Cradle to Prison Pipeline
New Jersey



Children's Defense Fund

2007

Poverty

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

- In New Jersey, among all children, **1 in 8** (11.8 percent or 251,999) **was poor**.
  - For **Black** children **1 in 4** (26.0 percent or 88,975) was poor.
  - For **Latino** children **1 in 4** (23.7 percent or 93,389) was poor.
  - For **White**, non-Latino children **1 in 20** (4.9 percent or 58,781) was poor.
  - For **Asian** children **1 in 15** (6.7 percent or 10,095) was poor.
- In New Jersey, a **baby is born poor** every **33 minutes**.
  - A **Black** baby is born poor every **2 hours**.
  - A **Latino** baby is born poor every **hour**.
  - A **White**, non-Latino baby is born poor every **3 hours**.
  - An **Asian** baby is born poor every **21 hours**.

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 **244,000 children (10.7%)** were **uninsured** in New Jersey.
- In 2004, **9,528 babies (8.3%)** were born at **low birthweight** in New Jersey. This included:
  - 13.7% of Black, non-Latino babies;
  - 7.2% of Latino babies; and,
  - 7.2% of White, non-Latino babies.
- **27.6%** of two-year-olds in New Jersey **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, **24.2% of 3-year-olds** and **37.4% of 4-year-olds** were enrolled in **state-funded preschool programs** in **New Jersey**.
- In 2005, **14,717 children** were enrolled in **Head Start and Early Head Start** in **New Jersey**. Of these:
  - 42.6% were Black, non-Latino;
  - 37.9% were Latino; and,
  - 16.4% 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 **12,801 children in foster care** in New Jersey.
- In 2004, there were **8,159 victims of child maltreatment** in New Jersey.

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 New Jersey:
  - 85% of Black, non-Latino;
  - 81% of Latino; and,
  - 54% 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 New Jersey:
  - For every 100 Black students enrolled, there were 11.9 suspensions.
  - For every 100 Latino students enrolled, there were 5.7 suspensions.
  - For every 100 White students enrolled, there were 3.8 suspensions.
  - For every 100 American Indian/Alaska Native students enrolled, there were 3.0 suspensions.
  - For every 100 Asian students enrolled, there were 1.7 suspensions.
- In New Jersey, the **school districts with the highest rates of suspension for Blacks** are:
  - Atlantic City (89 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled);
  - Asbury Park City (85 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled); and,
  - Bridgeton City (32 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled).
- In New Jersey, **7.2% 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 New Jersey, there were **59,154 juvenile arrests** in 2005.
- Of the estimated **1,941 youth in residential placement in New Jersey** in 2003:
  - 1,293 (66.6%) were Black, non-Latino;
  - 321 (16.5%) were Latino; and,
  - 303 (15.6%) were White, non-Latino.
- There were **110 youth under age 18 incarcerated in adult correctional facilities** in New Jersey**.**
- New Jersey spends **2.6 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, **48 children and teenagers** in New Jersey **died of firearm injuries,** including: **41 homicides** and 7 suicides.
- In 2005, **30.7%** of New Jersey's high school students were **involved in a physical fight.**
- In 2005, **8.0%** of New Jersey's high school students were **threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.**
- **10.5%** of New Jersey's high school students **carried a weapon** 2 or more times in the preceding month.