



The State of Missouri's Children: 2009

While the federal poverty level for a family of four is \$21,200¹, the Missouri Department of Economic Development reports that it takes between \$28,000 and \$39,000 for a family of four in Missouri to meet essential needs such as housing, food, and health care.²

Poverty and Missouri's Children

- The number of children *under the age of five* living in poverty increased from 20% in 2003 to 23% in 2005.³
- By 2005, the number of children age 5-17 living in poverty increased from 15% in 2003 to 18%.³
- Among children who reside in low income families (i.e., family income is less than twice the federal poverty threshold) in 2007⁴:
 - 44% are children under age 6 and 39% are children under age 18.
 - 51% are children who have at least one parent who is employed full-time year round.
 - 19% are children whose parent(s) is not employed.
 - 56% are Latino children, an increase from 52% in 2006.
 - 72% are Black children, an increase from 63% in 2005.
 - 33% are White children, a slight increase from 31% in 2005.
 - 56% reside in rural communities, an increase from 52% in 2005.
 - 50% reside in urban communities, an increase from 45% in 2005.
 - 30% reside in suburban communities, an increase from 26% in 2005.
- In 2003, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Missouri was at 34% of the federal poverty guideline.⁵
- In St. Louis City, 32% of the children are poor, which is down from 39% last year, yet remains significantly higher than both the state and national average of 18%.⁶

Education of Missouri's Children

- When compared to other Midwest states, the eligibility level for child care subsidy funds is unfavorably low.⁷ However, Missouri increased the eligibility level from 110% of poverty to 128% of poverty in 2006.⁸
- The average annual cost for full-time center-based infant care is \$6,539 and \$4,836 for a 4-year old child; this is 30% of the median income for a single parent.⁹
- Between 2001 and 2007, Missouri added 10,000 licensed child care spaces and the number of accredited child care facilities also increased from 345 to 547 during this same period.⁸ School entry assessment data, however, indicates 25% of children are not academically ready to enter kindergarten.⁸
- The number of children with Limited English Proficiency increased from 11,535 in 2002 to 19,092 in 2006.⁸
- In 2006, the percent of 4th grade students performing below proficiency, according to the U.S. Department of Education, for their grade level in reading was 68% and 69% in math.¹⁰ Only 33% and 19% of 4th graders meet *basic* reading and math levels respectively.⁹
- Drop-out rates for 9th -12th graders has increased from 3.7% in 2005 to 4.1% in 2006.⁸
- From 2002-2006 there was a steady decrease in the number of high school graduates going into the workforce and more entering either 2-year or 4-year college or university programs upon graduation in 2006.⁸
- When comparing the cost of child care for a 4-year-old child living in an urban area of Missouri, the cost exceeds tuition at a 4-year public college (\$4,784 versus \$3,701).¹¹

Nutrition of Missouri's Children

- The percentage of children living in families receiving food stamps increased from 26% in 2002 to 31% in 2006.⁸
- The number of students enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program has increased by 36,000 since 2002 for a total of 365,919 students in 2006.⁸

Health of Missouri's Children

- The percent of Missouri mothers receiving late or no prenatal care in 2005 was 2.3%; the national average is 3.5%.⁶
- Of all Missouri babies born in 2005, 8.1% were low birth weight compared with the 2004 rate of 8.3%.⁶
- The number of two year old children properly immunized has increased since 2002 from 78% to 84% in 2006. However, the rate of immunization was 85% and 86% for 2003 and 2004, which indicates a slight decrease in the past few years.⁶
- Of all Missouri's children, 39% are eligible for Medicaid/SCHIP, but only 81% of eligible children were enrolled in 2007.¹²

Welfare of Missouri's Children

- In 2007, there were 6,576 children who were victims of substantiated child abuse*, which represents a steady decline from 10,080 in 2003.¹³
 - Neglect: 3,291 substantiated cases (50%)
 - Physical Abuse: 1,916 substantiated cases (29.1%)
 - Sexual Abuse: 1,746 substantiated cases (26.6%)
 - Emotional Maltreatment: 404 substantiated cases (6.1%)
 - Medical Neglect: 187 substantiated cases (2.8%)
 - Educational Neglect: 142 substantiated cases (2.2)
- *Children could be classified in up to 6 types of abuse so the number of cases exceeds 6,576 and the percents add up to more than 100%
- In 2006, there were 27 children who died from substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect. That number increased to 46 in 2007.¹³
 - In 2007, Department of Social Services had custody of 9,818 children who spent an average of 27 months in foster care (4,614 with foster care parents; 2,750 in relative care; 1,577 in residential treatment facilities; 110 in pre-adoptive homes.)¹⁴
 - The number of children aging out of foster care remained stable between 2003 and 2006 with 353, 363, 328, 362 children aging out of the system for those 4 years respectively.⁸
 - In 2006, there were 1,268 children adopted from state custody and 1,843 children waiting for adoption from state custody. Over half of the children in state custody are 9-18 years of age (29 % age 15+).⁸

Teen Pregnancy in Missouri

- In 2006, there were 2,828 births to teen mothers between the ages of 15-17, an increase from 2,555 in 2005.⁸
- The number of babies born to mothers under the age of 15 decreased from 134 in 2000⁷ to 107 in 2006.⁸
- The number of births to mothers with less than a high school diploma has increased from 14,267 in 2001 to 15,279 in 2006. Despite the increase, the rate has remained less than 1 in 5 of all births in Missouri.⁸

Substance Use by Missouri's Children

- Between 2005/2006, an estimated 43,000 children ages 12-17 were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol, which is a decrease of 5,000 from the 2003/2004 estimates of 48,000.¹⁵
- Among Missouri students in grades 6-12:
 - Alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana are the most commonly used substances and the rate of use for all three substances increases with age.¹⁶
 - The percentage of students reporting recent alcohol use by grade level was 7% among 6th graders, 24% among 8th graders, 39% among 10th graders and 50% among 12th graders.¹⁶
 - The average rate of binge drinking (5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row) was 29% for 30-day prior use, and highest among 12th graders (35%).¹⁵

Violence and Missouri's Children

- Between 2006 and 2007, there was a 20% decrease in juvenile arrests (40,093 children younger than 18 were arrested in 2007¹⁷ compared to 49,659 arrests in 2006¹⁸). While these decreases in juvenile arrests are positive, the 2007 numbers are still a 33% increase over the 2005 arrests of 26,874 youth.¹⁹
- Of the juvenile arrests in 2007, 540 were for possession of a weapon and 1,431 were for violent crimes.¹⁷
- In 2003, 1,413 children were in juvenile correction facilities in Missouri compared to 1,293 in 2006.²⁰
- In Missouri, 43 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in 2006, compared with 44 in 2005 and 37 in 2004.²¹

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The Center for Family Policy & Research is housed in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Missouri-Columbia. The Center's mission is to create and disseminate research-based analyses to promote the well-being of families through informed public policy and program development.

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