

# Cradle to Prison Pipeline Tennessee



Children's Defense Fund

2007

## Poverty

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

- In Tennessee, among all children, **2 in 9** (21.4 percent or 290,932) **were poor**.
  - For **Black** children **3 in 8** (36.3 percent or 102,355) were poor.
  - For **Latino** children **2 in 7** (28.9 percent or 16,078) were poor.
  - For **White**, non-Latino children **1 in 6** (16.6 percent or 161,735) was poor.
  - For **Asian** children **1 in 14** (7.0 percent or 1,220) was poor.
- In Tennessee, a **baby is born poor** every **28 minutes**.
  - A **Black** baby is born poor every **hour**.
  - A **Latino** baby is born poor every **6 hours**.
  - A **White**, non-Latino baby is born poor every **54 minutes**.
  - An **Asian** baby is born poor every **2 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 **147,000 children (10.0%)** were **uninsured** in Tennessee.
- In 2004, **7,273 babies (9.2%)** were born at **low birthweight** in Tennessee. This included:
  - 13.8% of Black, non-Latino babies;
  - 6.0% of Latino babies; and,
  - 8.2% of White, non-Latino babies.
- **20.0%** of two-year-olds in Tennessee **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, **10.3% of 3-year-olds** and **21.8% of 4-year-olds** were enrolled in **state-funded preschool programs** in Tennessee.
- In 2005, **16,445 children** were enrolled in **Head Start and Early Head Start** in Tennessee. Of these:
  - 42.7% were Black, non-Latino;
  - 6.0% were Latino; and,
  - 48.9% 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 **9,487 children in foster care** in Tennessee.
- In 2004, there were **14,840 victims of child maltreatment** in Tennessee.

## 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 Tennessee:
  - 89% of Black, non-Latino;
  - 87% of Latino; and,
  - 67% 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 Tennessee:
  - For every 100 Black students enrolled, there were 16.2 suspensions.
  - For every 100 Latino students enrolled, there were 5.5 suspensions.
  - For every 100 White students enrolled, there were 5.3 suspensions.
  - For every 100 American Indian/Alaska Native students enrolled, there were 4.6 suspensions.
  - For every 100 Asian students enrolled, there were 3.9 suspensions.
- In Tennessee, the **school districts with the highest rates of suspension for Blacks** are:
  - Fayette County School District (33 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled);
  - Memphis City School District (25 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled); and,
  - Sumner County School District (25 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled).
- In Tennessee, **9.8% 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 Tennessee, there were **34,316 juvenile arrests** in 2005.
- Of the estimated **1,434 youth in residential placement in Tennessee** in 2003:
  - 708 (49.4%) were Black, non-Latino;
  - 39 (2.7%) were Latino; and,
  - 675 (47.1%) were White, non-Latino.
- There were **142 youth under age 18 incarcerated in adult correctional facilities** in Tennessee.
- Tennessee spends **2.2 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, **73 children and teenagers** in Tennessee **died of firearm injuries**, including: **30 homicides**, 29 suicides, and 14 unintentional and undetermined shootings.
- In 2005, **30.9%** of Tennessee's high school students were **involved in a physical fight**.
- In 2005, **7.4%** of Tennessee's high school students were **threatened or injured with a weapon on school property**.
- **24.1%** of Tennessee's high school students **carried a weapon 2 or more times** in the preceding month.