Hunger and Homelessness

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

- More than 12,845 Mississippi 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 Mississippi and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- 29 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. Nearly 40 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Mississippi ranked 50th of 50 states in child food security and 49th in percent of children overweight and obese.
- Nearly 40 percent of Mississippi children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 92 percent of Mississippi children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Mississippi 45th of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

Child Health

Although the majority of Mississippi'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, 89.2 percent of eligible children participated in Mississippi Medicaid or CHIP, Mississippi's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 467,918 Mississippi children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Mississippi Medicaid, and 93,120 in CHIP.

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 56,000 Mississippi children ages 0-17 (7.6 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 15th highest rate of uninsured children among states.
- In 2012, 41,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Mississippi Medicaid or CHIP 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 \$5,496 – 16.2 percent less than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Mississippi.
- Mississippi did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 48 percent of Mississippi's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 46 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.

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

- In 2013, 79 percent of Mississippi's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 74 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
 - 89 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 89 percent could not compute.
 - 84 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 73 percent could not compute.
- 68 percent of Mississippi public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Mississippi 48th among states. 63 percent of Black students and 68 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 72 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 Mississippi public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Mississippi 45th among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 23 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

Children Facing Special Risks

Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In Mississippi, 7,415 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 10.1 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 4,085 Mississippi children in foster care.

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

- 258 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 81 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 1 percent were Hispanic, and 17 percent were White.
- 8 Mississippi children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Mississippi spent 2.1 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

Mississippi ranked 37th out of 41 ranked states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.

- A total of 38 children and teens were killed by guns in Mississippi in 2013 – a rate of 4.6 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit www.childrensdefense.org/cits