



# Sisters of the Holy Family

To seek out and advocate for the poor and needy, especially families, for the Kingdom of God.

## Children's Defense Fund: Overview of the State of America's Children 2017

**Child Population:** The United States is reaching a tipping point in racial and ethnic diversity as children of color will be a majority by 2020.

- There were 73.6 million children in the U.S. in 2016, 23 percent of the nation's population. The child population has increased every year over the past 50 years.
- In 2016 children of color made up 49 percent of all children and the majority of children under 5.



**Child Hunger and Nutrition:** Millions of children live in food-insecure households, lacking consistent access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food.

- In 2015 nearly 1 in 5 children—14.8 million—lived in food-insecure households. The percent of Black and Hispanic households with food-insecure children was more than two times that of White households.
- Food insecurity increases the risk of obesity, a condition more prevalent among Black and Hispanic children than White children.



**Housing and Homelessness:** The lack of affordable housing and federal rental assistance means millions of children live in families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness with children of color disproportionately affected.

- In 2017, a person working (full-time, year-round at minimum wage) could not afford the monthly Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom rental unit in any state or the District of Columbia and still have enough money for food, utilities and other necessities; yet the lack of federal rental assistance means only 1 in 4 eligible households receive aid.
- Children comprised more than 1 in 5 of the nearly 550,000 homeless people living in shelters, transitional housing and on the streets on a single night in January 2016. Black families represented about half of homeless families with children and 49 percent of those who were sheltered that night.
- More than 1.2 million homeless children were enrolled in public schools during the 2014-2015 school year, excluding younger children and youths not enrolled in school.



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# Children's Defense Fund *Continued*

**Gun Violence:** Every year gun violence cuts short the lives of thousands of children and teens, particularly children of color.

- During 2013-2015, 7,768 children and teens were killed with guns.
- Gun violence remains the leading cause of death for Black children and teens. In 2015, 9.5 out of every 100,000 Black children and teens were killed with a gun—a rate four times higher than that for White children and teens (2.5 per 100,000).
- A Black child or teen was killed with a gun every 7 hours and 25 minutes.



**Education:** Most public school children cannot read or compute at grade level and children of color are particularly behind in educational achievement.

- In 2015 the majority of public school children in fourth and eighth grades could not read at grade level. This includes more than 75 percent of fourth and eighth grade Black, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native public school students compared with less than 60 percent of White students.
- Less than 80 percent of Black, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native public school students graduated on time during the 2014-2015 school year compared with 87 percent of White students.



## Each Day in America for Black Children

Nearly one mother dies from complications of childbirth.

Almost one child or teen commits suicide.

1 child is killed by abuse or neglect.

3 children or teens are killed with a gun.

4 children or teens die from accidents.

15 children or teens are injured with a gun.

18 babies die before their first birthdays.

72 children are arrested for drug crimes.

86 children are arrested for violent crimes.

136 babies are born to teen mothers.

148 babies are born without health insurance.

215 babies are born with low birth weight.

222 public school students are corporally punished.\*

233 babies are born into extreme poverty.

365 children are confirmed as abused or neglected.

370 babies are born into poverty.

763 high school students drop out.\*

974 children are arrested.

1,139 babies are born to unmarried mothers.

4,529 public school students are suspended.\*

\* Based on 180 school days a year

# Why We Need Immigration Reform

Immigrant children face a number of risks to healthy development, although only some of these are unique to this population. They are more likely than non-immigrant children to live in families with incomes below the poverty threshold, to have parents with very low educational attainment, and to have three or more siblings.

Immigrant children are also far less likely to be covered by health insurance. Non-immigrant children are three times more likely than first-generation immigrant children to have health insurance, and twice as likely as immigrant children who are second-generation.

Children in immigrant families, though more likely to face economic hardship, are less likely than native children to use public benefits such as SNAP (formerly food stamps) or Medicaid. This may be in part due to the fact that some immigrant children have undocumented parents, who may be unaware of their child's eligibility, or be afraid to interact with government agencies.

Nearly 30% of undocumented parents reported that their children were afraid either all or most of the time, much higher than among children of documented parents. Nearly half reported that their child had been anxious, and almost three-fourths of undocumented parents reported that a child had shown symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

*Sources: Urban Institute; Board on Children, Youth, and Families at the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine; and Family Unity, Family Health: How Family-Focused Immigration Reform Will Mean Better Health for Children and Families, by familyunityfamilyhealth.org.*



## Changes To The Detention Policies Proposed

Since 1997, the court-ordered settlement agreement in the *Flores* case has protected immigrant children by setting out minimum standards for their care and custody, and set a limit of 20 days on holding children in detention with their parents. Its purpose is to minimize the unnecessary and harmful practice of detaining children and requires—when release is not possible—that children be kept in the least restrictive setting licensed by a child welfare agency.

On September 6, 2018, the Trump Administration proposed new regulations that would undo the *Flores* protections and have major implications for the well-being of children and families.

Proposed changes to the *Flores* settlement agreement would allow:

- DHS [Department of Homeland Security] to operate family jails under their own self-licensing scheme.
- DHS to indefinitely detain families in prisons that fail to meet current minimum standards.
- DHS and ORR [Office of Refugee Resettlement] to redetermine whether a child is unaccompanied even after a child's case has begun—a move that could strip children of critical protections and procedures, and frustrate access to due process and humanitarian protection.

The Federal Register 60-day period to public comment on these regulations closes 11/6/2018.

Register your opinion: [www.goo.gl/Fap2gJ](http://www.goo.gl/Fap2gJ) and learn more here: [www.immigrationjustice.us](http://www.immigrationjustice.us)