Child Maltreatment

In 2020, Colorado had 98,073 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 33,453 were referred for investigation.¹

There were 11,615 child victims of abuse or neglect in Colorado in 2020, at a rate of 9.3 children per 1,000. This translates to an 5.2% decrease since 2016.²

Of the 11,615 children, 8,225 were first time victims.³

The largest age group of victims was children under one, representing 1,755 of the 11,615 cases.⁴

- 73% of child maltreatment perpetrators in 2020 were parents of the child. 27% were non-parents or had an unknown relationship.⁵

- 53% of Colorado’s child victims in 2020 were female while 47% were male.⁶

Plans of Safe Care

- In 2020, Colorado reported 27 infants who were screened-in with prenatal substance abuse exposure.⁷

- Colorado reported 2 plans of safe care for screened-in infants.⁸

Types of Maltreatment Victims, 2020

- Medical Neglect
- Neglect
- Other
- Physical Abuse
- Psychological Maltreatment
- Sexual Abuse
- Sex Trafficking
- Unknown

Child Victims by Race or Ethnicity, 2020

- African American
- Hispanic
- Multiple Race
- White
- Unknown
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Pacific Islander
- Asian
Child fatalities decrease in 2020 from 25 in 2019 to 24 in 2020.xi

Colorado did not report any numbers regarding child victims of sex trafficking.xii

2,240 victims received post-response services while 876 non-victims received post-response services as well.xiii

Foster Care and Adoptions

- 8,740 total children were served by the foster care system in FY 2020.
- 4,804 were in care on the day of September 30th, 2020.
- 3,554 children entered care during the 2020 FY while 3,936 exited during the same year.
- 832 of Colorado’s children were adopted while 921 were waiting to be adopted.xv

There was a 10% decrease in the number of children in care between 2019 and 2020. Adoptions from the system also decreased 9.5% from 2019.xvi

223 children in Colorado aged out and exited foster care in 2019. This is an increase from 225 in 2018 and represents an 0.9% decrease.xvii

- Children in foster care in 2020 spent an average of 17.5 months in care.xviii
- The average length of stay in Colorado for children waiting to be adopted from foster care is 33.6 months.xix
- The average age of children waiting to be adopted in 2020 was 7.7 years old.xx
- The average age of adopted children was 5.3 years old.xx
Data from 2019 shows that 2,475 children in foster care within Colorado were living with non-relatives while 1,394 stayed with a relative.

1,174 children were staying in group homes while 65 children were classified as runaways.xxii

3% of households in Colorado in 2020 had a grandparent living with a grandchild.xxiii

The average length of time a child in care spent living with their current relative foster family was 8.5 months.xxiv

Child Poverty
Colorado had 280,000 children in 2020 who lived with parents who lacked secure employment, representing 22% of all children.xxv

30% of Colorado’s children lived in households with a high housing cost burden.xxvi

The average number of individuals receiving TANF fell from 30,798 in 2020 to 28,433 in 2021. This represents a 7.7% decrease.xxvii xxviii

The state spent $28,799,040 on WIC in 2021, serving 78,695 people. This represents a 1.3% decrease in total participants and a 8.7% decrease in spending. xxix

566,440 people in Colorado were food insecure in 2019, including 147,120 children who struggled with hunger.xxx

42.8% of households receiving SNAP benefits in Colorado in 2019 had children.xxxi
Health

Colorado had 5,911 low birth-weight babies born in 2019 which is constituted as babies weighing less than 5.5 pounds. This translates to 9.4% of infants born in Colorado in 2019.  

Colorado had a total of 6,004 preterm births in 2019, meaning less than 37 completed weeks of gestation. 8.9% of all white babies were born premature while 12.2% of black babies arrived prematurely in 2018. The total premature birth rate was 9.6%.  

There were 2,471 births to mothers aged 15-19 in Colorado in 2019, representing a rate of 14 in every 1,000 teen girls.  

306 infants under 1 died in Colorado in 2019, representing an infant mortality rate of 4.9 per 1,000.

Public Health Insurance Coverage for Children, 2020

8% of Colorado’s children had no health insurance in 2019. Colorado is a Medicaid expansion state.  

468,318 children in Colorado were enrolled in Medicaid in 2020. This represents 2.8% decrease from 2019.  

164,505 children in Colorado were in the state Children Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2020. This represents an 5.6% increase from 2019.
Juvenile Justice System
- There were 16,885 total arrests for children under 18 in Colorado in 2019.
- 1,565 of these arrests were for Disorderly Conduct.
- 3,062 arrests were made for Property Crimes.
- 1,920 were arrested under the charge of Drug Abuse Violations.xi
- 753 children lived in juvenile correction facilities in Colorado in 2019. This is a decrease from 993 kids in 2017, representing a 24.2% decline.xi

Teens & Youth
- 15,000 (5%) of Colorado’s youth were both not in school and not working in 2021.xlii
- In 2020, there were 18 reports of children in Colorado aged 10-14 committing suicide, and 197 reports of suicide among children aged 15-24.xliii
- 82 children under age 19 were killed by a firearm in Colorado in 2020.xliv

Child Welfare Services Funding
- Colorado spent $390,495,868 on child welfare services in 2018. Child welfare services are all of the direct and administrative services that state agencies provide to children and families.
- $150,996,558 were allocated from the federal government and $233,158,552 came from state and local funds.xlv

The breakdown of the $150,996,558 in federal funding received in Colorado in 2018: xlvii
- $29,397,951 as part of the Title IV-E Foster Care Program.
- $16,958,469 as part of the Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program.xlvii
- Colorado’s sum of expenditures for Social Service Block Grants in 2020 was $28,147,528.xlviii


xx Based on Calculations from the CWLA

xviii I. Based on Calculations from the CWLA

xix I. Based on Calculations from the CWLA


xviii Ibid.
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**xxxi** Ibid.


**xxxix** Ibid


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