



March 28, 2014

The State of Black Children in America: A Portrait of Continuing Inequality

Of the 73.7 million children in the United States in 2012, 10.2 million —14 percent — were Black, while 38.9 million — 53 percent — were White and 17.6 million — 24 percent — were Hispanic. The number of Black children has been holding steady over the last decade at 10 to 11 million.

Black children are the poorest children in America.

- A Black baby is born into poverty every two-and-a-half minutes and into extreme poverty every four-and-a-half minutes.¹
- Each day in America, 597 Black babies are born into poverty, 310 into extreme poverty.
- Over 4 million Black children were poor in 2012 (40 percent), compared to 5.2 million White children (14 percent).
- Black children are more than three times as likely to be poor as White children.
- Twenty-five percent of poor children are Black although Black children are only 14 percent of the child population.
- Black households with children were twice as likely as White households to have food insecure children (15.0 percent vs. 7.4 percent).
- In six states half or more Black children are poor. Nearly half the states have Black child poverty rates of 40 percent or more.

Black households own and earn less.

- The average wealth of Black households in 2011 was 94 percent less than the average wealth of White households: \$6,314 compared to \$110,500.
- Black families' median annual income in 2012 was \$35,665, less than half of White families' median income (\$75,448). Among married-couple families, the median income for Black families was 24 percent less than for White families (\$69,725 vs. \$91,362).

Black children are less likely to live in two-parent families.

- A Black baby is born to an unmarried mother every 75 seconds and to a teen mother every 7 minutes. Black children living with single mothers are three-and-a-half times as likely to be poor as Black children living with married parents.
- Each day, 1,153 Black babies are born to unmarried mothers and 199 to teen mothers.
- Just under 40 percent of Black children live with two parents, compared to 65 percent of White children and 85 percent of Asian children.
- Black children are twice as likely as White children to live with neither parent.

Black children suffer worse health outcomes.

- Each day, 19 Black babies die before their first birthday, a total of 6,973 babies a year. Black babies are more than twice as likely as White babies to die before their first birthdays.
- A Black baby is born at a low birthweight every 7 minutes.

¹ Poverty is defined as living on less than \$23,492 a year, \$1,958 a month, \$452 a week, or \$64 a day for a family of four. Extreme poverty is living on less than half the poverty level: less than \$11,746 per year or \$32 a day for a family of four.

- Black children are twice as likely to die before their 18th birthday as White children.
- Black children ages 10-17 are nearly twice as likely to be obese as White children.
- Over 1 million Black children (9.5 percent) are uninsured. Black children are 40 percent more likely to be uninsured than White children.

Black students fall behind early on and do not catch up. Without an education children are dead on arrival in America's economy.

- Black children arrive in kindergarten with lower levels of school readiness than White children.
- Black children are 18 percent of preschool enrollment but 48 percent of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension.
- More than 80 percent of fourth and eighth grade Black public school students cannot read or compute at grade level compared to less than 57 percent of White students.
- Only two-thirds of Black public school students graduated from high school in four years in the 2009-2010 school year, compared to 83 percent of White students and 94 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander students.
- Each school day, 763 Black high school students drop out. Black students are more than twice as likely to drop out as White students.
- Black students scored the lowest of any racial/ethnic group on the ACT[®] college entrance exam. Only 5 percent of Black students were college ready according to the ACT[®], compared to 33 percent of White students and 43 percent of Asian students.

Black children are overrepresented in maltreatment cases and foster care.

- A Black child is confirmed abused or neglected every three-and-a-half minutes. Every day a Black child is killed by abuse or neglect.
- Black children have the highest rates of maltreatment of any racial/ethnic group: 14.2 Black children maltreated per 1,000 Black children, compared to 8 per 1,000 White children and 1.7 per 1,000 Asian children.
- Black children are 14 percent of the child population but 26 percent of children in foster care.

Black children are at greatest risk of being funneled into the prison pipeline.

- Black students made up only 18 percent of students in public schools in 2009-2010 but were 40 percent of students who received one or more out-of-school suspensions.
- A Black public school student is suspended every 4 seconds during the school day.²
- A Black child is arrested every 68 seconds. Black children are more than twice as likely to be arrested as White children.
- Black children and youth make up 32 percent of children arrested and 40 percent of all children and youth in residential placement in the juvenile justice system.

Black children and teens are at highest risk of gun violence.

- Gun violence is the leading cause of death among Black children ages 1-19.
- Each day, three Black children or teens are killed by guns. Black children and teens are nearly five times more likely to die from a gun than White children and teens.
- The number of Black children and teens killed by guns between 1963 and 2010 is 17 times greater than the recorded lynchings of Black people of all ages from 1882 to 1968.

For sources and additional data please refer to *The State of America's Children 2014* available at www.childrensdefense.org/SOAC.

² Based on 180 school days a year.