

## Overview of *The State of America's Children 2017*

### **Child Population: The United States is reaching a tipping point in racial and ethnic diversity as children of color will be a majority by 2020.**

- There were 73.6 million children in the U.S. in 2016, 23 percent of the nation's population. The child population has increased every year over the past 50 years.
- In 2016 children of color made up 49 percent of all children and the majority of children under 5.

### **Child Poverty: Children remain the poorest age group in America; children of color and young children are disproportionately poor.**

- Nearly 1 in 5 children were poor in 2016—more than 13.2 million children. Nearly 70 percent of poor children were children of color. About 1 in 3 Black and American Indian/Alaska Native children and 1 in 4 Hispanic children were poor compared with 1 in 9 White children.
- About 3 million children live in families trying to survive on \$2 a day per person which rivals child poverty in some of the world's poorest countries.
- The youngest children are the poorest. Nearly 1 in 5 children under 6 were poor in 2016.

### **Income and Wealth Inequality: The income and wealth inequality gap continues to widen with low-income families and households with people of color falling further and further behind.**

- Since the end of the Great Recession, the incomes of the top 1 percent have grown by 27 percent compared with 8 percent for the bottom 99 percent. Families in the bottom 99 percent have only recovered about 60 percent of their economic losses.
- Wealth inequality has reached levels not seen since the late 1800s. The top 1 percent of households held 39 percent of all wealth in the U.S. in 2016.
- In 2015 the median family income of White households with children (\$80,800) was about two times that of Black (\$35,900) and Hispanic households with children (\$41,000). In 2016 White families held seven times more wealth than Black families and five times more than Hispanic families.

### **Housing and Homelessness: The lack of affordable housing and federal rental assistance means millions of children live in families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness with children of color disproportionately affected.**

- In 2017, a person working (full-time, year-round at minimum wage) could not afford the monthly Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom rental unit in any state or the District of Columbia and still have enough money for food, utilities and other necessities; yet the lack of federal rental assistance means only 1 in 4 eligible households receive aid.
- Children comprised more than 1 in 5 of the nearly 550,000 homeless people living in shelters, transitional housing and on the streets on a single night in January 2016. Black families represented about half of homeless families with children and 49 percent of those who were sheltered that night.
- More than 1.2 million homeless children were enrolled in public schools during the 2014-2015 school year, excluding younger children and youths not enrolled in school.

### **Child Hunger and Nutrition: Millions of children live in food-insecure households, lacking consistent access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food.**

- In 2015 nearly 1 in 5 children—14.8 million—lived in food-insecure households. The percent of Black and Hispanic households with food-insecure children was more than two times that of White households.
- Food insecurity increases the risk of obesity, a condition more prevalent among Black and Hispanic children than White children.

**Child Health: Ninety-five percent of all children have health coverage but 3.9 million children under 18 still lack the coverage they need to survive and thrive.**

- In 2016, Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provided comprehensive, pediatric-appropriate and affordable health coverage to nearly 46 million children under 19.
- Special attention is still needed to enroll school-aged children, children eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP, and children in immigrant families.

**Early Childhood: The high cost of child care and lack of early childhood investments means many children do not receive quality care during critical years of brain development.**

- Center-based child care for an infant cost more than public college tuition in 31 states and the District of Columbia in 2015 yet the number of children receiving child care subsidies has decreased by more than 370,000 since 2006.
- In 2016 Early Head Start served only 5 percent of eligible infants and toddlers and Head Start served only 54 percent of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds.

**Education: Most public school children cannot read or compute at grade level and children of color are particularly behind in educational achievement.**

- In 2015 the majority of public school children in fourth and eighth grades could not read at grade level, including more than 75 percent of fourth and eighth grade Black, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native public school students compared with less than 60 percent of White students.
- Less than 80 percent of Black, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native public school students graduated on time during the 2014-2015 school year compared with 87 percent of White students.

**Child Welfare: Hundreds of thousands of children are abused or neglected and in foster care, especially young children.**

- Each day 1,854 children are confirmed abused or neglected, and in 2016, 433,201 children were in a family foster home, group home or child care institution, a number that is growing as the opioid epidemic worsens.
- Children under 6 made up nearly half of all child maltreatment cases in 2015 and 41 percent of all children in foster care in 2016.

**Juvenile Justice: Many children are incarcerated in the juvenile justice and/or adult criminal justice systems, placing them at risk of serious physical and psychological harm.**

- In 2015, 48,043 children were held in residential placement; more than 60 percent were Black or Hispanic. 993 children were incarcerated in adult prisons, and Black children are nine times more likely than White children to receive an adult prison sentence.
- Once incarcerated children are at risk of serious harm, including physical and psychological abuse, sexual assault, suicide, inadequate educational instruction and solitary confinement.

**Gun Violence: Every year gun violence cuts short the lives of thousands of children and teens, particularly children of color.**

- During 2013-2015, 7,768 children and teens were killed with guns.
- Gun violence remains the leading cause of death for Black children and teens. In 2015, 9.5 out of every 100,000 Black children and teens were killed with a gun—a rate four times higher than that for White children and teens (2.5 per 100,000). A Black child or teen was killed with a gun every 7 hours and 25 minutes.