KidsData

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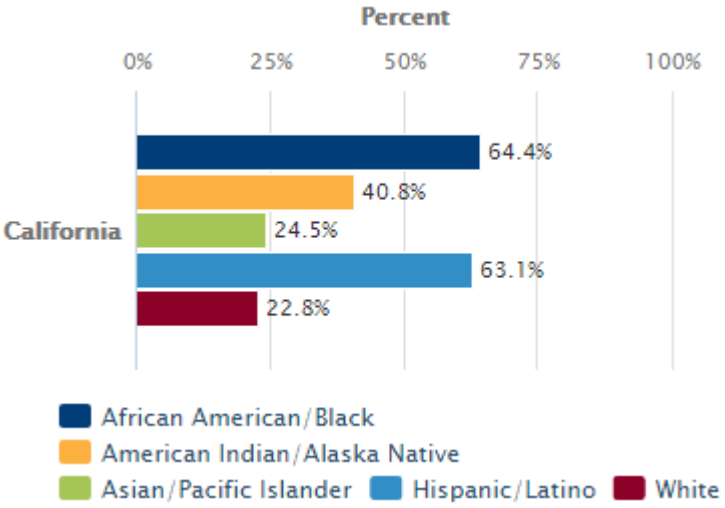
Children's Health Care in California

Children Ages 0-18 Without Health Insurance Coverage: 2021

Locations	Percent
California	3.5%
Alameda County	2.6%
Contra Costa County	2.8%
Fresno County	2.0%
Kern County	4.2%
Los Angeles County	3.6%
Orange County	3.6%
Riverside County	3.9%
Sacramento County	2.4%
San Bernardino County	4.6%
San Diego County	3.6%
Santa Clara County	1.5%

Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-18 with and without health insurance coverage at the time of survey, by type of insurance and age group (e.g., in 2021, 43.5% of California children ages 6-18 were covered by public health insurance).
Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey summary files and public use microdata (Mar. 2024).

Monthly Medi-Cal Enrollment Among Children Ages 0-20, by Race/Ethnicity: 2024



Definition: Average percentage of children and youth ages 0-20 enrolled in Medi-Cal per month, by race/ethnicity (e.g., on average in 2024, 63.1% of Hispanic/Latino children and youth in California were enrolled in Medi-Cal each month).
Data Source: California Dept. of Health Care Services, Eligible Individuals Under Age 21 Enrolled in Medi-Cal (Dec. 2025); California Dept. of Finance, Population Estimates and Projections (Sept. 2024).

Yearly Medicaid and CHIP Enrollment Among Children Ages 0-18

What It Is

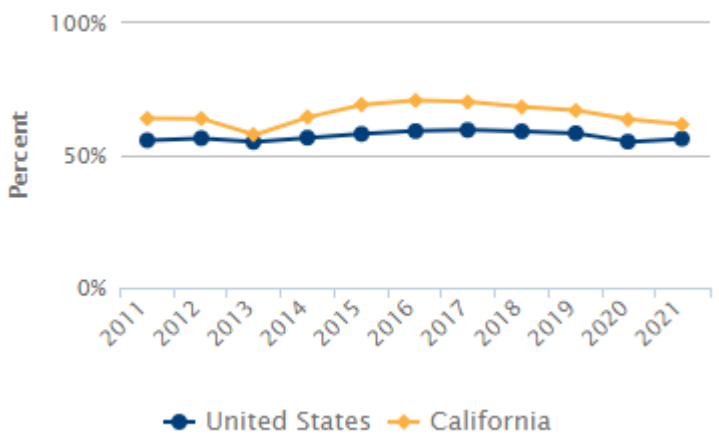
Kidsdata.org's health care measures include:

- Children ages 0-18 with and without health insurance, by type of coverage, age group, and race/ethnicity
- Children and young adults ages 0-21 with means-tested public health insurance; also, for California and the U.S. only, coverage by age group and race/ethnicity
- Total yearly enrollment in Medicaid (Medi-Cal) and CHIP among children ages 0-18 (California and U.S. only)
- Average monthly enrollment in Medi-Cal among children and young adults ages 0-20, by age group, and, for California only, by race/ethnicity and most common written languages
- Children ages 0-17 who receive health care within a medical home
- The number of school-based or -linked health centers serving public schools

Why This Topic Is Important

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, every child should receive high-quality health care that is accessible, family centered, culturally effective, coordinated, continuous, compassionate, and comprehensive. This care is best delivered through a medical home—a primary care model in which all of a child's health needs are met through partnerships between the family, clinical professionals, and community resources. This model is associated with better health outcomes and lower costs, as children who receive care in the context of a medical home are more likely to have regular preventive check-ups (which can lead to the early identification and treatment of problems) and are less likely to have unmet needs, emergency room visits, and in-patient hospital stays. However, estimates indicate that fewer than half of children receive care within a medical home, statewide and nationally.

Not surprisingly, children with adequate, consistent health insurance coverage are more likely to access needed care and to have positive health outcomes than those with coverage gaps or no coverage. Public insurance programs, such as Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), play a crucial role in providing coverage for young people (more than half of Californians ages 0-20 are enrolled in Medi-Cal, the state's Medicaid/CHIP



Definition: Percentage of children ages 0-18 enrolled in Medicaid and/or CHIP at some point during the federal fiscal year (e.g., in the 2021 federal fiscal year, 45% of California children were enrolled in Medicaid).
Data Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Statistical Enrollment Data System, Annual Enrollment Reports; California Dept. of Finance, Population Estimates and Projections; U.S. Census Bureau, Population and Housing Unit Estimates (Mar. 2025).

Children Ages 0-17 Receiving Care Within a Medical Home: 2016-2019

Locations	Percent
United States	48.2%
California	43.1%
Alameda County	44.8%
Contra Costa County	46.5%
Fresno County	37.2%
Kern County	39.0%
Los Angeles County	38.5%
Orange County	42.6%
Riverside County	41.3%
Sacramento County	42.3%
San Bernardino County	39.2%
San Diego County	44.0%
Santa Clara County	44.6%

Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 who receive coordinated, ongoing, comprehensive health care within a medical home (e.g., in 2016-2019, 43.1% of California children received care within a medical home).
Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the National Survey of Children's Health and the American Community Survey (Jan. 2021).

program) and easing the strain of health care costs on family budgets. Research shows that Medicaid enrollment in childhood is associated with a host of lifelong benefits, including improved educational outcomes, fewer health problems later in life, and higher incomes in adulthood.

How Children Are Faring

An estimated 97% of California children ages 0-18, and 95% of children nationwide, had some form of health insurance coverage in 2021—up from less than 90% in 2008. Despite these gains, gaps persist. For example, more than 1 in 20 American Indian/Alaska Native children statewide were uninsured in 2021, compared with around 1 in 25 Hispanic/Latino children, and fewer than 1 in 40 white children.

More than three in five California children ages 0-18 (62%) were enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP at some point during the 2021 federal fiscal year, a larger share than the percentage enrolled nationally (56%). In calendar year 2024, more than half (52%) of the state's young people ages 0-20 were enrolled in Medi-Cal per month on average, with figures ranging from 23% (Placer) to 78% (Tulare) across counties with data. Statewide, average monthly Medi-Cal enrollments among African American/black (64%) and Hispanic/Latino (63%) children and youth were more than double the enrollment rates for their Asian/Pacific Islander (25%) and white (23%) peers.

Parent reports from 2016-2019 show that 43% of the state's children ages 0-17 received health care within a medical home, compared with 48% nationwide. Across California regions, estimates of children receiving care within a medical home ranged from 35% (Merced County) to 54% (Marin County).

View references for this text and additional research on this topic: https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/51/health-care/summary