Children in the States
KENTUCKY

September 2015

Child Population

1,012,614 children lived in Kentucky in 2014; 20 percent were children of color.

- 80 percent were White
- 6 percent were Hispanic
- 9 percent were Black
- 2 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 4 (26.2 percent) of Kentucky's children were poor in 2014, a total of 259,751 children.[1]

- Kentucky ranked 43rd in child poverty among states.[2]
- Nearly 1 in 8 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. Nearly 3 in 10 children under age 6 were poor; more than half of the poor children were extremely poor.

Children of color in Kentucky are disproportionately poor.

- Nearly 1 in 2 Black children, more than 2 in 5 Hispanic children, and more than 1 in 2 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2014, compared to nearly 1 in 4 White children.

Child Hunger and Homelessness

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

- More than 34,000 Kentucky 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 Kentucky and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- Nearly 22 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. Nearly 36 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Kentucky ranked 47th of 50 states in child food security and 44th in percent of children overweight and obese.
- More than 33 percent of Kentucky children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 93 percent of Kentucky children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Kentucky 47th of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

Child Health

Although the majority of Kentucky's children have access to health coverage, that does not guarantee enrollment in coverage, which can jeopardize their education and their future.

- In 2013, 90.1 percent of eligible children participated in Kentucky Medicaid or KCHIP, Kentucky's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 485,286 Kentucky children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Kentucky Medicaid, and 84,069 in KCHIP.
- Nearly 60,000 Kentucky children ages 0-17 (5.9 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 24th highest rate of uninsured children among states.

---

[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.

- In 2012, 43,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Kentucky Medicaid or KCHIP 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 a 4-year-old was $6,194 – 28.7 percent less than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college.
- Kentucky did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 42 percent of Kentucky's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 36 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- Kentucky's state-funded preschool program met 9 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

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

- In 2013, 64 percent of Kentucky's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 59 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
  - 85 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 81 percent could not compute.
  - 71 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 70 percent could not compute.
- 82 percent of Kentucky public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Kentucky 22nd among states. 78 percent of Black students and 89 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 82 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 9 percent of Kentucky public school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Kentucky 22nd among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 22 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

Children Facing Special Risks

Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In Kentucky, 20,005 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 19.7 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 7,324 Kentucky children in foster care.

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

- 7,143 children were arrested in Kentucky in 2012 – a rate of 1,569 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 747 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 33 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 4 percent were Hispanic, and 59 percent were White.
- No Kentucky children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Kentucky spent 3.5 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

Kentucky ranked 20th out of 41 ranked states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.

- A total of 35 children and teens were killed by guns in Kentucky in 2013 – a rate of 3.1 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit **www.childrensdefense.org/cits**