The State of America’s Children® in
TENNESSEE
2020 Factsheet

Child Population
- 35 percent were children of color: 19 percent were Black; 10 percent were Hispanic; 2 percent were Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; and <1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native.

Child Poverty
- 22 percent of Tennessee’s children were poor in 2018—a total of 330,998 children—and children of color were disproportionately poor.
- 40 percent of Black, 31 percent of Hispanic and 15 percent of white children were poor.
- 10 percent of children were extremely poor (their family had income below half the poverty level).
- 26 percent of children under 6 were poor.

Income and Wealth Inequality
- $68,500 was the median income for white families with children compared with $35,200 for Black and $35,300 for Hispanic families in 2017.

Housing and Homelessness
- 16,851 homeless children were enrolled in public schools during 2016-2017.
- 2.3 full-time jobs at minimum wage were needed for a family to afford a two-bedroom rental unit at fair market rent in FY2019.

Child Hunger and Nutrition
- 38 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2017.
- 28 percent of children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in FY2018.
- 87 percent of children receiving free or reduced-price lunch during the 2017-2018 school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2018.

Child Health
- 82,924 children ages 0-18 (5 percent) were uninsured in 2018.
- 787,826 children ages 0-18 were enrolled in TennCare (Medicaid) and CoverKids (Children’s Health Insurance Program) in 2018.

Early Childhood
- $9,017 was the average annual cost for an infant in center-based child care in 2018.
- 22 percent of 4-year-olds were enrolled in state-funded preschool during 2017-2018.

Education
- 82 percent of Black, 79 percent of Hispanic and 57 percent of white 4th grade public school students were not proficient in reading in 2019.
- 85 percent of Black, 78 percent of Hispanic and 63 percent of white 8th grade public school students were not proficient in reading in 2019.
- 84 percent of Black, 84 percent of Hispanic and 93 percent of white students graduated high school on time during 2016-2017.
- 17 percent of Black, 4 percent of Hispanic and 4 percent of white public school students had at least one out-of-school suspension in 2013-2014.

Child Welfare
- 9,186 children were abused or neglected in 2018.
- 8,929 children were in foster care on the last day of FY2018.

Youth Justice
- 537 children were in residential placement in 2017. 53 percent were Black; 8 percent were Hispanic; and 36 percent were white.
- 7 children were in adult prisons in 2017.

Gun Violence
- 129 children and teens were killed with guns in 2017.

Note: All numbers in this factsheet are included in the Children’s Defense Fund’s The State of America’s Children® 2020 report, and most have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Facts for states and the District of Columbia were omitted when data were not available. Citations for all data may be found in The State of America’s Children® 2020.