

Cradle to Prison Pipeline

West Virginia



Children's Defense Fund

2007

Poverty

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

- In West Virginia, among all children, **1 in 4** (25.6 percent or 95,381) was poor.
 - For **Black** children **1 in 2** (47.8 percent or 5,640) was poor.
 - For **White**, non-Latino children **1 in 4** (24.6 percent or 85,059) was poor.
- In West Virginia, a **baby is born poor every 2 hours**.
 - A **Black** baby is born poor every **day**.
 - A **White**, non-Latino baby is born poor every **2 hours**.

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 **35,000 children (8.7%)** were **uninsured** in West Virginia.
- In 2004, **1,937 babies (9.3%)** were born at **low birthweight** in West Virginia. This included:
 - 14.3% of Black, non-Latino babies and
 - 9.1% of White, non-Latino babies.
- **32.5%** of two-year-olds in West Virginia **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, **22.0% of 3-year-olds** and **64.6% of 4-year-olds** were enrolled in **state-funded preschool programs** in West Virginia.
- In 2005, **7,610 children** were enrolled in **Head Start and Early Head Start** in West Virginia. Of these:
 - 8.5% were Black, non-Latino;
 - .9% were Latino; and,
 - 86.0% 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 **4,069 children in foster care** in West Virginia.
- In 2004, there were **8,446 victims of child maltreatment** in West Virginia.

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 West Virginia:

- 85% of Black, non-Latino and
- 74% 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 West Virginia:
 - For every 100 Black students enrolled, there were 13.1 suspensions.
 - For every 100 Latino students enrolled, there were 8.8 suspensions.
 - For every 100 White students enrolled, there were 8.1 suspensions.
 - For every 100 American Indian/Alaska Native students enrolled, there were 20.1 suspensions.
 - For every 100 Asian students enrolled, there was 1.0 suspension.
- In West Virginia, the **school districts with the highest rates of suspension for Blacks** are:
 - Raleigh County School District (22 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled) and
 - Kanawha County School District (22 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled).
- In West Virginia, **9.0% 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 West Virginia, there were **3,033 juvenile arrests** in 2005.
- Of the estimated **498 youth in residential placement in West Virginia** in 2003:
 - 75 (15.1%) were Black, non-Latino and
 - 399 (80.1%) were White, non-Latino.
- There were **25 youth under age 18 incarcerated in adult correctional facilities** in West Virginia.
- West Virginia spends **4.4 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, **12 children and teenagers** in West Virginia **died of firearm injuries**, including: **4 homicides** and 8 suicides.
- In 2005, **29.1%** of West Virginia's high school students were **involved in a physical fight.**
- In 2005, **8.0%** of West Virginia's high school students were **threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.**
- **22.3%** of West Virginia's high school students **carried a weapon** 2 or more times in the preceding month.