



Children in the States

MONTANA

July 2015

Child Population

225,024 children lived in Montana in 2014; 21 percent were children of color.

- 79 percent were White
- 6 percent were Hispanic
- 1 percent were Black
- 1 percent were Asian
- 4 percent were two or more races
- 9 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

Child Poverty

More than 1 in 5 (21.3 percent) of Montana's children were poor in 2013, a total of 46,806 children.¹

- Montana ranked 26th in child poverty among states.²
- Nearly 1 in 11 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. Nearly 1 in 4 children under age 6 were poor; more than 2 in 5 of the poor children were extremely poor.

Children of color in Montana are disproportionately poor.

- More than 3 in 10 Hispanic children and nearly 1 in 2 American Indian/Alaska Native children were poor in 2013, compared to more than 1 in 6 White children.

Child Hunger and Homelessness

Child poverty in Montana leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.

- Nearly 2,600 Montana 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 Montana and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- More than 22 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. More than 29 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Montana ranked 28th of 50 states in child food security and 20th in percent of children overweight and obese.
- More than 23 percent of Montana children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- More than 81 percent of Montana children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Montana 16th of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

Child Health

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

- In 2013, 85.8 percent of eligible children participated in Montana Medicaid or Healthy Montana Kids, Montana's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 83,447 Montana children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Montana Medicaid, and 44,661 in Healthy Montana Kids.
- More than 22,000 Montana children ages 0-17 (10.1 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 6th highest rate of uninsured children among states.

¹ 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.

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

- In 2012, 20,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Montana Medicaid or Healthy Montana 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 \$8,858 – 42.6 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Montana.
- Montana did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 38 percent of Montana's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 35 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.

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

- In 2013, 65 percent of Montana's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 55 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
 - 77 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 66 percent could not compute.
- 86 percent of Montana public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Montana 12th among states. 65 percent of Black students and 96 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 87 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 7 percent of Montana public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Montana 8th among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 7 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

Children Facing Special Risks

Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In Montana, 1,414 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 6.3 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 2,239 Montana children in foster care.

Too many Montana children are involved in the juvenile justice system.

- 6,903 children were arrested in Montana in 2012 – a rate of 6,967 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 168 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 4 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 7 percent were Hispanic, and 61 percent were White.
- 1 Montana child was in an adult jail in 2013.
- Montana spent 4.2 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

Montana ranked 39th out of 41 ranked states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.

- A total of 14 children and teens were killed by guns in Montana in 2013 – a rate of 5.6 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit www.childrensdefense.org/cits