

Cradle to Prison Pipeline

Arkansas



Children's Defense Fund

2007

Poverty

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

- In Arkansas, among all children, **1 in 4** (24.9 percent or 164,510) **was poor**.
 - For **Black** children **4 in 9** (46.5 percent or 60,365) were poor.
 - For **Latino** children **3 in 10** (30.7 percent or 14,514) were poor.
 - For **White**, non-Latino children **1 in 5** (18.4 percent or 84,471) was poor.
 - For **American Indian/Alaska Native** children **1 in 4** (26.4 percent or 1,227) was poor.
- In Arkansas, a **baby is born poor every 51 minutes**.
 - A **Black** baby is born poor every **3 hours**.
 - A **Latino** baby is born poor every **8 hours**.
 - A **White**, non-Latino baby is born poor every **2 hours**.
 - An **American Indian/Alaska Native** baby is born poor every **week**.

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 **70,000 children (9.8%)** were **uninsured** in Arkansas.
- In 2004, **3,593 babies (9.3%)** were born at **low birthweight** in Arkansas. This included:
 - 15.5% of Black, non-Latino babies;
 - 6.0% of Latino babies; and,
 - 8.1% of White, non-Latino babies.
- **35.8%** of two-year-olds in Arkansas **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, **26.6% of 3-year-olds** and **42.9% of 4-year-olds** were enrolled in **state-funded preschool programs** in Arkansas.
- In 2005, **10,942 children** were enrolled in **Head Start and Early Head Start** in Arkansas. Of these:
 - 42.5% were Black, non-Latino;
 - 12.1% were Latino; and,
 - 45.5% 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 **3,000 children in foster care** in Arkansas.
- In 2004, there were **7,276 victims of child maltreatment** in Arkansas.

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 Arkansas:
 - 90% of Black, non-Latino;
 - 79% of Latino; and,
 - 63% 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 Arkansas:
 - For every 100 Black students enrolled, there were 15.3 suspensions.
 - For every 100 Latino students enrolled, there were 4.1 suspensions.
 - For every 100 White students enrolled, there were 5.6 suspensions.
 - For every 100 American Indian/Alaska Native students enrolled, there were 4.3 suspensions.
 - For every 100 Asian students enrolled, there were 3.4 suspensions.
- In Arkansas, the **school districts with the highest rates of suspension for Blacks** are:
 - Pulaski County Special School District (27 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled);
 - El Dorado School District (26 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled); and,
 - Watson Chapel School District (25 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled).
- In Arkansas, **9.6% 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 Arkansas, there were **12,380 juvenile arrests** in 2005.
- Of the estimated **675 youth in residential placement in Arkansas** in 2003:
 - 312 (46.2%) were Black, non-Latino and
 - 321 (47.6%) were White, non-Latino.
- There were **353 youth under age 18 incarcerated in adult correctional facilities** in Arkansas.
- Arkansas spends **2.5 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, **16 children and teenagers** in Arkansas **died of firearm injuries**, including: **8 homicides**, 4 suicides, and 4 unintentional and undetermined shootings.
- In 2005, **32.1%** of Arkansas's high school students were **involved in a physical fight**.
- In 2005, **9.6%** of Arkansas's high school students were **threatened or injured with a weapon on school property**.
- **25.9%** of Arkansas's high school students **carried a weapon** 2 or more times in the preceding month.