



Children in the States

COLORADO

September 2015

Child Population

1,246,372 children lived in Colorado in 2014; 43 percent were children of color.

- 57 percent were White
- 31 percent were Hispanic
- 4 percent were Black
- 3 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 7 (15.4 percent) of Colorado's children were poor in 2014, a total of 190,045 children.¹

- Colorado ranked 11th in child poverty among states.²
- 1 in 15 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. Nearly 1 in 6 children under age 6 were poor; nearly half of the poor children were extremely poor.

Children of color in Colorado are disproportionately poor.

- More than 3 in 10 Black children, more than 1 in 4 Hispanic children, and more than 3 in 10 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2014, compared to nearly 1 in 12 White children.

Child Hunger and Homelessness

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

- Nearly 23,000 Colorado public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, more than 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in Colorado and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- Nearly 21 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2012. More than 23 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Colorado ranked 18th of 50 states in child food security and 2nd in percent of children overweight and obese.
- More than 20 percent of Colorado children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 91 percent of Colorado children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Colorado 43rd of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

Child Health

Although the majority of Colorado'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 FY2013, 83.7 percent of eligible children participated in Colorado Medical Assistance Program or Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+), Colorado's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 446,943 Colorado children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Colorado Medical Assistance Program, and 90,397 in Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+).

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 102,000 Colorado children ages 0-17 (8.2 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 13th highest rate of uninsured children among states
- In 2012, 69,000 children ages 0-18 were eligible for Colorado Medical Assistance Program or Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+) 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 \$13,143 – 44.5 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Colorado.
- Colorado had 12 children on a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 49 percent of Colorado's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 38 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- Colorado's state-funded preschool program met 6 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

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

- In 2013, 59 percent of Colorado's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 50 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
 - 81 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 78 percent could not compute.
 - 77 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 70 percent could not compute.
- 82 percent of Colorado public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Colorado 22nd among states. 65 percent of Black students and 76 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 84 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 8 percent of Colorado public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Colorado 14th among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 16 percent and 12 percent, respectively.

Children Facing Special Risks

Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In Colorado, 10,161 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 8.2 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 5,992 Colorado children in foster care.

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

- 32,048 children were arrested in Colorado in 2012 – a rate of 5,922 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 1,254 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 24 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 29 percent were Hispanic, and 41 percent were White.
- 1 Colorado child was in an adult jail in 2013.
- Colorado spent 3.3 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

Colorado ranked 14th out of 41 states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.

- A total of 37 children and teens were killed by guns in Colorado in 2013 – a rate of 2.7 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit www.childrensdefense.org/cits