# Children in the States

# WYOMING

July 2015

## Child Population

**138,323 children lived in Wyoming in 2014; 22 percent were children of color.**

- 78 percent were White
- 14 percent were Hispanic
- 1 percent were Black
- 1 percent were Asian
- 3 percent were two or more races
- 3 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

## Child Poverty

**More than 1 in 8 (13.2 percent) of Wyoming's children were poor in 2013, a total of 18,187 children.[1]**

- Wyoming ranked 4th in child poverty among states.[2]
- More than 1 in 17 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. Nearly 1 in 6 children under age 6 were poor; more than 2 in 5 of the poor children were extremely poor.

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

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

## Child Hunger and Homelessness

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

- More than 1,000 Wyoming public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in Wyoming and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- Nearly 19 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. Nearly 27 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Wyoming ranked 7th of 50 states in child food security and 10th in percent of children overweight and obese.
- More than 13 percent of Wyoming children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 81 percent of Wyoming children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Wyoming 15th of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

## Child Health

**Although the majority of Wyoming'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 2013, 85.2 percent of eligible children participated in Medicaid or KidCare CHIP, Wyoming's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 58,644 Wyoming children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Medicaid, and 8,815 in KidCare CHIP.
- Nearly 8,000 Wyoming children ages 0-17 (5.7 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 23rd lowest 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 2011, fewer than 6,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Medicaid or KidCare CHIP 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 $9,233 – 109.7 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Wyoming.
- Wyoming did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 44 percent of Wyoming's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013.

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

- In 2013, 63 percent of Wyoming's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 52 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
  - 76 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 71 percent could not compute.
- 80 percent of Wyoming public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Wyoming 27th among states. 58 percent of Black students and 77 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 82 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 6 percent of Wyoming public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Wyoming 4th among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 12 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

## Children Facing Special Risks

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

- In Wyoming, 720 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 5.2 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 996 Wyoming children in foster care.

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

- 4,773 children were arrested in Wyoming in 2012– a rate of 8,165 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 249 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 5 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 12 percent were Hispanic, and 73 percent were White.
- No Wyoming children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Wyoming spent 3.2 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

### Fewer than 10 children and teens were killed by guns in Wyoming in 2013.

For sources please visit **www.childrensdefense.org/cits**