



Children in the States

LOUISIANA

September 2015

Child Population

1,113,493 children lived in Louisiana in 2014; 48 percent were children of color.

- 52 percent were White
- 6 percent were Hispanic
- 37 percent were Black
- 2 percent were Asian
- 3 percent were two or more races
- 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

Child Poverty

Nearly 3 in 10 (27.9 percent) of Louisiana's children were poor in 2014, a total of 306,198 children.¹

- Louisiana ranked 48th in child poverty among states.²
- Nearly 1 in 7 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. More than 3 in 10 children under age 6 were poor; more than half of the poor children were extremely poor.

Children of color in Louisiana are disproportionately poor.

- Nearly 1 in 2 Black children, nearly 1 in 3 Hispanic children, and more than 1 in 3 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2014, compared to more than 1 in 8 White children.

Child Hunger and Homelessness

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

- Nearly 20,476 Louisiana public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, more than 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in Louisiana and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- More than 24 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. Nearly 40 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Louisiana ranked 35th of 50 states in child food security and 50th in percent of children overweight and obese.
- 38 percent of Louisiana children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 88 percent of Louisiana children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Louisiana 32nd of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

Child Health

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

- In 2013, 92.3 percent of eligible children participated in Bayou Health or LaCHIP, Louisiana's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 670,729 Louisiana children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Bayou Health, and 149,968 in LaCHIP.
- More than 63,000 Louisiana 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 2012, 44,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Bayou Health or LaCHIP 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 \$5,655 – 13.6 percent less than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college.
- Louisiana did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 50 percent of Louisiana’s 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 45 percent of children from families with incomes below 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- Louisiana’s state-funded preschool programs met an average of 8 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

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

- In 2013, 77 percent of Louisiana’s fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 74 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
 - 89 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 87 percent could not compute.
 - 80 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 71 percent could not compute.
- 72 percent of Louisiana public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Louisiana 45th among states. 65 percent of Black students and 87 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 76 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 14 percent of Louisiana public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Louisiana 41st among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 20 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

Children Facing Special Risks

Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.

- In Louisiana, 10,119 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 9.1 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 3,994 Louisiana children in foster care.

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

- 957 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 73 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 1 percent were Hispanic, and 24 percent were White.
- 23 Louisiana children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Louisiana spent 2 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012

Louisiana ranked 40th out of 41 ranked states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.

- A total of 97 children and teens were killed by guns in Louisiana in 2013 – a rate of 7.9 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit www.childrensdefense.org/cits