



# Children in the States

## SOUTH CAROLINA

September 2015

### Child Population

**1,084,748 children lived in South Carolina in 2014; 45 percent were children of color.**

- 55 percent were White
- 9 percent were Hispanic
- 31 percent were Black
- 1 percent were Asian
- 4 percent were two or more races
- <1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

### Child Poverty

**More than 1 in 4 (27.1 percent) of South Carolina's children were poor in 2014, a total of 288,564 children.<sup>1</sup>**

- South Carolina ranked 46<sup>th</sup> in child poverty among states.<sup>2</sup>
- Nearly 1 in 7 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. Nearly 3 in 10 children under age 6 were poor; more than half of the poor children were extremely poor.

**Children of color in South Carolina are disproportionately poor.**

- More than 2 in 5 Black children, more than 2 in 5 Hispanic children, and more than 2 in 5 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2014, compared to more than 1 in 7 White children.

### Child Hunger and Homelessness

**Child poverty in South Carolina leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.**

- More than 11,000 South Carolina public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in South Carolina and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- More than 25 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. More than 39 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. South Carolina ranked 37<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in child food security and 48<sup>th</sup> in percent of children overweight and obese.
- Nearly 36 percent of South Carolina children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 80 percent of South Carolina children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking South Carolina 9<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

### Child Health

**Although the majority of South Carolina's children have access to health coverage, that does not guarantee enrollment in coverage or access to care, which can jeopardize their education and their future.**

- In 2013, 89.8 percent of eligible children participated in Healthy Connections or Healthy Connections Kids, South Carolina's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 582,293 South

<sup>1</sup> A family of four was poor if it was living on less than \$23,834 a year, \$1,986 a month, \$458 a week and \$65 a day, and extremely poor if living on less than \$11,917 a year, \$993 a month, \$229 a week and \$33 a day.

<sup>2</sup> The state ranked 1<sup>st</sup> is the best for children for that outcome and the state ranked 50<sup>th</sup> is the worst for children.

Carolina children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Healthy Connections, and an additional 76,191 in Healthy Connections Kids.

- More than 72,500 South Carolina children ages 0-17 (6.7 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 18<sup>th</sup> highest rate of uninsured children among states.
- In 2012, 63,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Healthy Connections or Healthy Connections Kids but not enrolled.

## **Early Childhood and Education**

### **Lack of early childhood investments deprives children of critical supports in the early years and reduces school readiness.**

- In 2013, the average annual cost of center-based child care for an infant was \$6,372 – 42.8 percent less than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in South Carolina.
- South Carolina did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 41 percent of South Carolina's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 34 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- South Carolina's state-funded preschool programs met an average of 5.6 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

### **South Carolina's schools fail to educate all children, closing off a crucial pathway out of poverty.**

- In 2013, 72 percent of South Carolina's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 65 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
  - 87 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 85 percent could not compute.
  - 79 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 75 percent could not compute.
- 72 percent of South Carolina public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing South Carolina 45<sup>th</sup> among states. 64 percent of Black students and 72 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 76 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 16 percent of South Carolina public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing South Carolina 45<sup>th</sup> among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 26 percent and 13 percent, respectively.

## **Children Facing Special Risks**

### **Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.**

- In South Carolina, 10,404 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 9.6 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 3,203 South Carolina children in foster care.

### **Too many South Carolina children are involved in the juvenile justice system.**

- 16,323 children were arrested in South Carolina in 2012 – a rate of 3,397 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 726 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 65 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 3 percent were Hispanic, and 31 percent were White.
- 27 South Carolina children were in adult jails in 2013.
- South Carolina spent 2.2 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

### **South Carolina ranked 29<sup>th</sup> out of 41 ranked states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.**

- A total of 48 children and teens were killed by guns in South Carolina in 2013 – rate of 4.0 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit [www.childrensdefense.org/cits](http://www.childrensdefense.org/cits)