

# KIDS COUNT in Colorado



**COLORADO  
CHILDREN'S  
• CAMPAIGN •**

**2026 DATA BOOK**

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**Colorado Children's Campaign**



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**Colorado Children's Campaign**



**We create opportunity for every child in Colorado by catalyzing innovative policy, research, and advocacy solutions.**

We fight their fight so they can focus on being kids.



**COLORADO CHILDREN'S  
• CAMPAIGN •**



**Economic Security**

**Health**

**Child Welfare**

**Early Childhood**

**K-12 Education**

# 2026 KIDS COUNT® DATA BOOK

State Trends in  
Child Well-Being



**Colorado**

**#14**

In the nation  
for child well-being

# Thank you to our funders



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION



1

## **Access**

Availability & Affordability

2

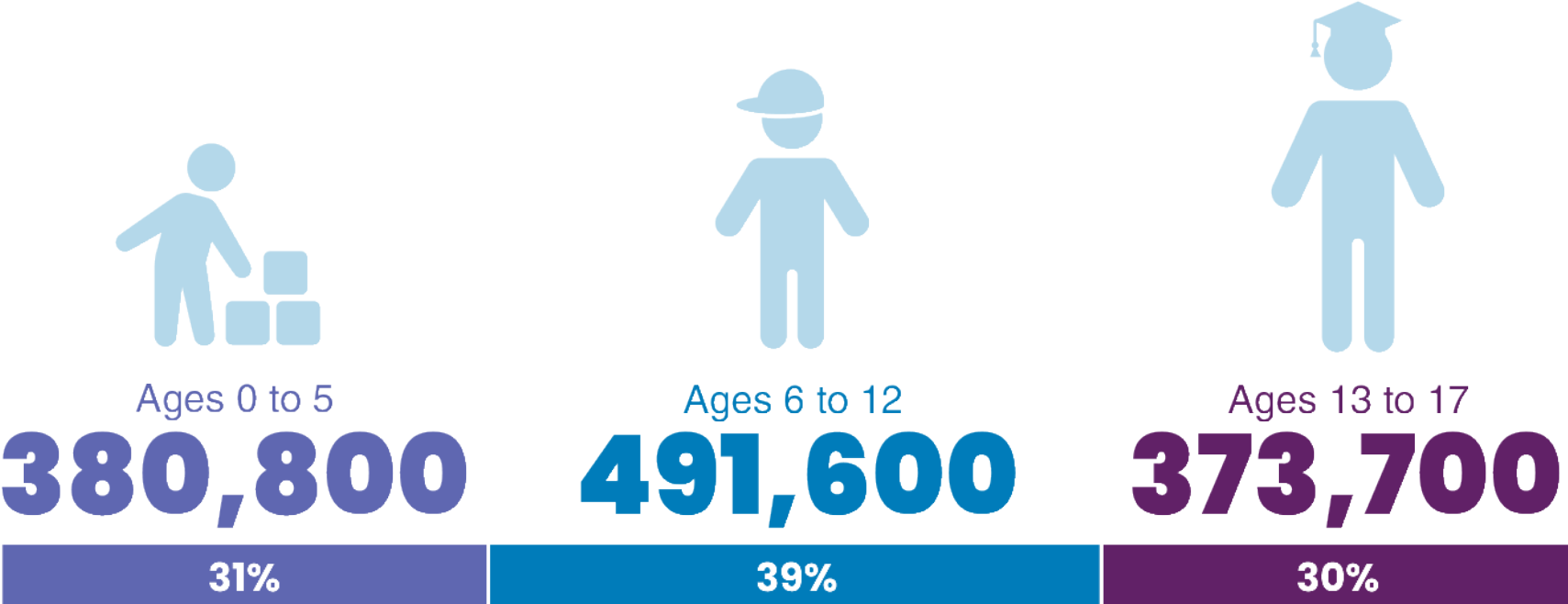
## **Unmet Need**

Systems failing to meet family and child needs

# Demographics

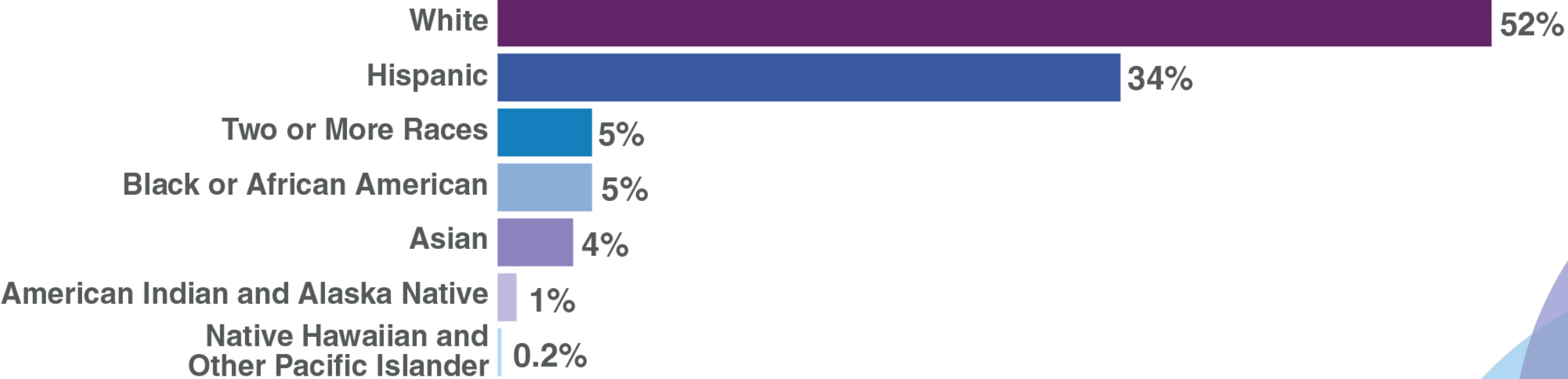


## Colorado is Home to Over 1.2 Million Kids



Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs

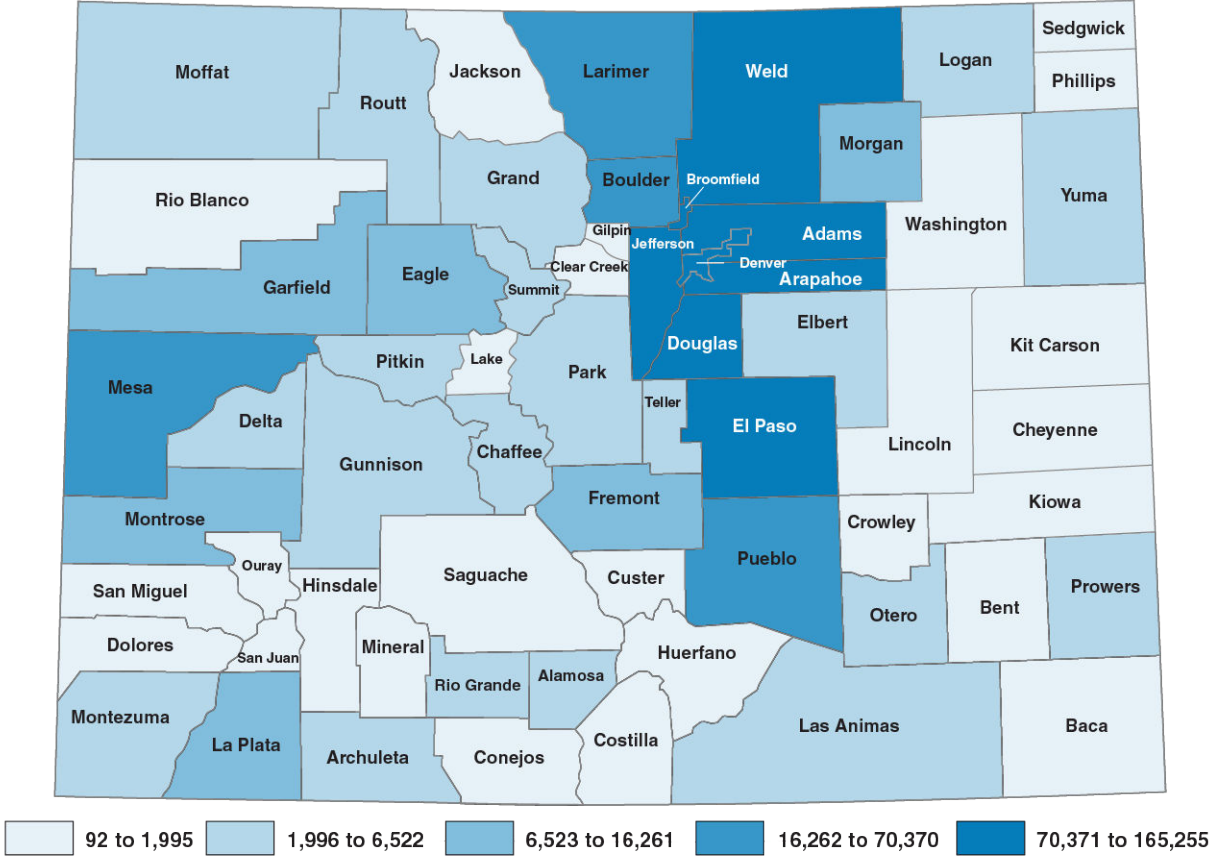
## Children by Race and Ethnicity, 2024



Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs

## More Than Half of Colorado Kids Live in The Front Range

### Child Population, 2024



Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs

# Economic Security



# Economic Security

## 2026 Highlights



**1 in 4 children  
are economically  
disadvantaged.**



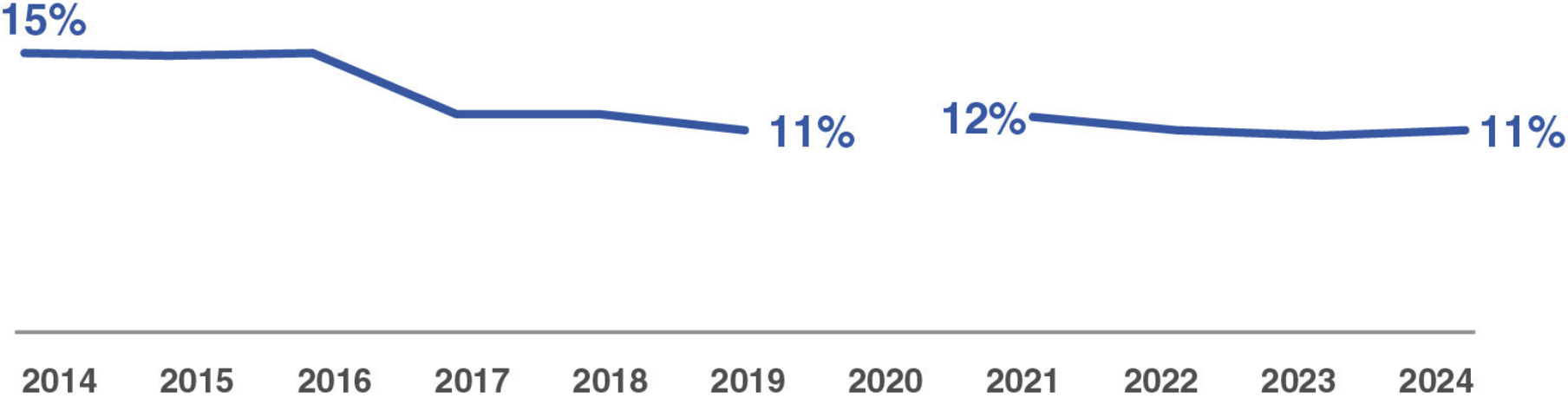
**Single-parent  
households are almost  
4 times more likely to  
experience financial  
hardship than married  
households.**



**Federal programs  
help a significant  
number of Colorado  
kids meet their  
basic needs.**

## About 1 in 9 Colorado Kids Experience Poverty

Childhood Poverty Rate, 2014-24

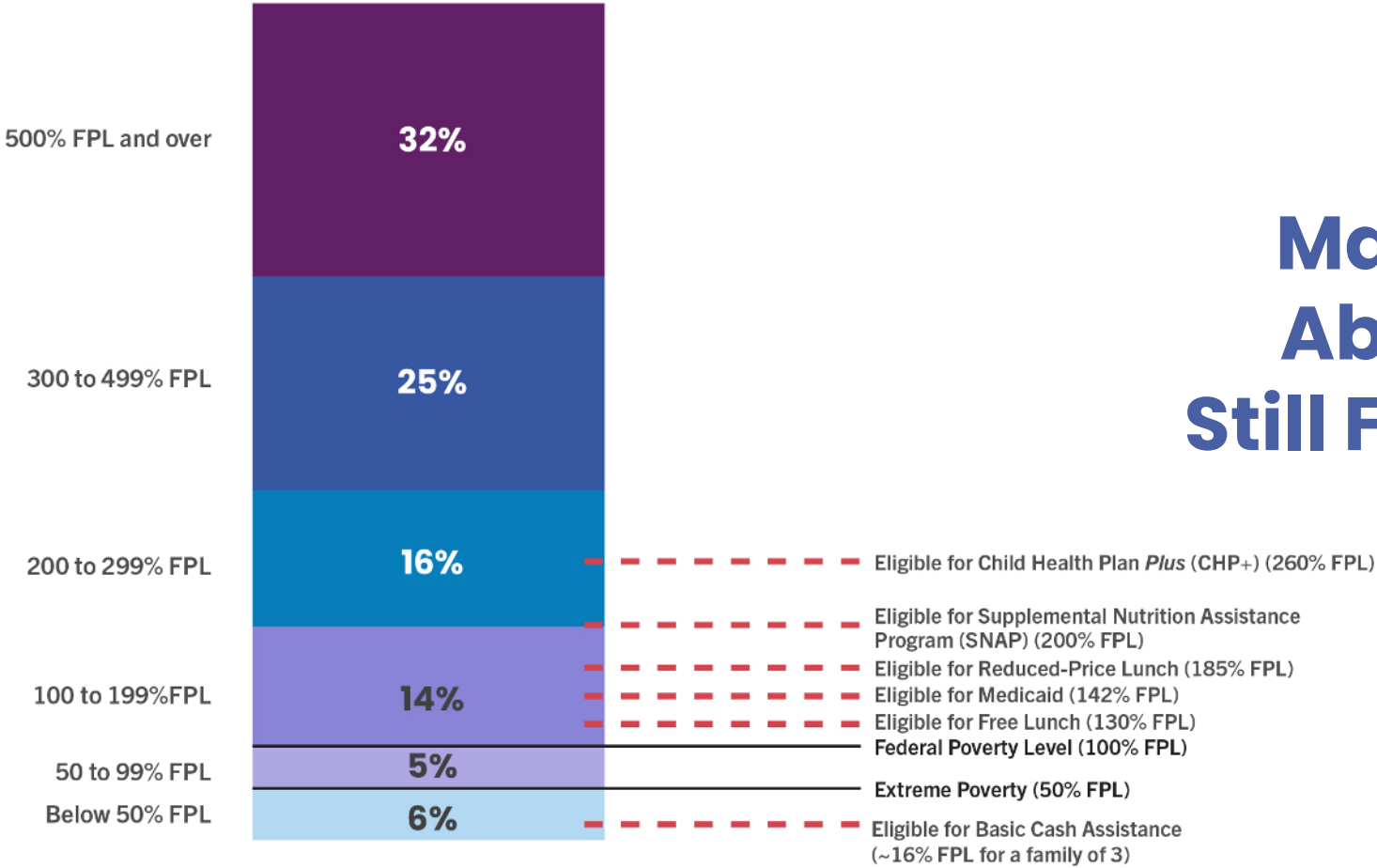


**\$31,200**

Federal Poverty Level Family of Four (2024)

Note: Data from 2020 are not included due to a large margin of error during the COVID-19 pandemic  
Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of U.S. Census Supplementary Survey and American Community Survey

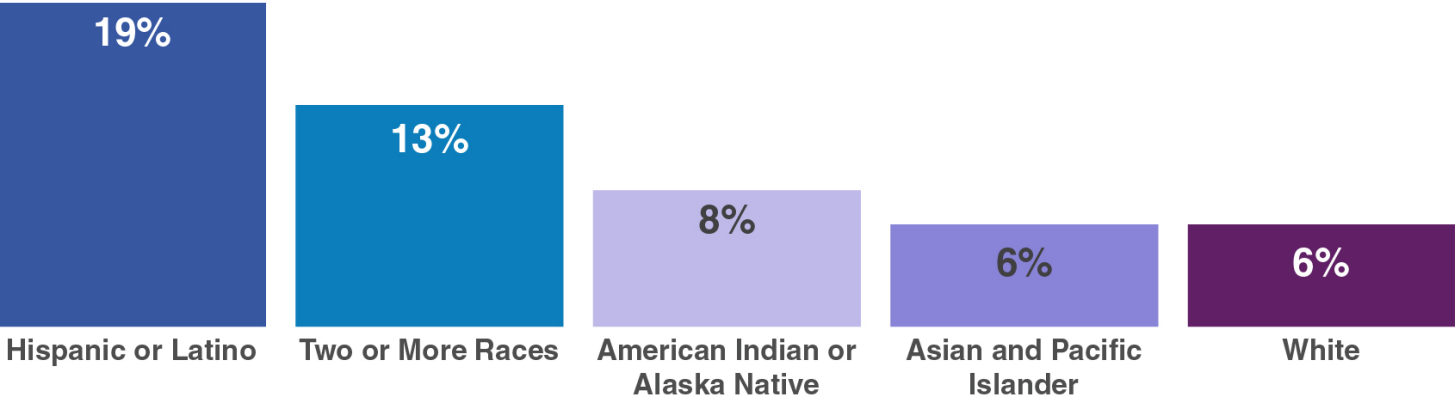
### Children by Household Income, 2024



## Many Children Who Live Above the Poverty Level Still Face Economic Hardship

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

### Childhood Poverty Rate by Race and Ethnicity, 2024



Note: Data for Black and African American children are not reported due to a large margin of error.

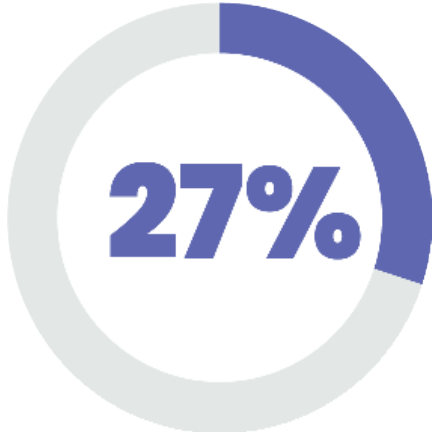
### Childhood Poverty Rate, 2024

Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of U.S. Census Supplementary Survey and American Community Survey

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

## Colorado Household Survival Budget for Family of Four, 2024

Expense	Monthly Cost
Housing	\$1,624
Child Care	\$1,717
Food	\$1,399
Transportation	\$826
Health	\$784
Technology	\$129
Miscellaneous	\$648
Tax	\$751
<b>Total Monthly Expenses</b>	<b>\$7,878</b>
<b>Total Annual Expenses</b>	<b>\$94,536</b>

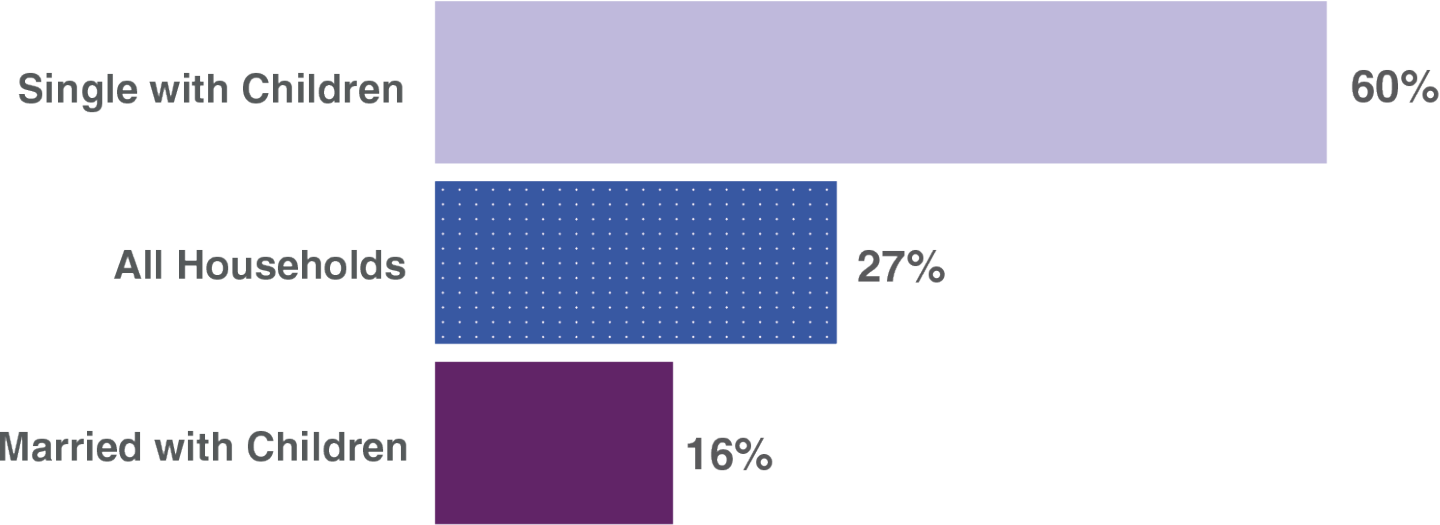


Household With Children Experiencing Financial Hardship, 2024  
*According to ALICE*

Source: United For ALICE

## Single-Parent Households Are Nearly 4 Times More Likely to Experience Financial Hardship Than married Households

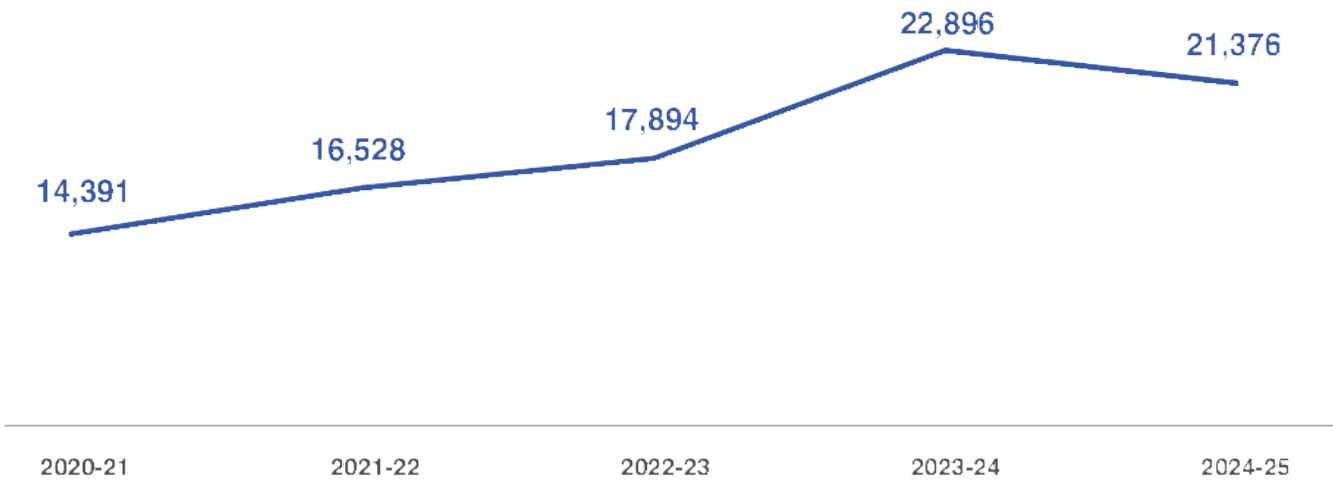
Households With Children Experiencing Financial Hardship, 2024



Source: United For ALICE

## Economic Hardship is the Primary Cause of Homelessness Among Colorado Students

PK-12 Students Served by McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program, 2020-25 school years



**73%**

Of PK-12 Students Experiencing Homeless Live in Doubled Up Arrangements Due to Economic Hardship

Source: Colorado Department of Education

## Health Insurance

*Medicaid & Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+)*



**519,081**

children enrolled in Medicaid



**97,176**

children enrolled in CHP+

## Food

*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*



**354,953**

children enrolled in SNAP

## Other Basic Needs

*Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*



**50,538**

children received TANF basic cash assistance

## Child Care

*Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)*



**27,598**

children enrolled in CCCAP

Sources: Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing; Colorado Department of Early Childhood; Colorado Department of Human Services

# Child Welfare



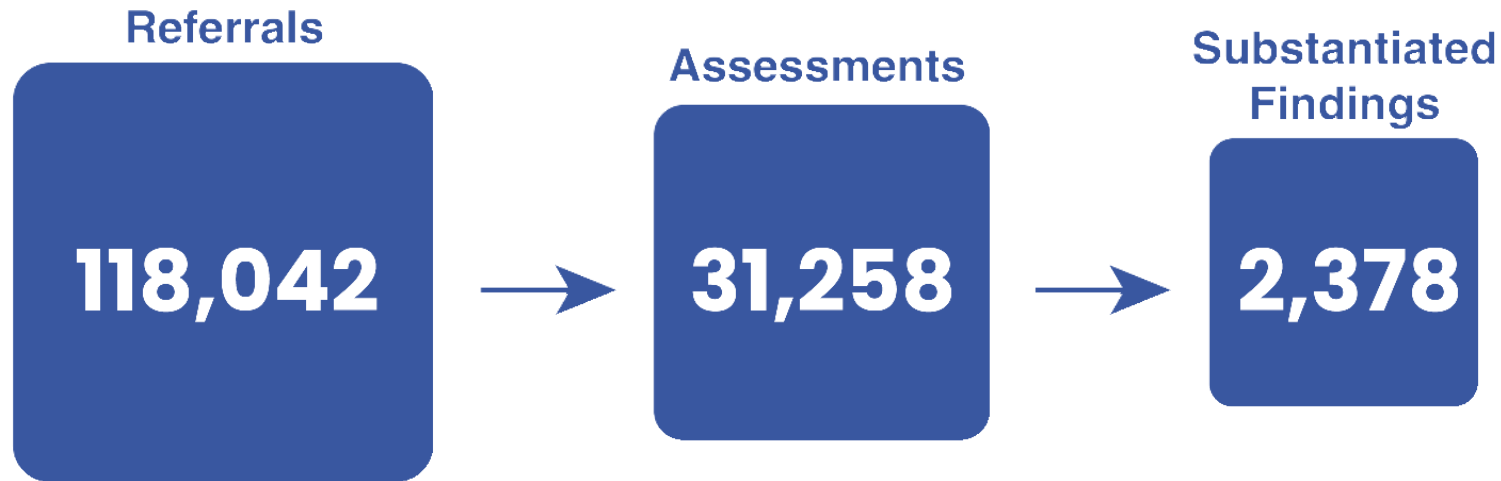
# Child Welfare

## *Introduction to the child welfare system*

### **The child welfare system provides services intended to:**

- Keep children safe and protect them from harm
- Connect families to the support they need to create a positive home for their children
- Establish permanent environments for kids when their home is no longer safe

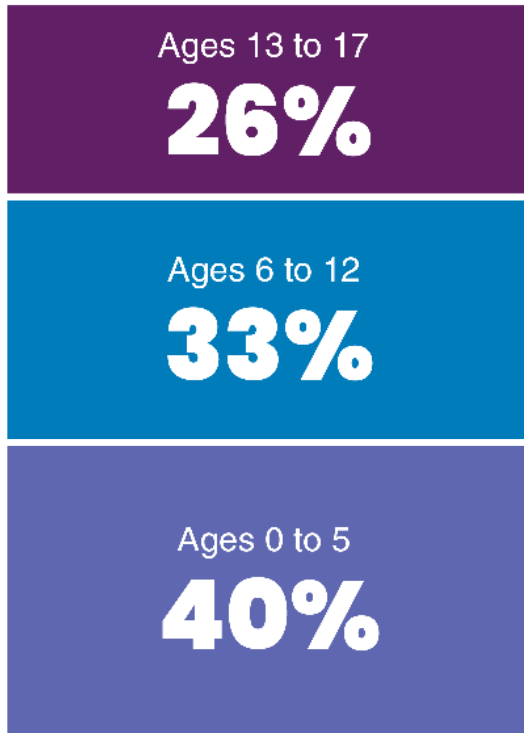
## About 2% of Referrals to Child Welfare Result in a Substantiated Finding of Abuse or Neglect



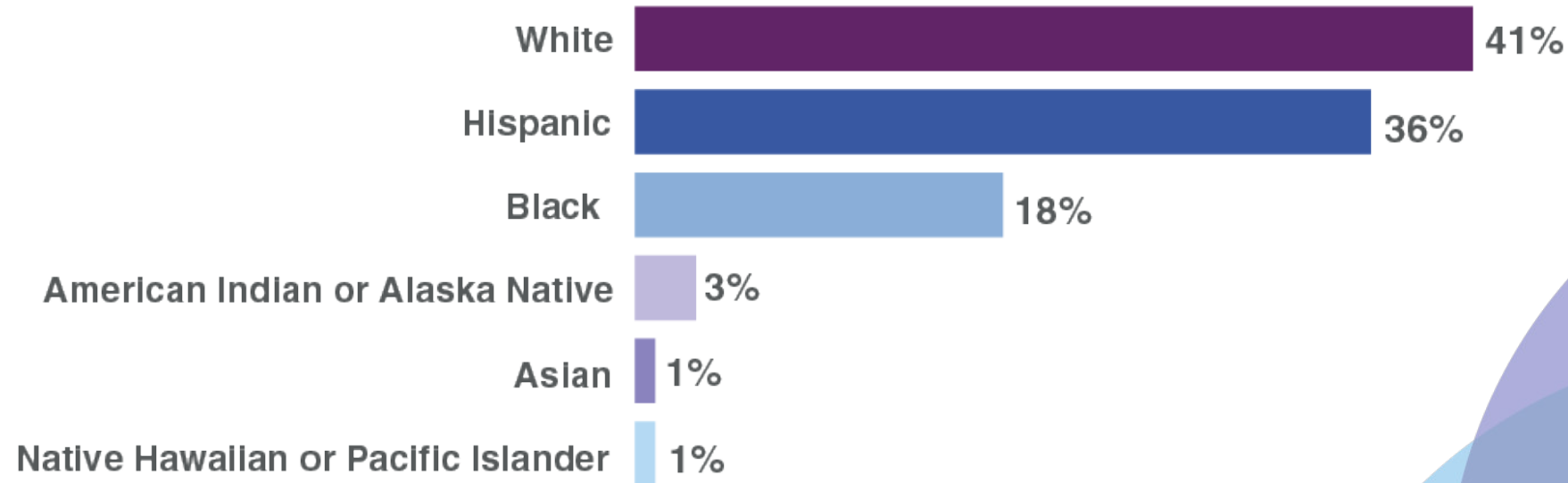
Source: Colorado Department of Human Services

## Just Over 12,200 Children Receive Child Welfare Services

Children Served by Age, FY 2024-25

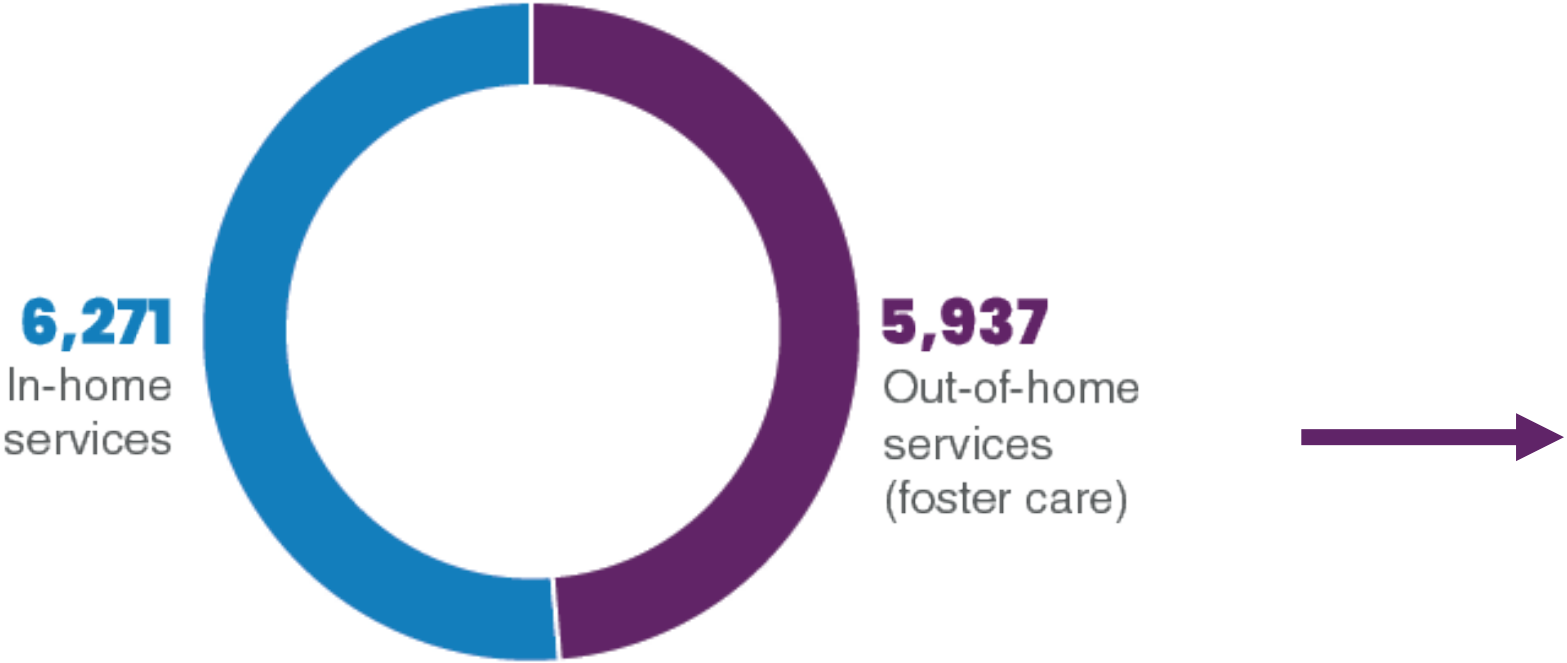


Children Served by Race and Ethnicity, FY 2024-25



Source: Colorado Department of Human Services

## Children Who Received Services by Service Type, FY 2024-25



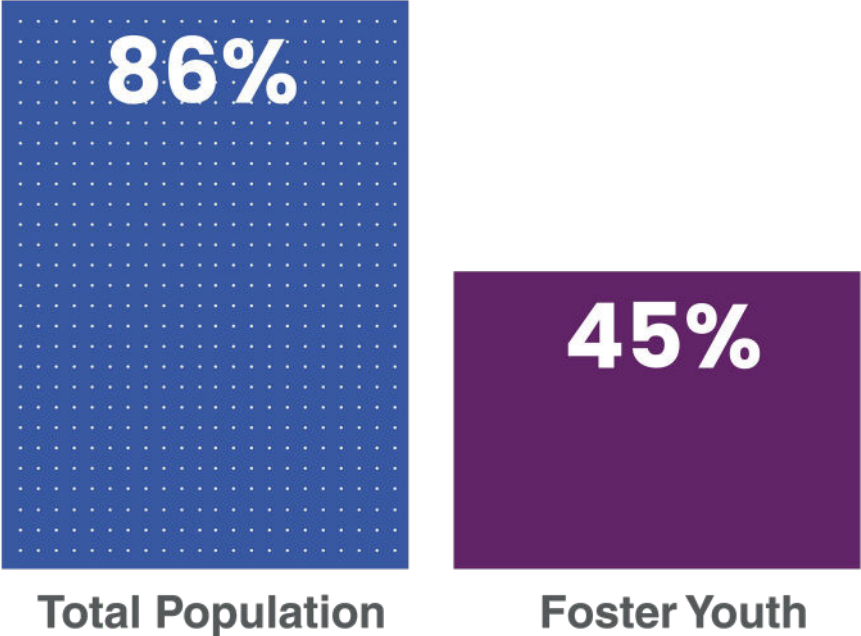
**46%**  
Of Foster Care Children  
Are in Kinship Care,  
June 30, 2025

Note: Children placed in out-of-home care are not included in the county of in-home services; however, it is possible they received in-home services as well

Source: Colorado Department of Human Services

## Foster Youth Graduation Rates Remain the Lowest in the State

Graduation Rates Among Foster Youth, 2024-25 school year



Source: Colorado Department of Education



# Health

## 2026 Highlights



**1 in 3  
two-year olds  
are not fully  
vaccinated.**



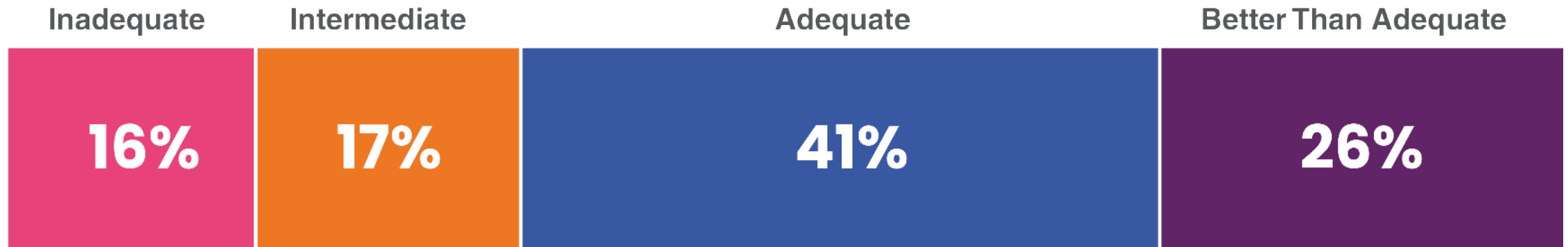
**Medicaid and CHP+  
served 10% fewer children  
in the last year,  
while the uninsured rate  
doubled among  
low-income children.**



**About 70% of kids  
cannot easily access  
primary care.**

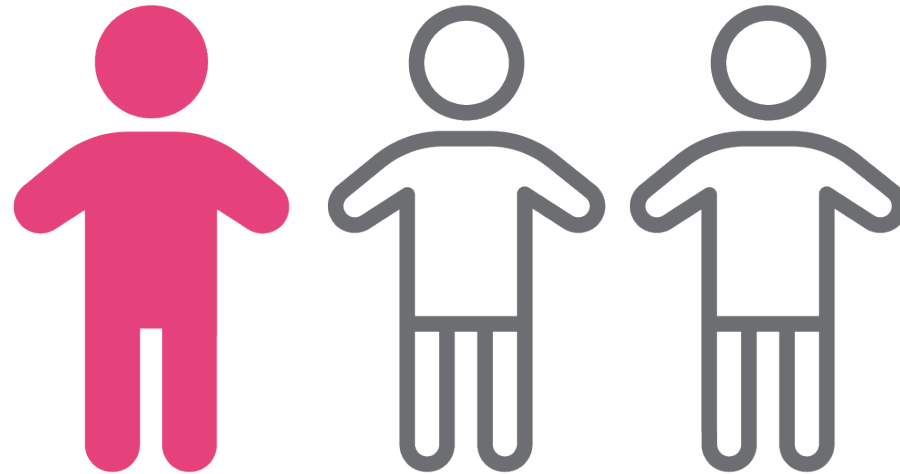
## 1 in 3 Babies Are Born to Mothers Who Receive Late or Insufficient Prenatal Care

Babies Born to Mothers by Level of Prenatal Care, 2024



Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

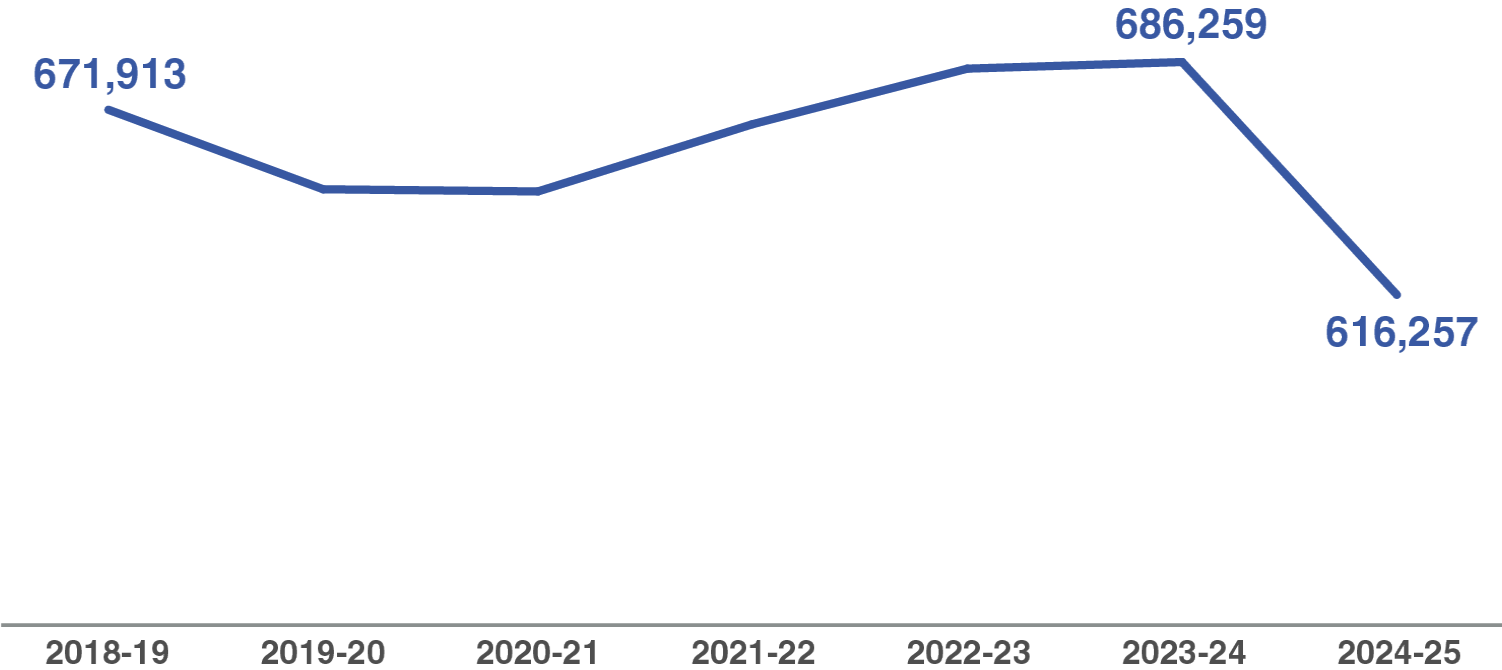
## One in Three 2-Year-Olds Are Not Fully Vaccinated



Source: Children's Hospital Colorado

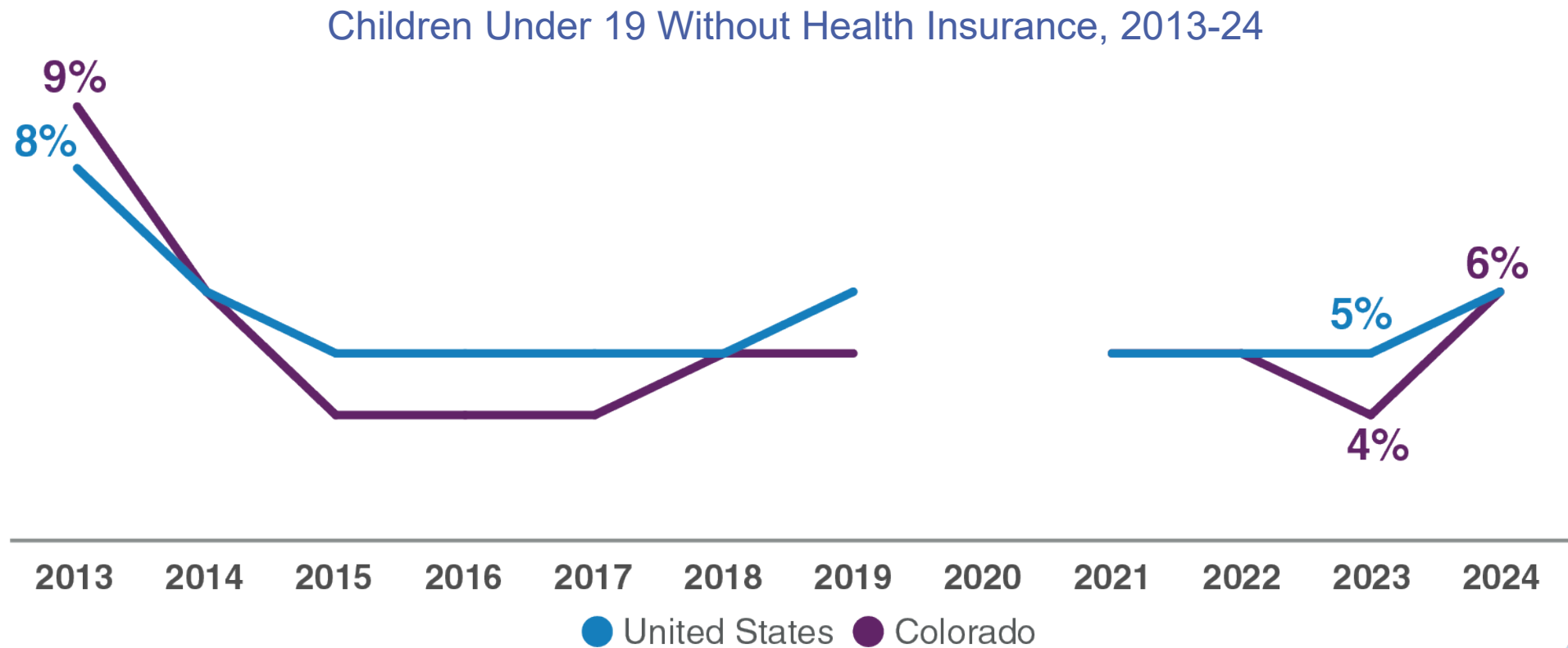
# Medicaid and CHP+ Enrollment Declined By 10%

Colorado Children Enrolled in Medicaid or CHP+ 2018-25



Source: Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing

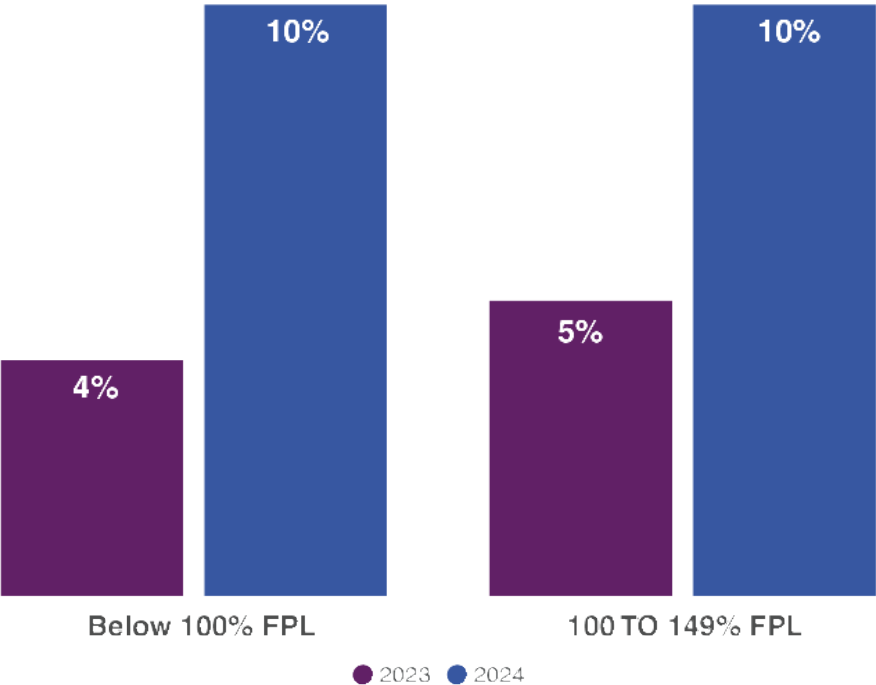
## At The Same Time, The Childhood Uninsured Rate is Rising



Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of American Community Survey

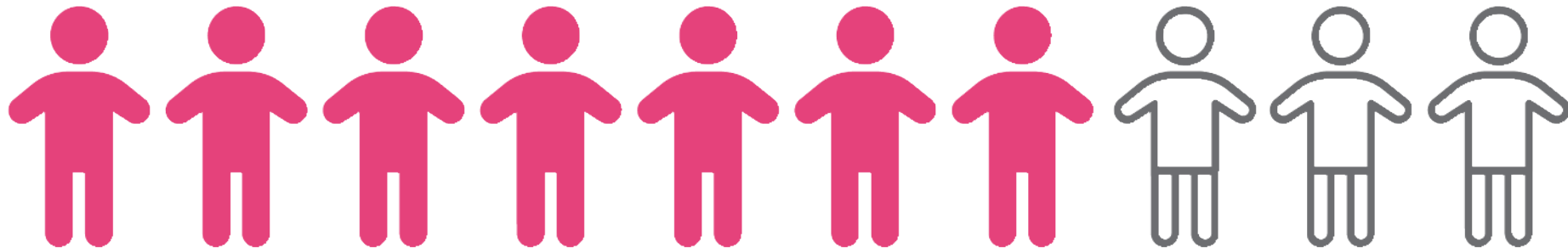
# In Just One Year, The Uninsured Rate Among Children Experiencing Poverty More Than Doubled

Share of Children Under 19 Without Health Insurance by Household Income, 2023-24



Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of American Community Survey

## 70% of Kids Cannot Easily Get to a Pediatric Health Care Provider



Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

## Children in Communities With Pediatric Provider Shortage, 2024

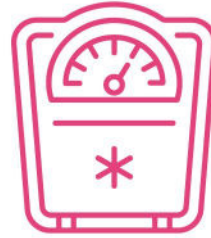
Level of Shortage	Number and Percent of Children
<b>Significant Shortage:</b> Enough providers to meet less than 60% of need	388,115 (31%)
<b>Moderate Shortage:</b> Enough providers to meet 60 to 80% of need	273,187 (22%)
<b>Small Shortage:</b> Enough providers to 80 to 100% of need	202,018 (16%)
<b>Adequate Supply:</b> Enough providers to meet 100% or more of need	377,366 (30%)

Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

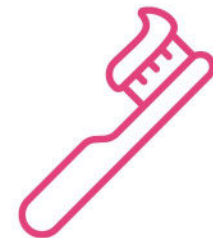
## Colorado Still Has Made Progress in Children's Health



The teen suicide rate continues to decline



Colorado has the lowest rate of children who are overweight or obese in the country



Access to dental care remains high

Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment; United Health Foundation; Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation

# Early Childhood



# Early Childhood

## 2026 Highlights



**There is not enough licensed care to serve all infants and toddlers.**

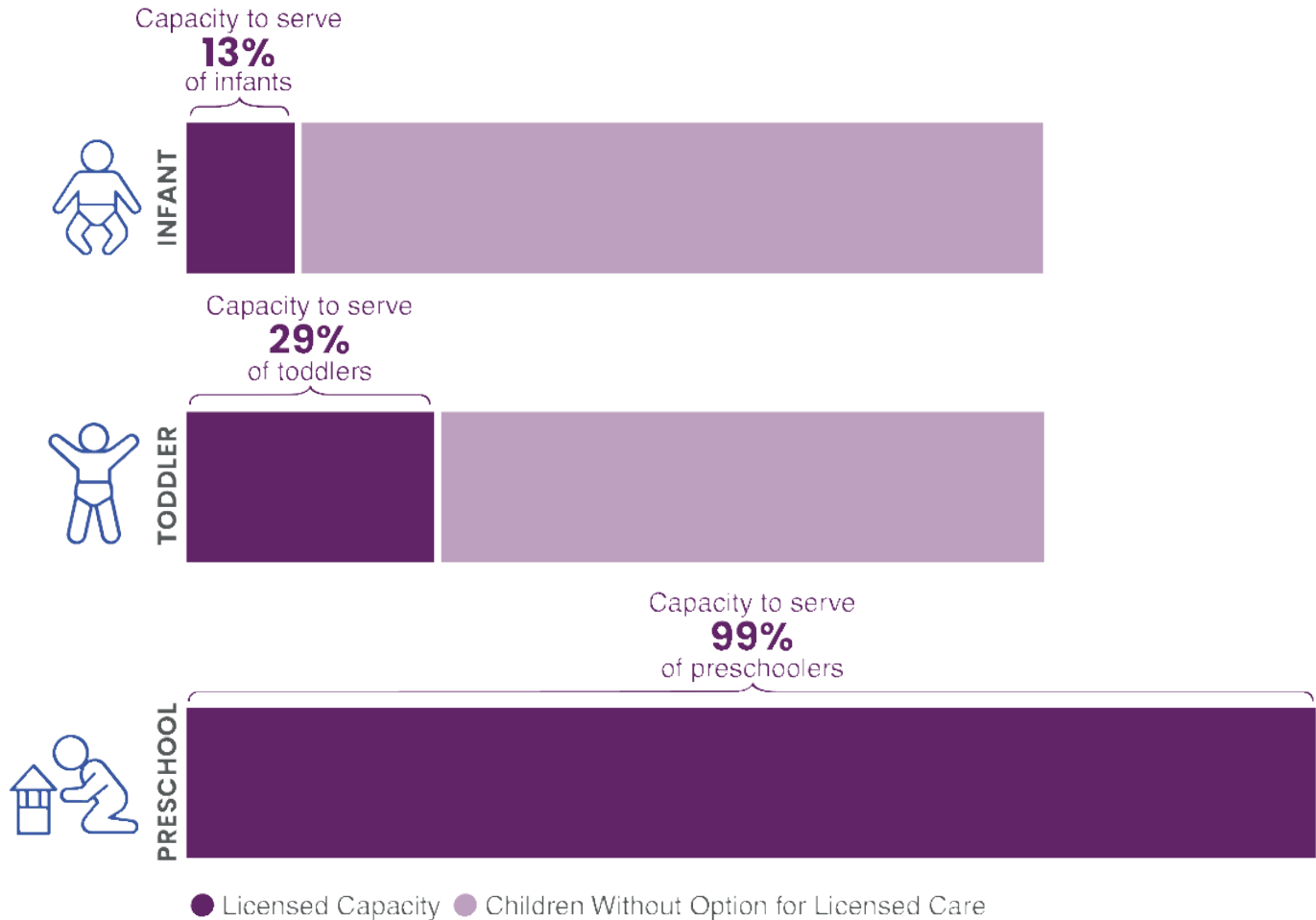


**When seats are available, many families cannot afford them.**



**More than 9,000 families are on a waitlist or in an enrollment freeze for child care subsidies.**

## Colorado Only Has Enough Seats to Serve 13% of Infants



Source: Colorado Department of Early Childhood

## Child Care is Not Affordable for Most Families

Average Annual Cost of Child Care in Colorado, 2024



### Licensed Child Care Home

Infant: \$13,700

Toddler: \$13,700

4-year-old: \$12,800



### Licensed Child Care Center

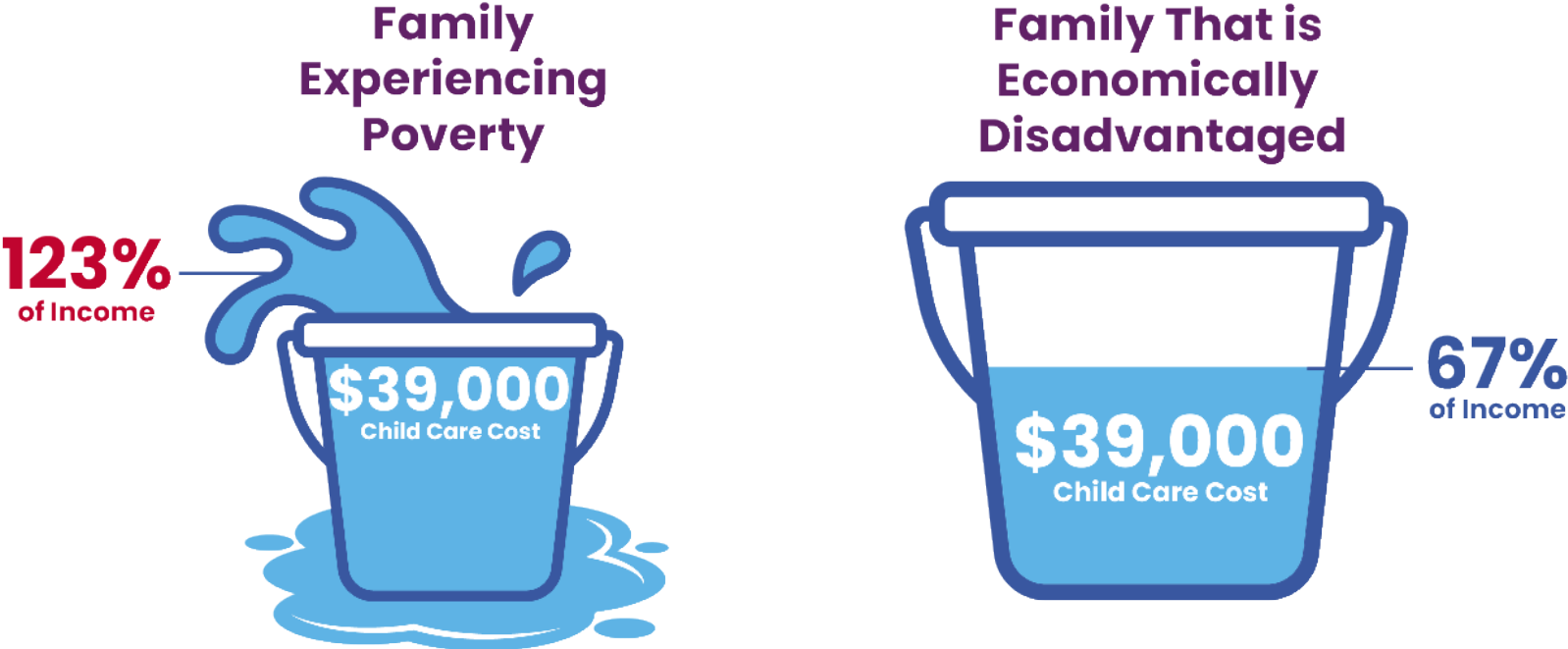
Infant: \$21,000

Toddler: \$17,500

4-year-old: \$14,800

Source: Child Care Aware of America

## Families Experiencing Poverty Do Not Earn Enough to Afford Child Care

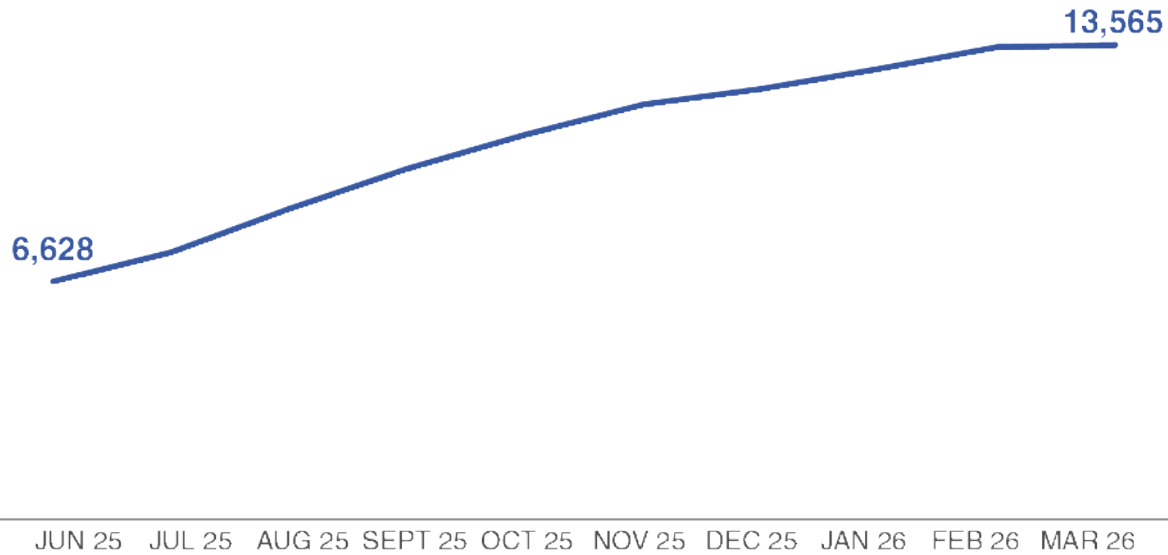


Source: Child Care Aware of America (2024); Analysis by Colorado Children's Campaign

## Over 9,000 Families Are Stuck on a Waitlist or in an Enrollment Freeze Due to Limited CCCAP Funding

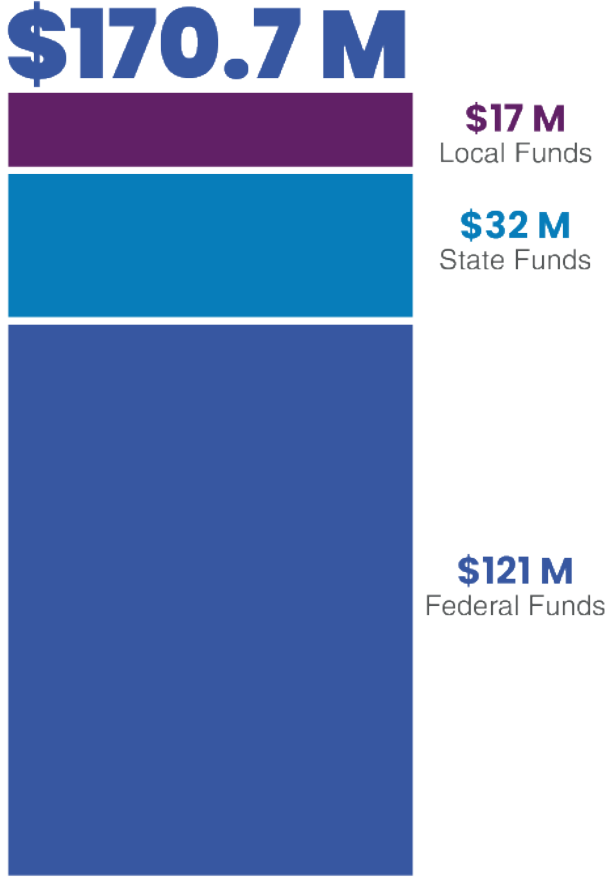
Children on a CCCAP Waitlist or in an Enrollment Freeze, June 2025 – March 2026

Children on a CCCAP Waitlist or in an Enrollment Freeze, March 1, 2026



Source: Colorado Department of Early Childhood

## CCCAP Expenditures, FY 2024-25



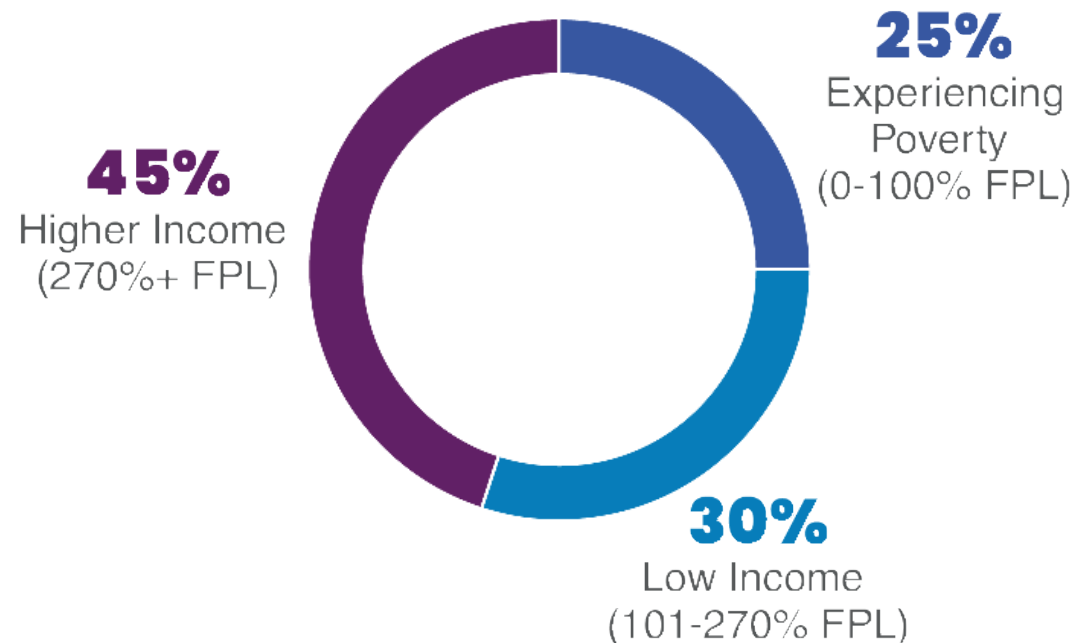
**\$127 M**

Additional Funding  
Needed to Address the  
Waitlist and Enrollment  
Freezes

Source: Colorado Joint Budget Committee; Colorado Department of Early Childhood

## Just Over Half of Children Served by Universal Preschool Are From Low-Income Households

4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Colorado Universal Preschool Program  
by Household Income, FY 2024-25



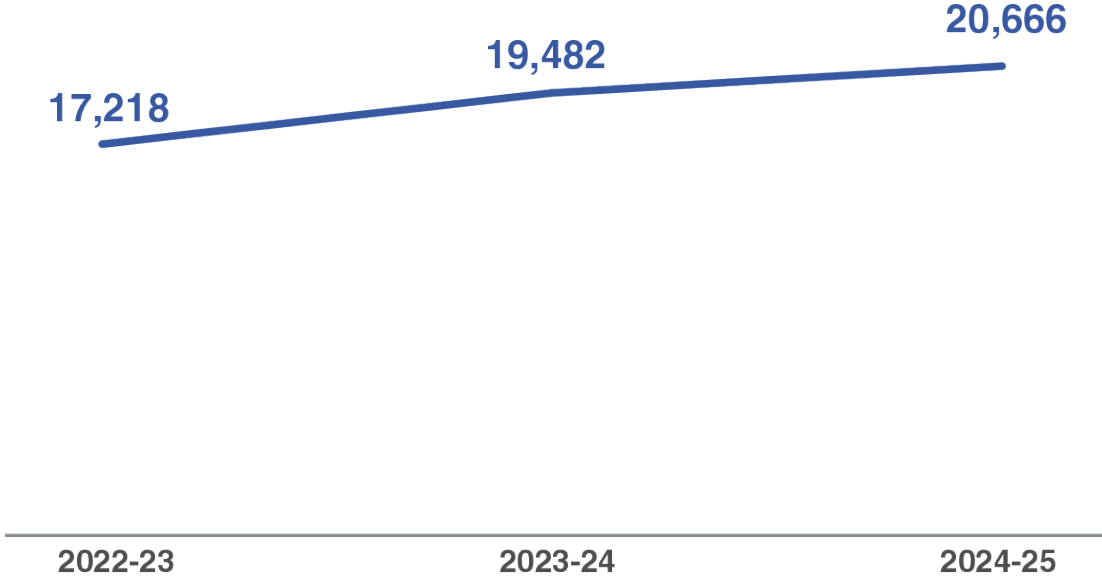
Source: Colorado Department of Early Childhood

## Colorado Offers a Variety of Family Support Services

# 12,771

Children Receiving  
**Home Visiting Services,**  
FY 2024-25

Children Enrolled in Early Intervention Services, 2022-25



Source: Colorado Home Visiting Coalition; Colorado Department of Early Childhood

# K-12 Education



# K-12 Education

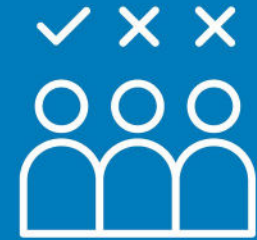
## 2026 Highlights



**6 in 10 third graders do not read and write on grade level.**



**There are significant disparities in academic achievement by race, ethnicity, and income.**

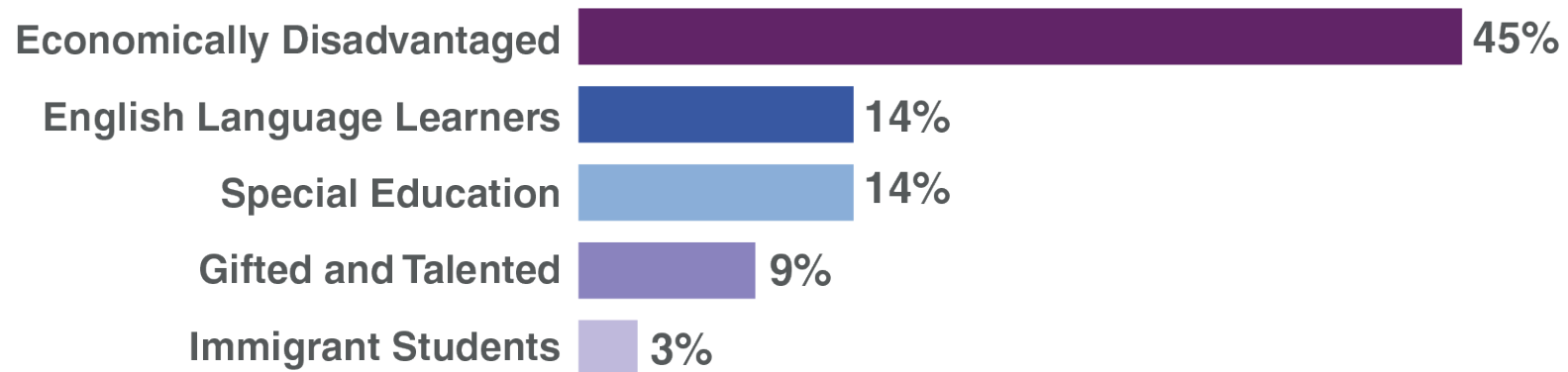


**Nearly 30% of students are chronically absent.**

# 870,800

PK-12 Public School Students, 2025-26 school year

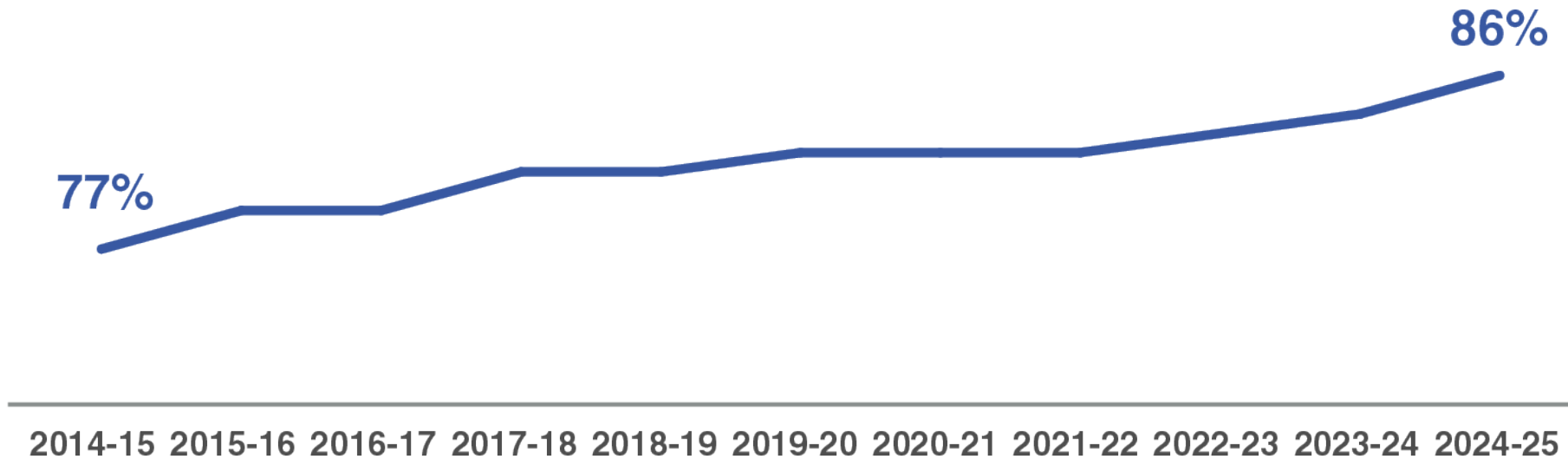
## PK-12 Student Body by Student Characteristics, 2025-26 school year



Source: Colorado Department of Education

## Colorado's On-Time Graduation Rate Continues to Rise

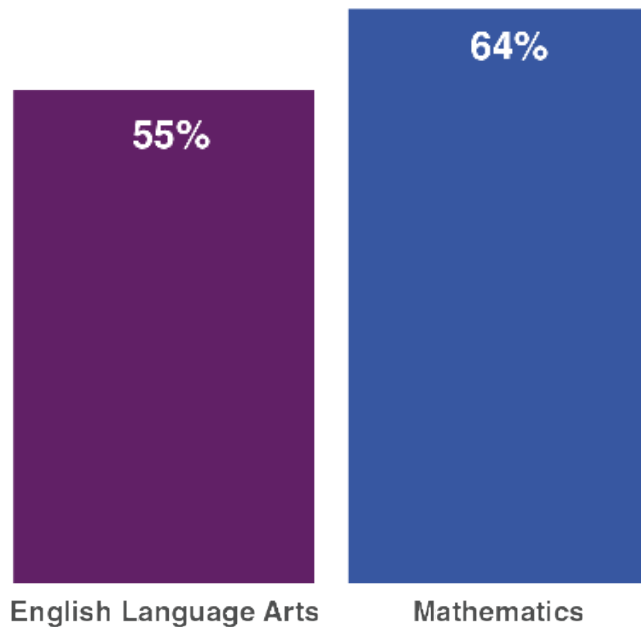
On-Time Graduation Rate, 2014-25 school years



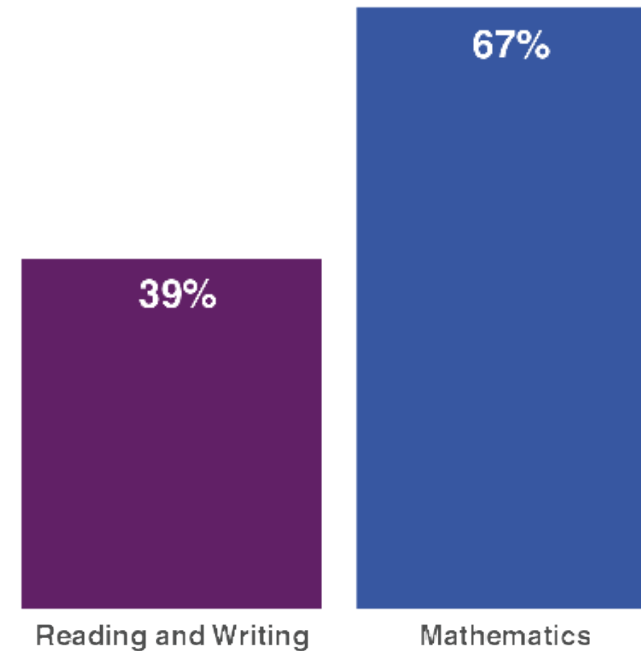
Source: Colorado Department of Education

## Colorado Students Are Not Meeting Academic Standards

Students Grades 3 through 8 Not Meeting Academic Expectations on CMAS, 2025

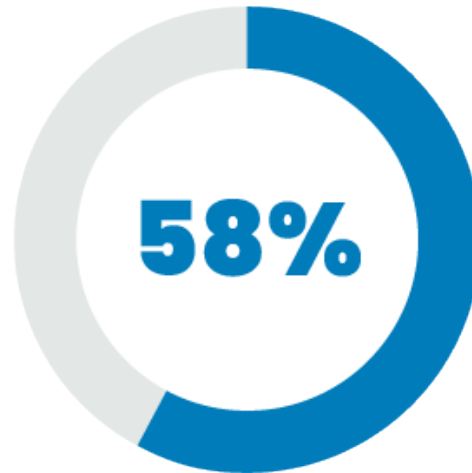


11<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Not Meeting Academic Expectations on SAT, 2025



Source: Colorado Department of Education

## Nearly 60% of Third Graders Do Not Read or Write on Grade Level

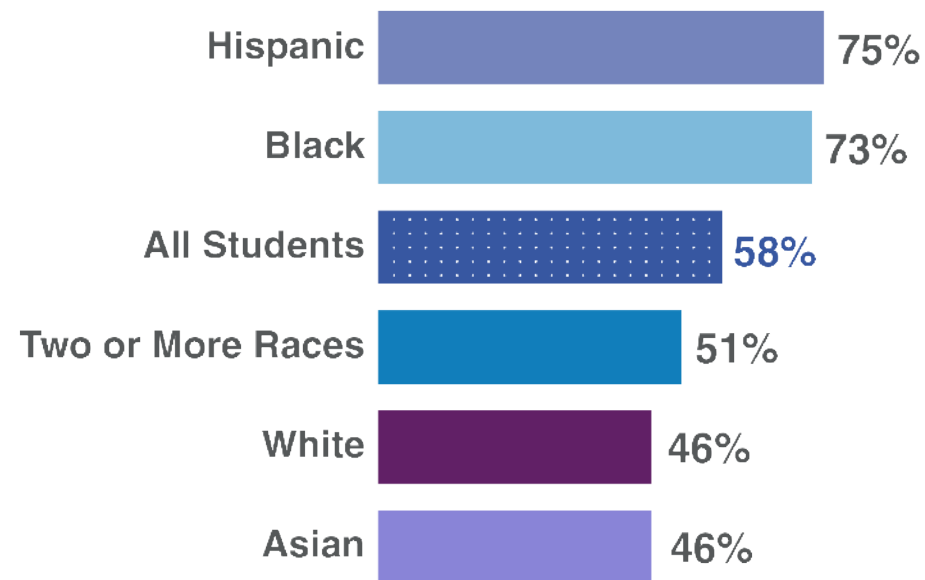


3<sup>rd</sup> graders **not** meeting grade-level reading and writing expectations, 2025

Source: Colorado Department of Education

## Significant Disparities Persist in Academic Achievement

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Students Not Meeting Expectations on CMAS, English Language Arts, 2025



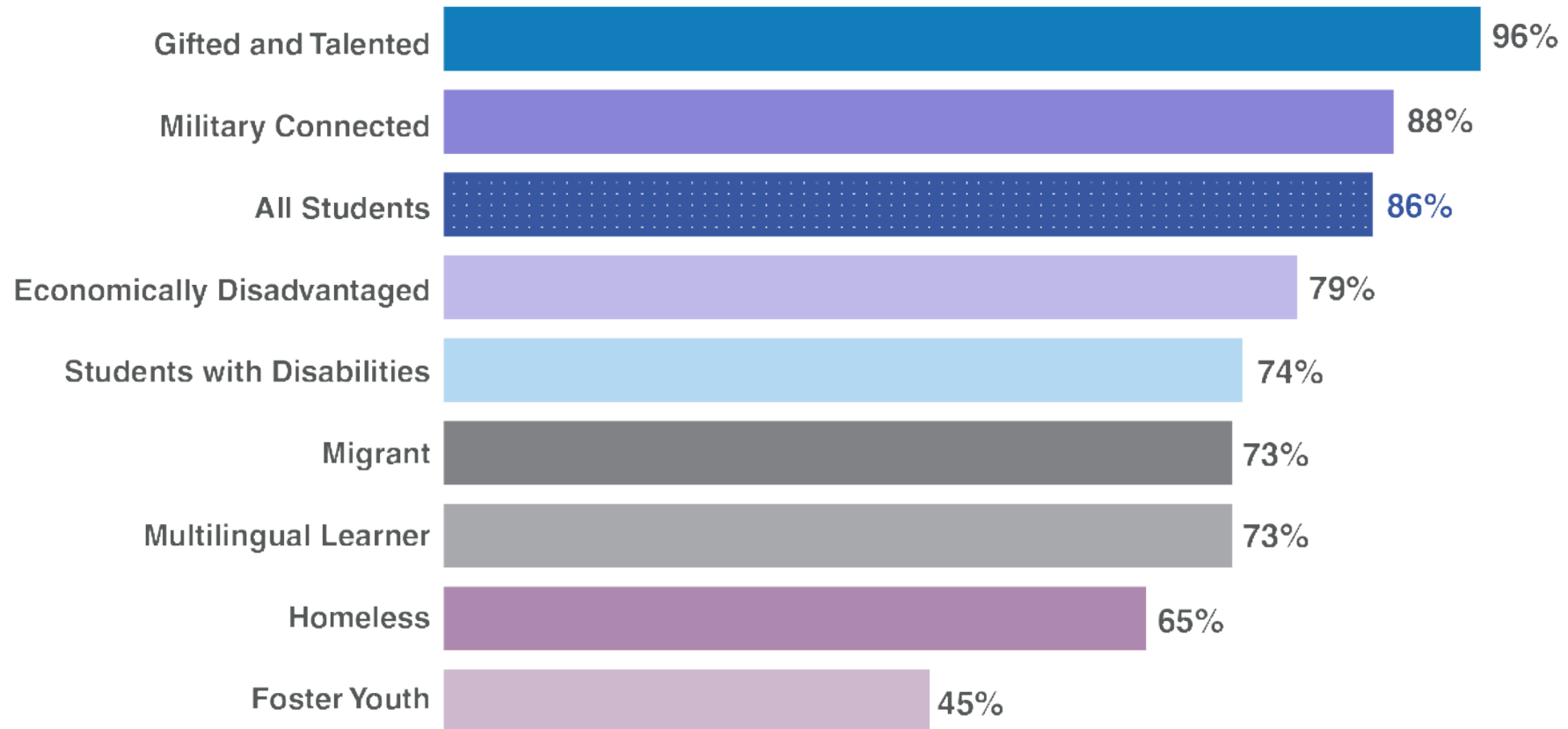
Source: Colorado Department of Education

## 8<sup>th</sup> Graders **Not** Meeting Academic Expectations in English Language Arts by Income and Special Education Status, 2025



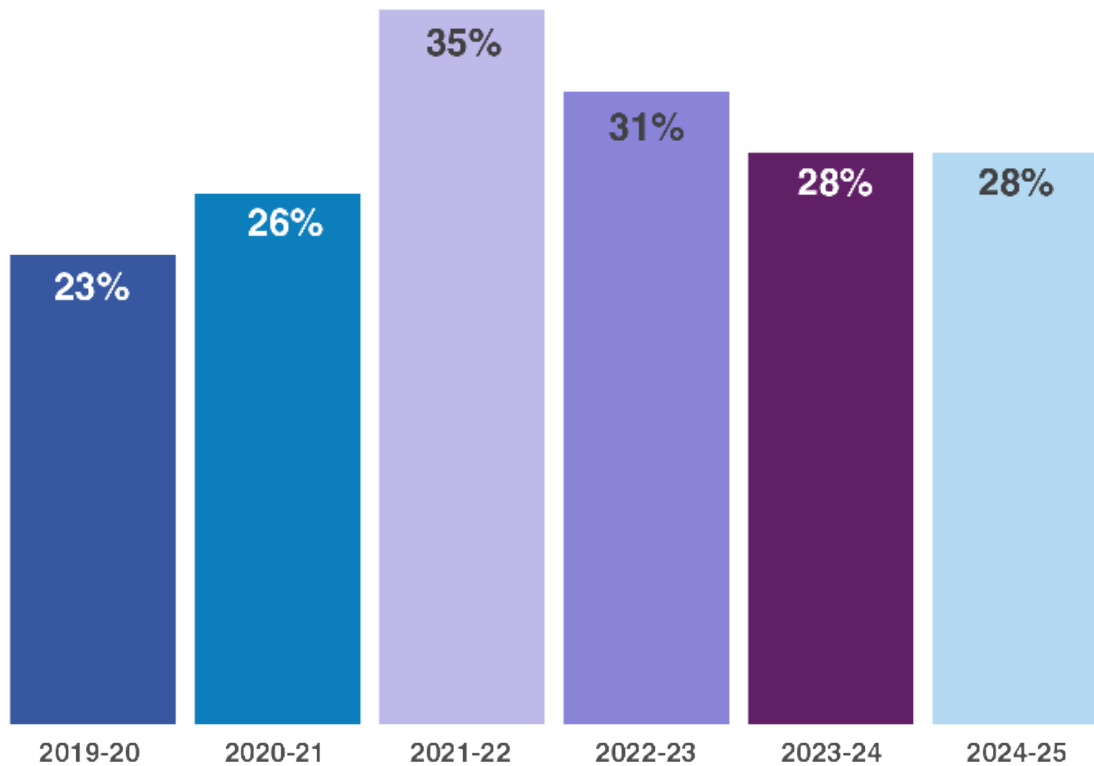
Source: Colorado Department of Education

## On-Time Graduation Rates by Student Characteristics, 2024-25 school year



Source: Colorado Department of Education

PK-12 Public School Students, 2016-26 school years



**Chronic Absenteeism is Declining, But Remains Higher Than Pre-Pandemic Levels**

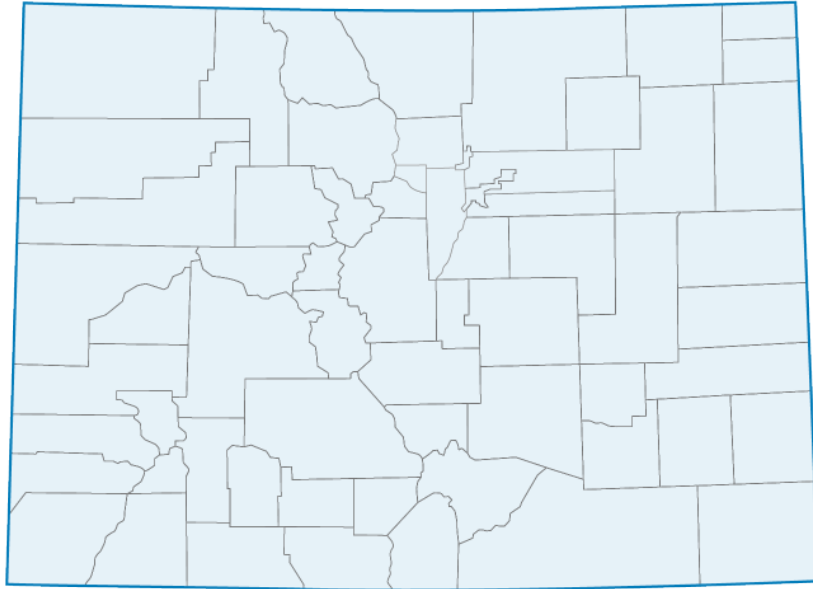
Source: Colorado Department of Education

# County Data



# County Data Tables

## Colorado



### COLORADO

#### POPULATION

2024 Total Population	5,956,729
2024 Child Population (% of Total Population)	1,246,088 (20.9%)
Ages 0-5	380,794
Ages 6-12	491,561
Ages 13-17	373,733
2024 Live Births	64,249

#### ECONOMIC SECURITY

2024 Median Household Income, All Households	\$96,871
2024 Children Experiencing Poverty (100% FPL)	11.2%
2024 Household Survival Budget, Family of Four	\$94,536
2024 Households Facing Financial Hardship	27.0%

#### CHILD WELFARE

FY 2024-25 Referrals	118,026
FY 2024-25 Children Involved with Child Welfare	13,322
FY 2024-25 Children in Foster Care	6,415

#### HEALTH

2024 Babies Born to Women Who Lacked Adequate Prenatal Care	32.5%
2024 Low Weight Births	9.6%
FY 2024-25 Children Enrolled in Medicaid	519,081
FY 2024-25 Children Enrolled in CHP+	97,176
2023 Children (Under 19) Without Health Insurance	4.2%

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD

2025 Infant Population Licensed Capacity Can Serve	13.0%
2025 Toddler Population Licensed Capacity Can Serve	29.0%
2025 Preschool Population Licensed Capacity Can Serve	99.0%
FY 2024-25 Children Enrolled in CCCAP (13 and younger)	27,598
FY 2024-25 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Colorado Universal Preschool Program	43,398

#### K-12 EDUCATION

2025-26 School Year PK-12 Pupil Enrollment	870,793
2025-26 School Year Students Who Are Economically Disadvantaged (185% FPL)	389,397 (45%)
2025-26 School Year English Language Learners	120,846 (13.9%)
2025-26 School Year Special Education Students	119,507 (13.7%)
2024-25 School Year K-12 Students Who Are Chronically Absent	28.4%
2025 Students Grades 3-8 Not Meeting Expectations on CMAS English Language Arts	55.0%
2025 Students Grades 3-8 Not Meeting Expectations on CMAS Mathematics	64.0%
2024-25 School Year On-Time Graduation Rate	85.6%

# Still Looking For More?



**Request a printed copy (English & Spanish)**



**Schedule a tailored presentation**



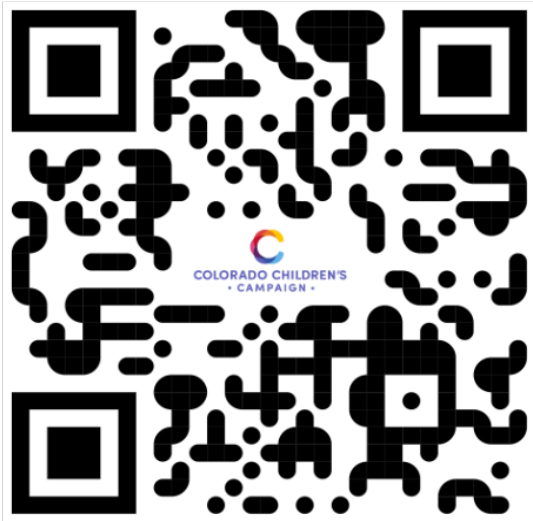
**Check-out the Data Center**



**Reach out**

# Stay Involved!

## Join our Newsletter



## Follow us on Social Media



## Submit an Action Alert

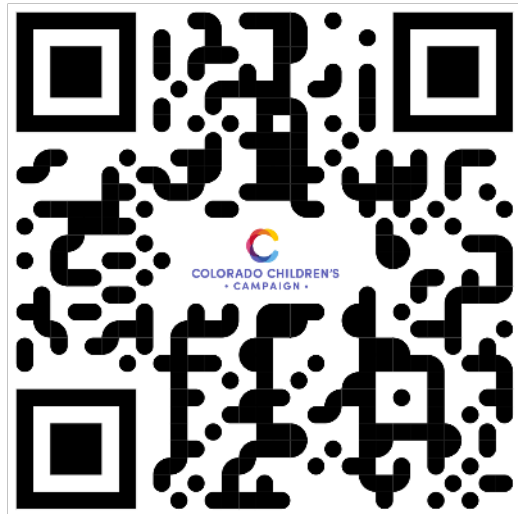


# Share Your Story

**Have you ever wanted to share your lived experience with policies or systems?**

Do you want to highlight an issue affecting you and your community?

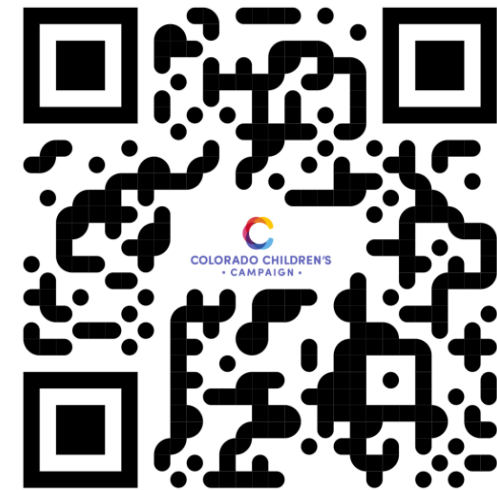
Would you be interested in sharing your personal experience in a media or blog post?



# Upcoming Events



Join us at our annual  
Connection Reception  
**Thursday, Sept. 17**



# Please Reach Out!

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Leah Caputo, Director of Advocacy & Community Engagement (schedule presentation)  
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Jackie Zubrzycki, Vice President of Communications (media contact)  
[Jackie@ColoradoKids.org](mailto:Jackie@ColoradoKids.org)



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