

# Cradle to Prison Pipeline Colorado



Children's Defense Fund

2007

## Poverty

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

- In Colorado, among all children, **1 in 7** (14.2 percent or 165,586) was poor.
  - For **Black** children **2 in 7** (28.2 percent or 13,511) were poor.
  - For **Latino** children **1 in 4** (26.6 percent or 82,712) was poor.
  - For **White**, non-Latino children **1 in 12** (8.3 percent or 61,177) was poor.
  - For **American Indian/Alaska Native** children **1 in 4** (25.4 percent or 2,469) was poor.
  - For **Asian** children **1 in 9** (11.0 percent or 2,927) was poor.
- In Colorado, a **baby is born poor** every **46 minutes**.
  - A **Black** baby is born poor every **9 hours**.
  - A **Latino** baby is born poor every **hour**.
  - A **White**, non-Latino baby is born poor every **2 hours**.
  - An **American Indian/Alaska Native** baby is born poor every **2 days**.
  - An **Asian** baby is born poor every **3 days**.

## 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 **176,000 children (14.2%)** were **uninsured** in Colorado.
- In 2004, **6,130 babies (9.0%)** were born at **low birthweight** in Colorado. This included:
  - 14.6% of Black, non-Latino babies;
  - 8.6% of Latino babies; and,
  - 8.7% of White, non-Latino babies.
- **21.4%** of two-year-olds in Colorado **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, **9.6% of 3-year-olds** and **24.8% of 4-year-olds** were enrolled in **state-funded preschool programs** in Colorado.
- In 2005, **9,820 children** were enrolled in **Head Start and Early Head Start** in Colorado. Of these:
  - 7.9% were Black, non-Latino;
  - 60.8% were Latino; and,
  - 53.6% 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 **8,754 children in foster care** in Colorado.

- In 2004, there were **9,578 victims of child maltreatment** in Colorado.

### 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 Colorado:
  - 82% of Black, non-Latino;
  - 83% 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 Colorado:
  - For every 100 Black students enrolled, there were 14.2 suspensions.
  - For every 100 Latino students enrolled, there were 9.2 suspensions.
  - For every 100 White students enrolled, there were 5.5 suspensions.
  - For every 100 American Indian/Alaska Native students enrolled, there were 9.6 suspensions.
  - For every 100 Asian students enrolled, there were 4.1 suspensions.
- In Colorado, the **school districts with the highest rates of suspension for Blacks** are:
  - Harrison 2 (22 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled);
  - Denver County 1 (16 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled); and,
  - Cherry Creek 5 (15 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled).
- In Colorado, **12.2% 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 Colorado, there were **46,030 juvenile arrests** in 2005.
- Of the estimated **1,776 youth in residential placement in Colorado** in 2003:
  - 312 (17.6%) were Black, non-Latino;
  - 462 (26.0%) were Latino; and,
  - 948 (53.4%) were White, non-Latino.
- There were **159 youth under age 18 incarcerated in adult correctional facilities** in Colorado.
- Colorado spends **3.1 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 Colorado **died of firearm injuries**, including: **23 homicides**, 24 suicides, 1 unintentional shooting.
- In 2005, **32.2%** of Colorado's high school students were **involved in a physical fight.**
- In 2005, **7.6%** of Colorado's high school students were **threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.**
- **17.0%** of Colorado's high school students **carried a weapon** 2 or more times in the preceding month.