

# Cradle to Prison Pipeline Louisiana



Children's Defense Fund

2007

## Poverty

**Poverty is the largest driving force of the Cradle to Prison Pipeline crisis.**

- In Louisiana, among all children, **2 in 7** (28.4 percent or 319,095) **were poor**.
  - For **Black** children **1 in 2** (49.5 percent or 223,596) was poor.
  - For **Latino** children **1 in 5** (20.6 percent or 6,672) was poor.
  - For **White**, non-Latino children **1 in 8** (12.9 percent or 77,620) was poor.
  - For **American Indian/Alaska Native** children **2 in 7** (28.2 percent or 1,664) were poor.
  - For **Asian** children **1 in 5** (19.5 percent or 2,539) was poor.
- In Louisiana, a **baby is born poor every 27 minutes**.
  - A **Black** baby is born poor every **39 minutes**.
  - A **Latino** baby is born poor every **16 hours**.
  - A **White**, non-Latino baby is born poor every **2 hours**.
  - An **American Indian/Alaska Native** baby is born poor every **2 days**.
  - An **Asian** baby is born poor every **4 days**.

## Health Care

**Disadvantages in health care increase the risk that poor children and particularly poor children of color will be trapped in the pipeline.**

- In 2005, an estimated **128,000 children (10.5%)** were **uninsured** in Louisiana.
- In 2004, **7,139 babies (10.9%)** were born at **low birthweight** in Louisiana. This included:
  - 15.2% of Black, non-Latino babies;
  - 7.7% of Latino babies; and,
  - 8.0% of White, non-Latino babies.
- **25.9%** of two-year-olds in Louisiana **did not receive** all recommended **immunizations** in 2005.

## Early Childhood

**Children who do not participate in high-quality early education have higher rates of juvenile delinquency, arrests, and juvenile court petitions.**

- In the 2004-2005 school year, **17.1% of 3-year-olds** and **42.9% of 4-year-olds** were enrolled in **state-funded preschool programs** in Louisiana.
- In 2005, **21,982 children** were enrolled in **Head Start and Early Head Start** in Louisiana. Of these:
  - 80.5% were Black, non-Latino;
  - 5.5% were Latino; and,
  - 14.6% were White, non-Latino.

## Child Welfare

**Children in foster care or with a history of abuse and neglect are at higher risk of being trapped in the pipeline.**

- In 2003, there were **4,541 children in foster care** in Louisiana.

- In 2004, there were **10,862 victims of child maltreatment** in Louisiana.

### **Education**

**Educational disadvantages make it more likely that children will enter the juvenile justice system.**

- In 2005, a **disproportionate number** of Black and Latino **fourth graders could not read at grade level**. In Louisiana:
  - 91% of Black, non-Latino and
  - 68% of White, non-Latino fourth graders could not read at grade level.
- **Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely than their peers to drop out of school altogether**. In Louisiana:
  - For every 100 Black students enrolled, there were 15.5 suspensions.
  - For every 100 Latino students enrolled, there were 5.7 suspensions.
  - For every 100 White students enrolled, there were 7.2 suspensions.
  - For every 100 American Indian/Alaska Native students enrolled, there were 7.9 suspensions.
  - For every 100 Asian students enrolled, there were 4.4 suspensions.
- In Louisiana, the **school districts with the highest rates of suspension for Blacks** are:
  - Allen Parish School Board (36 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled);
  - Avoyelles Parish School Board (32 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled); and,
  - Saint Bernard Parish School Board (31 suspensions of Black students for every 100 enrolled).
- In Louisiana, **11.7% of youth ages 16 to 19 were neither enrolled in school nor high school graduates**.

### **Juvenile Justice System and Incarceration**

**Children of color are disproportionately represented in both the juvenile and criminal justice systems.**

- In Louisiana, there were **23,806 juvenile arrests** in 2005.
- Of the estimated **1,821 youth in residential placement in Louisiana** in 2003:
  - 1,260 (69.2%) were Black, non-Latino and
  - 522 (28.7%) were White, non-Latino.
- There were **632 youth under age 18 incarcerated in adult correctional facilities** in Louisiana.
- Louisiana spends **1.4 times as much per prisoner as per public school pupil**.

### **Community Violence**

**Between 1979 and 2004, gunfire killed 101,413 children and teens in America, destroying countless families and communities.**

- In 2004, **88 children and teenagers** in Louisiana **died of firearm injuries**, including: **54 homicides**, 25 suicides, and 9 unintentional and undetermined shootings.