



# Children in the States

## ALABAMA

July 2015

### Child Population

**1,107,571 children lived in Alabama in 2014; 41 percent were children of color.**

- 59 percent were White
- 7 percent were Hispanic
- 30 percent were Black
- 1 percent were Asian
- 3 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 (27.2 percent) of Alabama's children were poor in 2013, a total of 297,591 children.<sup>1</sup>**

- Alabama ranked 45<sup>th</sup> in child poverty among states.<sup>2</sup>
- More than 1 in 8 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. Nearly 1 in 3 children under age 6 were poor; more than half of the poor children were extremely poor.

**Children of color in Alabama are disproportionately poor.**

- More than 2 in 5 Black children, nearly 2 in 5 Hispanic children, and more than 1 in 6 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2013, compared to more than 1 in 6 White children.

### Child Hunger and Homelessness

**Child poverty in Alabama leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.**

- Nearly 30,000 Alabama 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 Alabama and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- More than 26 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. 35 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Alabama ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> of 50 states in child food security and 42<sup>nd</sup> in percent of children overweight and obese.
- Nearly 35 percent of Alabama children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 90 percent of Alabama children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Alabama 40<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

### Child Health

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

- In FY2013, 91.5 percent of eligible children participated in Alabama Medicaid or All Kids, Alabama's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 598,045 Alabama children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Alabama Medicaid, and 113,490 in All Kids.
- More than 48,000 Alabama children ages 0-17 (4.3 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 10<sup>th</sup> lowest rate of uninsured children among states.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> The state ranked 1<sup>st</sup> is the best for children for that outcome and the state ranked 50<sup>th</sup> is the worst for children.

- In 2012, 40,000 children ages 0-18 were eligible for Alabama Medicaid or All Kids 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 an infant was \$5,547 – 39.3 percent less than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Alabama.
- Alabama had 8,394 children on a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 41 percent of Alabama's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 32 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- Alabama's state-funded preschool program met 10 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

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

- In 2013, 69 percent of Alabama's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 70 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
  - 85 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 91 percent could not compute.
  - 85 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 77 percent could not compute.
- 75 percent of Alabama public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Alabama 50<sup>th</sup> among states. 68 percent of Black students and 67 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 80 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 16 percent of Alabama public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Alabama 45<sup>th</sup> among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 29 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

## **Children Facing Special Risks**

### **Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.**

- In Alabama, 8,809 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 7.9 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 4,624 Alabama children in foster care.

### **Too many Alabama children are involved in the juvenile justice system.**

- 1,026 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 58 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 2 percent were Hispanic, and 38 percent were White.
- 41 Alabama children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Alabama spent 1.9 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

### **Alabama ranked 31<sup>st</sup> out of 41 states in child and teen gun deaths.**

- A total of 51 children and teens were killed by guns in Alabama in 2013 – a rate of 4.1 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit [www.childrensdefense.org/cits](http://www.childrensdefense.org/cits)