

# Children in the States

## OKLAHOMA

September 2015



### Child Population

**952,699 children lived in Oklahoma in 2014; 45 percent were children of color.**

- 55 percent were White
- 15 percent were Hispanic
- 8 percent were Black
- 2 percent were Asian
- 9 percent were two or more races
- 10 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

### Child Poverty

**More than 1 in 5 (22.4 percent) of Oklahoma's children were poor in 2014, a total of 208,310 children.<sup>1</sup>**

- Oklahoma ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> in child poverty among states.<sup>2</sup>
- More than 1 in 10 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. More than 1 in 4 children under age 6 were poor; half of the poor children were extremely poor.

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

- More than 2 in 5 Black children, more than 1 in 3 Hispanic children, and nearly 1 in 4 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2014, compared to nearly 1 in 6 White children.

### Child Hunger and Homelessness

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

- Nearly 23,000 Oklahoma 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 Oklahoma and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- 26 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. Nearly 34 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Oklahoma ranked 40<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in child food security and 39<sup>th</sup> in percent of children overweight and obese.
- Nearly 29 percent of Oklahoma children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- More than 93 percent of Oklahoma children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Oklahoma 50<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

### Child Health

**Although the majority of Oklahoma'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, 85.6 percent of eligible children participated in SoonerCare, Oklahoma's expanded Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 558,262 Oklahoma children ages 0-18 were enrolled in SoonerCare due to Medicaid funding, and an additional 147,911 thanks to CHIP funding.

<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.

- More than 95,000 Oklahoma children ages 0-17 (10.0 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 7<sup>th</sup> highest rate of uninsured children among states.
- In 2012, 62,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for SoonerCare 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 \$7,741 – 17.6 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Oklahoma.
- Oklahoma did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 41 percent of Oklahoma’s 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 37 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- Oklahoma’s state-funded preschool program met 8 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

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

- In 2013, 70 percent of Oklahoma’s fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 64 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
  - 86 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 86 percent could not compute.
  - 83 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 79 percent could not compute.
- 79 percent of Oklahoma public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Oklahoma 30<sup>th</sup> among states. 66 percent of Black students and 78 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, 10 percent of Oklahoma public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Oklahoma 29<sup>th</sup> among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 22 percent and 15 percent, respectively.

## **Children Facing Special Risks**

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

- In Oklahoma, 11,575 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 12.2 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 10,620 Oklahoma children in foster care.

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

- 15,599 children were arrested in Oklahoma in 2012 – a rate of 3,801 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 576 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 39 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 9 percent were Hispanic, and 38 percent were White.
- 4 Oklahoma children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Oklahoma spent 2.3 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

### **Oklahoma ranked 30<sup>th</sup> out of 41 ranked states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.**

- A total of 43 children and teens were killed by guns in Oklahoma 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)