Virginia children of every race and ethnicity face hardship

Percent of Children Living Below 200% of Poverty by Race and Ethnicity

32% of all children

Black: 51%
Latino: 51%
Two or More Races: 33%
White: 23%
Asian/Pacific Islander: 19%

Over time, a variety of federal, state, and local policy choices have had disproportionate impacts on families living in certain regions or belonging to certain races and ethnicities. Those effects are still felt today. To improve economic opportunity, we must recognize children have different starting points, which may require different policy solutions.
While the majority of children in Virginia are White, children of color have experienced the greatest population growth.

Research shows that areas with the greatest economic growth are those with an increasingly diverse population.* This is good news for Virginia, as its varied economic opportunities attract families from across the world to work and thrive here.

The majority of children in Virginia today (54%) are White, non-Hispanic. Over the last 16 years (2000 to 2016), the 10% increase in the number of children of color has led to a near even split between children of color and White children in the commonwealth.

This increasing diversity of the child population means we need to consider what opportunities and potential policy solutions exist for all children to develop into healthy, productive adults who will support and drive our economy.

Data helps us ask more questions about what is happening in a community and often does not provide any direct answers. To learn more about the data, sources, or child well-being in your community, please contact KIDS COUNT Director Beth Nolan at beth@vakids.org.

To learn more or get involved, visit www.vakids.org.

We champion public policies that improve the lives of Virginia’s children.

Voices is the home to the KIDS COUNT Data Center, which is generously funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.


FPL stands for Federal Poverty Level. The federal poverty definition consists of a series of thresholds based on family size and composition. In 2016, a 200% poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was $48,600.

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey & Small Area Estimates 2000 to 2016