

Cradle to Prison Pipeline Montana



Children's Defense Fund

2007

Poverty

Poverty is the largest driving force of the Cradle to Prison Pipeline crisis.

- In Montana, among all children, **1 in 5** (20.1 percent or 40,385) **was poor**.
 - For **Latino** children **2 in 5** (39.4 percent or 2,799) were poor.
 - For **White**, non-Latino children **1 in 6** (17.0 percent or 28,374) was poor.
 - For **American Indian/Alaska Native** children **3 in 8** (38.7 percent or 6,773) were poor.
- In Montana, a **baby is born poor** every 4 hours.
 - A **Latino** baby is born poor every **3 days**.
 - A **White**, non-Latino baby is born poor every **6 hours**.
 - An **American Indian/Alaska Native** baby is born poor every **day**.

Health Care

Disadvantages in health care increase the risk that poor children and particularly poor children of color will be trapped in the pipeline.

- In 2005, an estimated **36,000 children (16.2%)** were **uninsured** in Montana.
- In 2004, **880 babies (7.6%)** were born at **low birthweight** in Montana. This included:
 - 8.6% of Latino babies and
 - 7.6% of White, non-Latino babies.
- **34.6%** of two-year-olds in Montana **did not receive** all recommended **immunizations** in 2005.

Early Childhood

Children who do not participate in high-quality early education have higher rates of juvenile delinquency, arrests, and juvenile court petitions.

- In the 2004-2005 school year, **17.7% of 3-year-olds** and **29.4% of 4-year-olds** were enrolled in **state-funded preschool programs** in Montana.
- In 2005, **2,939 children** were enrolled in **Head Start and Early Head Start** in Montana. Of these:
 - .6% were Black, non-Latino;
 - 9.0% were Latino; and,
 - 49.0% were White, non-Latino.

Child Welfare

Children in foster care or with a history of abuse and neglect are at higher risk of being trapped in the pipeline.

- In 2003, there were **1,866 children in foster care** in Montana.
- In 2004, there were **1,753 victims of child maltreatment** in Montana.

Education

Educational disadvantages make it more likely that children will enter the juvenile justice system.

- In 2005, a **disproportionate number** of Black and Latino **fourth graders could not read at grade level**. In Montana:
 - 64% of Latino and
 - 61% of White, non-Latino fourth graders could not read at grade level.
- **Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely than their peers to drop out of school altogether**. In Montana:
 - For every 100 Black students enrolled, there were 4.5 suspensions.
 - For every 100 Latino students enrolled, there were 5.1 suspensions.
 - For every 100 White students enrolled, there were 2.9 suspensions.
 - For every 100 American Indian/Alaska Native students enrolled, there were 10.9 suspensions.
 - For every 100 Asian students enrolled, there were 1.2 suspensions.
- In Montana, **8.0% of youth ages 16 to 19 were neither enrolled in school nor high school graduates**.

Juvenile Justice System and Incarceration

Children of color are disproportionately represented in both the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

- In Montana, there were **6,493 juvenile arrests** in 2005.
- Of the estimated **261 youth in residential placement in Montana** in 2003, 171 (65.5%) were White, non-Latino.
- There were **69 youth under age 18 incarcerated in adult correctional facilities** in Montana.
- Montana spends **2.3 times as much per prisoner as per public school pupil**.

Community Violence

Between 1979 and 2004, gunfire killed 101,413 children and teens in America, destroying countless families and communities.

- In 2004, **12 children and teenagers** in Montana **died of firearm injuries**, including: **1 homicide**, 10 suicides, and 1 unintentional shooting.
- In 2005, **30.5%** of Montana's high school students were **involved in a physical fight**.
- In 2005, **8.0%** of Montana's high school students were **threatened or injured with a weapon on school property**.
- **21.4%** of Montana's high school students **carried a weapon** 2 or more times in the preceding month.