

MAINE

Understanding the facts about children in Maine illustrates why smart, proven investments in Maine's children and youth are critical to strengthening our current and future workforce and growing our economy

Children in Maine¹

- 248,842 children (under the age of 18) live in the state;
- 33,000 children (14 percent) live in poverty (about \$25,926 or less for a family of four);
- 13,000 children (5 percent) live in extreme poverty (about \$12,963 or less for a family of four);
- 31 percent of children live in a household with only one parent.

Child Care

- Although the number of children receiving child care vouchers increased to 6087 in FY 2018 (up from 5614 the previous year), the majority of eligible children are not being served.²
- Maine has a voluntary four-step Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) to help ensure child care quality. But only about half (57 percent) of licensed child care settings participate.³
- Of those who do participate, quality levels are not high: more than half (64 percent) are at Step 1, 12 percent are at Step 2, 10 percent are at Step 3, and 15 percent are at Step 4.⁴

Early Childhood Education

- Only 40 percent of eligible Maine children participated in Head Start programs (this statistic was before COVID-19; the number served dropped by about half with the pandemic and is gradually increasing back toward 40 percent).⁵
- In Fall 2020, 4,746 Maine four-year-olds are enrolled in public pre-k programs, which represents 38 percent of Maine four-year-olds.⁶ This is a 23 percent decrease from last fall, pre-pandemic (when 6183 children, 49 percent of four-year-olds) were enrolled. It is expected that enrollment rates will return to earlier levels, post-pandemic.
- Maine's state pre-k program meets 9 of the 10 National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) quality standards.⁷
- 66 percent of Maine children under the age of 6 have both or their only parent in the workforce.⁸

School Performance⁹

- On standardized tests given in grades 3-8 and to high school juniors, 44 percent of Maine students are below grade level in English, 64 percent are below grade level in math, and 40 percent are below grade level in science.

Graduation Rates

- 12.5 percent of high school students in Maine do not graduate on time.¹⁰

¹ Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2020). <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>

² 2019 Maine Kids Count. https://www.mekids.org/site/assets/files/1241/kidscount_2019.pdf

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⁵ Data provided by the Maine Department of Education on October 27, 2020.

⁶ Data from Maine Department of Education, December 2020.

⁷ National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) (2020) The State of Preschool 2019. http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Maine_YB2019.pdf

⁸ Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2020). <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>

⁹ Maine Department of Education ESSA dashboard. <https://www.maine.gov/doe/dashboard>

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