

# Children's Defense Fund

## Children's Rights

**<https://www.childrensdefense.org/2011/press-release-the-state-of-americas-children-2011-finds-children-in-jeopardy/>**

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### The State of Americas Children 2011 Finds Children in Jeopardy

**Washington, D.C. (July 18, 2011)** Americas children have fallen further behind in the last year in a range of leading indicators according to *The State of Americas Children 2011*, a new report from the Childrens Defense Fund. With unemployment, housing foreclosures, and hunger at historically high levels, childrens well-being is in jeopardy. In the United States one in five children is poor and children are our poorest age group. In 2009, millions of children fell into poverty due to the economic downturn, an increase of almost 10 percent, the largest single year rise since 1960. Today, 15.5 million children are adrift in a sea of poverty and every 32 seconds another child is born poor. Two-thirds of poor children live in families in which at least one family member works. The gap between rich and poor families has continued to grow. Income gains for the bottom 90 percent were completely wiped out by the recession, leaving the average income for the bottom 90 percent at its lowest level in more than a decade.

This report also shows continuing and increasing inequality in our country. Particularly striking is the fact that children of color, who are now 44 percent of Americas children, will be the majority of children in 2019 just eight years from now. In nine states and the District of Columbia, this is already the case. Millions of poor children of color are at increased risk of dying before their first birthday, living in poverty and extreme poverty, being uninsured and in poor health, lagging behind in early childhood development, lacking a quality education, dropping out of school and being excluded by zero tolerance school discipline policies, being stuck in foster care without permanent families, ending up in the juvenile and criminal justice systems, being caught in the high school and college completion gap, being unemployed or being killed by guns. A Cradle to Prison Pipeline haunts them from birth to adulthood.

Black children are facing one of the worst crises since slavery, and in many areas, Hispanic and American Indian children are not far behind. The alarm bells should be ringing across our country. If we compare just Black child well-being to child well-being in other nations, 70 nations have a lower infant mortality rate including Thailand, Costa Rica, Lebanon and Serbia, said Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Childrens Defense Fund. This report should be a wake-up call to our political leaders and every citizen. We need to get our priorities straight. We must not cut funding for programs benefiting children including education and other survival investments for poor children while protecting massive federal subsidies for corporations and individuals?

The best hope children have of lifting themselves out of poverty is a quality education with a good job at the end of the line. *The State of Americas Children 2011* details how our schools are failing our children. American education, once the envy of the world, is in dire straits. More than 60 percent of fourth, eighth and 12th grade public school students are reading or doing math below grade level. For Black and Hispanic students in these grades, it is nearly 80 percent or more. Our children are losing rather than gaining ground.

*The State of Americas Children 2011* is a comprehensive annual report produced by the Childrens Defense Fund using the latest data available. The report includes a foreword by Marian Wright Edelman, Moments in Americaa snapshot of children each day in America, and 11 chapters on the well-being of children in America.

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