Children with Special Health Care Needs

 properties

Prevalence of Special Health Care Needs Among Children: 2011-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>California</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definition:** Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 with special health care needs (e.g., in 2011-2012, an estimated 15% of California children had special health care needs).


Children with Major Disabilities: 2011-2015; Showing Counties

**Definition:** Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 with one or more serious difficulties in hearing, vision, cognitive ability, ambulatory ability, self-care, and/or independent living (e.g., in 2011-2015, an estimated 3.1% of California children had major disabilities).

**Data Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (Dec. 2016).

What It Is

On kidsdata.org, indicators related to children with special health care needs (CSHCN) include data on demographics and other characteristics of special needs children, the impact of conditions on CSHCN and their families, health insurance coverage, and access to and quality of health care and other services. See kidsdata.org’s CSHCN category for a full list of indicators.

In this topic on characteristics of children with special needs, kidsdata.org also provides the number and percentage of children under 18 with major disabilities, as single-year and five-year estimates, by county, city, and school district. Five-year estimates are available by legislative district, as well. These data also are available by health insurance status.

In addition, the number and percentage of public school students enrolled in special education by county and school district are available, as are the number and percentage by primary disability and by race/ethnicity at the county level.

Finally, kidsdata.org offers the number of active enrollees in the California Children’s Services (CCS) program (i.e., enrollees with paid claims), by age group and county.

Why This Topic Is Important

More than 1 million California children and youth have a need for health care services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally. Their ongoing health problems—physical, behavioral, or developmental—can affect their ability to function and participate in important educational and social activities. In some cases their health problems can shorten their lives. Medical care for children with special health care needs (CSHCN) is often complicated by the co-occurrence of social, emotional, and academic problems. Because of the higher caregiving burdens, families of CSHCN tend to experience more stress and difficulties with employment and finances than other families.

CSHCN account for more than 40% of all health care costs among children nationwide, despite making up only about 16% of the U.S. child population. Though advances in medical care have extended and improved the lives of millions of children, obtaining timely, appropriate, and affordable care remains a problem for many families. More than four in five CSHCN do not receive one or more basic health care services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definition:** Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 with special health care needs, by race/ethnicity (e.g., in 2011-2012, an estimated 13.2% of Hispanic/Latino children in California had special health care needs).


Active California Children’s Services (CCS) Enrollees, by Age Group: 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under Age 1</td>
<td>25,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 1-21</td>
<td>173,920</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definition:** Number of enrollees in the California Children’s Services (CCS) program with a paid claim, by age group (e.g., in 2014, there were 25,531 active CCS enrollees under age 1 in California).

**Data Source:** Stanford Center for Policy, Outcomes, and Prevention, analysis of CCS claims data (Jun. 2017).

How Children Are Faring

An estimated 15% of California children under age 18 have special health care needs, according to a 2011-2012 survey; among counties with data, estimates range from 14% to 19%. In 2009-2010, more than half of CSHCN in California had two or more chronic conditions, and 16% had four or more. Commonly reported conditions among California children with special health care needs (CSHCN) included allergies, asthma, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, and developmental delay.

In 2015, about 3% of California children had major disabilities including serious impairments in vision, hearing, walking, cognition, or self-care. Among uninsured children, 1.9% had one or more major disabilities, compared to 3.1% of insured children. Across counties with data, estimates of children with major disabilities ranged from 1.8% to 9% in 2011-2015.

In 2014, nearly 200,000 children and youth with chronic diseases and/or acute injuries were actively enrolled in the California Children’s Services (CCS) program. Of these, more than 25,000 were infants under age 1. Overall, statewide enrollment in CCS has increased by more than 35% since 2009.

According to 2011-2012 estimates, 61% of CSHCN in California have had at least one adverse experience, including living with someone with a drug or alcohol problem, divorce of parents, or economic hardship. Furthermore, an estimated 63% of CSHCN are resilient, meaning they are usually or always calm and in control when facing a challenge.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic: https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/14/characteristics-of-children-with-special-needs/summary