

THE NATION'S CHILDREN 2015

America's Children: A Snapshot

Child population under 18, 2013 ¹	73,586,612
White children (not Hispanic) under 18, 2013 ²	52.2%
Non-white children under 18, 2013 ³	47.8%
Young Children (under 6), 2013 ⁴	32.6%
Children (6–11), 2013 ⁵	33.6%
Youth (12–17), 2013 ⁶	33.8%

America's Most Vulnerable Children: A Snapshot

Estimate of referrals of possible child abuse and neglect, 2013 ⁷	3,504,000
Children substantiated/indicated as abused or neglected, 2013 ⁸	677,997
Estimated children who died as a result of abuse or neglect, 2013 ⁹	1,484
Children living in out-of-home care, 2013 ¹⁰	402,378
Children adopted from the public foster care system, 2013 ¹¹	50,608
Children waiting to be adopted, 2013 ¹²	101,840
Children living in poverty, 2013 ¹³	16,086,960
Children living in low-income families (200% of poverty), 2013 ¹⁴	30,674,476
National Poverty Rate, 2013 ¹⁵	15.8%
National Poverty Rate for children under 18, 2013 ¹⁶	22.2%
National Poverty Rate for children under age 6, 2013 ¹⁷	11.9%

Child Abuse and Neglect

- In 2013, approximately 3.5 million allegations of child abuse and neglect, representing 6.4 million children, were made to child protective services agencies. Of those, 1,837,326 reports were referred for investigation, as reported by 47 states.¹⁸
- During 2013, an estimated 678,932 children in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico were determined to be victims of abuse or neglect. Of these children, 79.5% were neglected, 18% were physically abused, and 9% were sexually abused.¹⁹
- Of the substantiations of child abuse and neglect in 2013, 63.8% received follow-up services. That service was foster care 36.4% of the time. Of the non-substantiated reports, 32.6% received follow-up services.²⁰



- In 2013, 402,378 children lived apart from their families in out-of-home care. Of the 396,892 children living apart from their families in 2012, 38% were age 5 or younger, 43% were ages 6 through 15, and 19% were 16 or older.²¹
- Of the children living in out-of-home care in 2013, 46.6% were white, 21.3% were black, 21.1% were Hispanic, 1.6% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 9.4% were children of other races and ethnicities.²²

Permanent Families for Children

- Of the 240,940 children exiting out-of-home care in the United States in 2012, 122,193 were reunited with their parents or other family members. In addition, 16,418 children exited out-of-home care to guardianship.²³
- In 2013, approximately 50,608 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency, a 2.8% decrease from 52,042 in 2012.²⁴
- Of the 402,378 children in out-of-home care in 2013, 101,840 children were waiting to be adopted.²⁵

Kinship Support

- In 2013, 2,681,518 grandparents were responsible for his or her grandchildren.²⁶
- Of the 396,892 children in out-of-home care in 2012, 108,822 were living with relatives while in care.²⁷
- In 2013, almost 7.5 million children under age 18 lived in homes with a householder who was their grandparents or other relative. Of these, more than 5.7 million lived with grandparents who were the householders.²⁸

Child Poverty and Income Support

- The percentage of children under 18 living in poverty is 22.2%, which has remained statistically the same since 2011. This leveling follows a steady increase from 18.0% in 2007.²⁹
- The total number of children receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in the United States decreased from 2,885,147 in 2013 to 2,680,508 in 2014. The number of families receiving TANF in 2014 was down to 1,520,232 from 1,640,654 in 2013.³⁰
- In 2014, approximately \$6.3 billion was spent on the Women, Infant, and Child (WIC) Nutrition Program, serving 8.3 million participants, a decrease from 8.66 million participants in 2013.³¹



- In 2013, over \$28 billion in child support funds was collected and distributed in the United States, up 1% compared to the \$27.7 billion in 2012 and following a steady increase since 2009.³²

Child Care and Head Start

- In 2013, an estimated monthly average of 1,455,100 of the nation's children received subsidized child care. This compares to 1,502,600 children served in 2012, 1,623,700 children served in 2011, and 1,697,300 children served in 2010.³³
- In 2013, Head Start served 903,679 children.³⁴
- In FY 2014, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) was funded at \$5.277 billion, and the amount of TANF funds used for child care in FY 2014 was \$2.523 billion, for a total of \$7.8 billion. Even after adjustment for inflation, the amount of TANF and CCDBG funds used for child care in FY 2014 was slightly higher than funding in FY 2013, \$7.741 billion in FY 2014 dollars, but was still below its high of \$10.925 billion in FY 2014 dollars for FY 2001 funding.³⁵
- In 38 states the income eligibility limit for obtaining child care assistance remained below 200% of poverty (poverty level in 2014 is \$19,790 a year for a family of 3). In the majority of communities across the country, a family needs an income equal to at least 200% of poverty to meet basic needs, including housing, food, child care, transportation, health care, and other necessities.³⁶
- In 2014, 18 states had waiting lists or frozen intake for child care assistance, lower than 19 states in 2013 and 21 states in 2001.³⁷
- In 2014, only one state paid child care providers at the 75th percentile of current market rates, slightly lower than the three states in 2013, and a sharp decline from 22 states paying at the 75th percentile of market rates in 2001.³⁸

Health

Pregnancy and Parenting

- In 2013, the birth rate among females age 15 to 19 was 26.5 births per 1,000 females, the lowest level ever reported in the United States.³⁹
- Teen girls in foster care are twice as likely as their peers not in foster care to get pregnant by age 19.⁴⁰



- Children born to teen mothers are at increased risk of ending up in foster care and child protective services. It is estimated that teen childbearing costs taxpayers \$9.4 billion annually, including \$3.1 billion in child welfare costs.⁴¹

Newborn Health and Infant Mortality

- Nationally, low-birth-weight babies represented 8% of all live births in 2013, the same rate as 2012 but lower than a four-decade high of 8.3% in 2006.⁴²
- The infant mortality rate for 2013 was 5.96 deaths per 1,000 live births, down from 5.98 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2012.⁴³

HIV/AIDS

- In 2012, 2,451 children aged 19 or younger were reported as having AIDS.⁴⁴
- In 2012, an estimated 9,448 persons 19 or younger were diagnosed with the HIV infection.⁴⁵

Child and Youth Mental Health

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among those 15–24 years old, accounting for 20% of deaths annually for this age group. Among American Indian/Alaskan Natives aged 15–34, the suicide rate is 2.5 times higher than the national average for that age group.⁴⁶
- Mental health disorders are chronic diseases among youth; half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and 75% have begun by age 24.⁴⁷
- The average age of onset was 6 for anxiety disorders, 11 for behavior disorders, 13 for mood disorders, and 15 for substance use disorders.⁴⁸
- In 2013, 3.3 million youth aged 12–17 (13.6%) received treatment or counseling for problems with emotions or behavior in a specialty mental health setting (inpatient or outpatient care). The most common reason for receiving services among youth was feeling depressed (50.2%).⁴⁹
- 20% of children have been diagnosed with a DSM-IV disorder and only 30% of diagnosed children receive psychiatric services.⁵⁰

Foster Care and Mental Health

- A 2007 study of youth in care (age 14–17) found that rates of nine lifetime mental health disorders were notably higher among youth in care than among youth in the general population, including:



- Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): 15.1% vs. 4.5%
 - Conduct disorder: 20.7% vs. 7.0%
 - Major depressive disorder: 19% vs. 11.9%
 - Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): 13.4% vs. 5.2%⁵¹
- A 2006 literature review by Casey Family Programs reveals that between one-half and three-fourths of the children entering foster care exhibit behavior or social competency problems that warrant mental health care.⁵²
 - A majority of youth in foster care (85%) are estimated to have an emotional disorder and/or a substance abuse problem,⁵³ and 30% have severe behavioral, emotional, or developmental problems.⁵⁴
 - A Northwest Alumni Foster Care Study revealed that among surveyed adults who had been placed in foster care as children, more than half (54.4%) had experienced clinical levels of at least one mental health problem in the last 12 months. One quarter (25%) suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the past 12 months—a rate nearly double that of U.S. war veterans.⁵⁵
 - In the child welfare system, an estimated 70-85% of children in need of mental health services do not receive such services, with children under 3 even less likely than older children.⁵⁶

Foster Care and Medicaid

- Children in foster care represent 3.7% of the nondisabled children enrolled in Medicaid but account for 12.3% of total Medicaid expenditures.⁵⁷
- In SFY 2012, state child welfare agencies spent approximately \$1 billion in Medicaid dollars on Medicaid TCM, rehabilitative services, and medically-necessary services for children treatment foster homes.⁵⁸
- Children in foster care have underlying needs that many non-foster children covered by Medicaid may not require addressing. Out of all of the children enrolled in Medicaid, children in foster care represent 53% of all psychological visits, 47% of psychiatry visits, 43% of public hospital inpatient hospitalizations, and 27% of all psychiatric inpatient hospitalizations. Medicaid mental health-related expenditures for children in foster care are almost 12 times the costs for non-foster children.⁵⁹
- Due to disproportionate needs, children in foster care account for 25-41% of state Medicaid expenditures, 15% of utilization of behavioral health services, and 13% of children in Medicaid receiving psychotropic medications. Children in foster



care are four times more likely to receive this medication in comparison to other children in Medicaid.⁶⁰

Substance Abuse and Child Welfare

- In 2013, 21.6 million people age 12 or older were classified with substance dependence or abuse. The rate of substance dependence or abuse among youth age 12–17 was 5.2%.⁶¹
- In 2013, 17.3 million people age 12 or older were classified with alcohol dependence or abuse. The rate of alcohol dependence among youth age 12–17 was 2.8%.⁶²
- In 2013, 22.7 million people age 12 or older (8.6% of the population) received treatment for a problem related to the use of alcohol or illicit drugs. Of the 1.3 million youth aged 12–17 who needed treatment for illicit drug or alcohol use problems, 122,000 received treatment at a specialty facility, leaving nearly 1.2 million that did not receive treatment at a specialty facility.⁶³
- Data shows that children of parents with substance abuse disorders are nearly three times more likely to be abused and more than four times more likely to be neglected than children of parents who do not abuse substances.⁶⁴
- The National Survey for Child and Adolescent Wellbeing estimates that 61% of infants and 41% of older children in out of home care are from families with active substance abuse.⁶⁵

Vulnerable Youth

- In FY 2013, 23,346 children left out-of-home care without a permanent family, nearly the same as 23,395 in 2012.⁶⁶
- A 2013 National School Climate Survey found 74.1% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students reported being verbally harassed, 36.2% reported being physically harassed and 16.5% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation. Over half (55.5%) of the students reported that they felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation, and more than a third (37.8%) felt unsafe because of their gender expression.⁶⁷
- In 2013, there were about 730,000 teens between the ages of 16 and 19 who were not in school and had not graduated from high school. There were 1,347,000



million teens between the ages of 16 and 19 who were not enrolled in school and were not working.⁶⁸

- In 2013, 24% of children aged 0–17 had at least one foreign-born parent, up from 15% in 1994. Children who have difficulty speaking English may face greater challenges progressing in school and in the labor market. In 2012, 22.3% of children under the age of 17 spoke a language other than English at home.⁶⁹

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

- In 2013, U.S. law enforcement agencies arrested an estimated 702,779 persons younger than age 18, a 15.5% decrease from 2012.⁷⁰
- In 2010, there were 1.4 million delinquency cases, down 27% since their 1997 peak. Youth under 16 made up 52% of these cases.⁷¹
- In 2010, probation remained the most likely disposition for juvenile offenders. With 61% of offenders being placed on probation compared to 26% placed in residential placement.⁷²

Funding Child Welfare Services

- In FY 2013, the federal government had a total budget of \$3.5 trillion, spending on children totaled 10.2% of the budget or \$464 billion. This is a slight increase from \$460 billion in 2012.⁷³
- Federal spending on children fell from 2.9% in FY 2012 to 2.8% of GDP in FY 2013. Spending on children in FY 2013 continued to be lower than during the recession.⁷⁴
- The ten programs that spent the most on children in the FY 2013 federal budget were Medicaid (\$72 billion), Earned Income Tax Credit (\$55 billion), Child Tax Credit (\$53 billion), Dependency Exemption (\$37 billion), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (\$37 billion), Exclusion for employer-sponsored health insurance (\$33 billion), Social Security (\$21 billion), Child Nutrition (\$19 billion), Title I/Education for the Disadvantaged (\$17 billion), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families–TANF (\$13 billion).⁷⁵
- According to the President’s proposed budget for FY 2016, 168,900 children are projected to receive Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.⁷⁶
- In FY 2012, of the \$12.7 billion federal dollars spent for child welfare, 51% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 5% was from Title IV-B



Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 8% was from Medicaid, 12% was from the Social Services Block Grant, 22% was from TANF, and 3% was from other federal sources, including SSI and Survivors Benefits.⁷⁷

Child Welfare Workforce

- While CWLA standards suggest a caseload ratio of 12 to 15 per caseworker, the actual average caseload for a child protective service worker is 24.⁷⁸
- According to the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being II baseline report, 75% of caseworkers earned an annual salary between \$30,000 and \$49,999. Approximately 20% of caseworkers had salaries over \$50,000.⁷⁹
- The majority of caseworkers hold a bachelor's degree (52.3%) or a bachelor of social work degree (21.9%). Only 25% of caseworkers hold a master's degree.⁸⁰
- Child welfare workforce turnover rates are estimated to be between 23% and 60% annually across private and public child welfare agencies.⁸¹
- Vacancy rates for the child welfare workforce are nearly 10%, and it takes seven to 13 weeks to fill vacant positions.⁸²

¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2015). *ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2013 American Community Survey 1-year estimates*. Retrieved on April 9, 2015 from <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Note: Percentage is a CWLA calculation.

⁵ Ibid.

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⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2014). *FY 2004 – FY 2013 Foster Care: Entries, Exits, and in Care on the Last Day of Each Federal Fiscal Year: Numbers of Children In Foster Care on September 30th, by State FY 2004–FY 2013*. Retrieved February 20, 2015. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/children_in_care_2013.pdf.

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Note: Some percentages are a CWLA calculation.
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