

The State of America's Children® in ARKANSAS

2021 Factsheet



Child Population

- **700,155** children lived in Arkansas in 2019.
- **37 percent** were children of color: 18 percent were Black; 13 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 Arkansas's children were poor in 2019—a total of **151,448** children—and children of color were disproportionately poor.
- **39 percent** of Black, **27 percent** of Hispanic and **16 percent** of white children were poor.
- **9 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

- **\$69,600** was the median income for white families with children compared with **\$28,800** for Black and **\$42,200** for Hispanic families in 2019.

Housing and Homelessness

- **14,052** unhoused children were enrolled in public schools during 2017-2018.
- **1.4 full-time jobs** at minimum wage were needed for a family to afford a two-bedroom rental unit at fair market rent in FY2020.

Child Hunger and Nutrition

- **23 percent** of children lived in food-insecure households in 2018.
- **25 percent** of children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in FY2018.
- **90 percent** of children receiving free or reduced-price lunch during the 2018-2019 school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2019.

Child Health

- **43,395** children ages 0-18 (**6 percent**) were uninsured in 2019.
- **433,540** children ages 0-18 were enrolled in ARKids First (Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs) in 2019.

Early Childhood

- **\$7,540** was the average annual cost for an infant in center-based child care in 2019.
- **32 percent** of 4-year-olds were enrolled in state-funded preschool during 2018-2019.

Education

- **85 percent** of Black, **73 percent** of Hispanic and **63 percent** of white 4th grade public school students were not proficient in reading in 2019.
- **89 percent** of Black, **71 percent** of Hispanic and **65 percent** of white 8th grade public school students were not proficient in reading in 2019.
- **86 percent** of Black, **86 percent** of Hispanic and **91 percent** of white students graduated high school on time during 2017-2018.
- **16 percent** of Black, **4 percent** of Hispanic and **4 percent** of white public secondary students had at least one out-of-school suspension in 2015-2016.

Child Welfare

- **8,422** children were abused or neglected in 2019.
- **4,127** children were in foster care on the last day of FY2019.

Youth Justice

- **585** children were in residential placement in 2017. **42 percent** were Black; **14 percent** were Hispanic; and **40 percent** were white.
- **8** children were in adult jails or prisons in 2019.

Gun Violence

- **50** children and teens were killed with guns in 2019.

Note: All numbers in this factsheet are included in the Children's Defense Fund's *The State of America's Children® 2021* 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® 2021*.