

Montana

A profile of its children

Understanding the facts about children in Montana illustrates why smart, proven investments in Montana's children and youth are critical to protecting Montana's competitive edge in a global market place.

Children in Montana¹

- 220,000 children (under the age of 18) live in the state. About one in 10 of these children is Native American;
- 44,000 children (20%) live in poverty (about \$22,100 or less for a family of four). Poverty rates are even higher among Native American children, with 42 percent (8,600 children) in poverty;
- 21,000 children (10%) live in extreme poverty (about \$11,000 or less for a family of four);
- 29 percent of children live in a household with only one parent.

Early Childhood²

- Currently, Montana has no state-funded pre-kindergarten program;
- Over 5,400 children participate in the federally-funded Head Start program, including almost 2,200 Native American children;
- Only 15 percent of 3-year-olds and 22 percent of 4-year-olds were enrolled Head Start or a special education preschool program;
- 64 percent of children under the age of 6 have both or their only parent in the work force.

School Readiness³

- Math:
 - 55 percent of fourth graders are below grade level in math;
 - 54 percent of eighth graders are below grade level in math.
- Reading:
 - 64 percent of fourth graders are reading below grade level;
 - 58 percent of eighth graders are reading below grade level.

Graduation Rates⁴

- 24 percent of high school students do not graduate on time with a high school diploma;
- These rates are worse for minority youth:
 - 54 percent of African-Americans do not graduate on time;
 - 47 percent of Latinos do not graduate on time;
 - 50 percent of Native Americans do not graduate on time.

¹ Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2011). *KIDS COUNT data center*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved on December 12, 2011 from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>; U.S. Census Bureau. (2011). *American Community Survey 2010 1-Year Estimates and 3-Year Estimates*. Table B09001, Population Under 18 Years of Age and Table B17001C, Poverty Status by Sex by Age. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved on December 13, 2011 from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>; Montana Kids Count. (2010). *2010 data book – Montana Kids Count*. Missoula, MT: University of Montana, Montana Kids Count. Retrieved on July 22, 2011 from <http://www.montanakidscount.org/filelib/26.pdf>;

² Barnett, W.S., Epstein, D.J., Carolan, M.E., Fitzgerald, J., Ackerman, D.J. & Friedman, A.H. (2010). *The state of preschool 2010 – State preschool yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research; Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2011). *KIDS COUNT data center*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved on December 12, 2011 from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>; U.S. Census Bureau. (2011). *American Community Survey 2010 5-Year Estimates*. Table B23008, Age of Own Children under 18 in Families by Living Arrangements by Employment Status. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved on December 13, 2011 from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>; Montana Kids Count. (2010). *2010 data book – Montana Kids Count*. Missoula, MT: University of Montana, Montana Kids Count. Retrieved on July 22, 2011 from <http://www.montanakidscount.org/filelib/26.pdf>;

³ National Center for Education Statistics (2011). *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2011* (NCES 2012-457). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.; National Center for Education Statistics (2011). *The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2011* (NCES 2012-458). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

⁴ Editorial Projects in Education. (2011). *EdWeek maps*. Bethesda, MD: Education Week. Retrieved on July 22, 2011 from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2011/06/09/index.html>