

# BUILDING CALIFORNIA'S FUTURE

A voter guide to championing policies that improve the lives of California's children



## 2018 ELECTION GUIDE

This voter education material is nonpartisan and is in no way intended to reflect an endorsement for, or opposition to, any candidate or political party.





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*Mayra Alvarez*

California's next governor and elected leaders will face critical policy decisions that have the power to uplift children and families and ensure they have the resources and opportunities they need to be healthy, educated, and financially secure. Leaders across the political spectrum have a responsibility to protect children's health, rights and well-being. As we look to the future, it is critical for us to unite in our continued efforts to prioritize our children.

While California has made big strides in advancing children's well-being in recent years, we have not fully lived up to the vision of a just and equitable state for every child. More than 1 in 5 California children live in poverty - most of them children of color. Over half of 3rd graders cannot read at grade level, including 82% of English Learners and students with disabilities. More than 500,000 children with mental health needs go without necessary treatment.

California can – and must – do better.

The goal of this election guide is simple: to champion policies that improve the lives of California's children, particularly those who have been historically marginalized. Our organizations have come together to educate voters and advocate for policies that ensure every child has the same chance for a healthy and bright future.

We encourage you to join us in this mission. We hope the information in this election guide will inform the conversations you have with your friends, neighbors and especially candidates for office. Most importantly, we hope this guide will make it easier to identify worthy candidates who understand the challenges facing children and families, and who commit to taking action to level the playing field for California's children, particularly poor children and children of color.

**Shimica Gaskins**

Executive Director  
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*Shimica Gaskins*

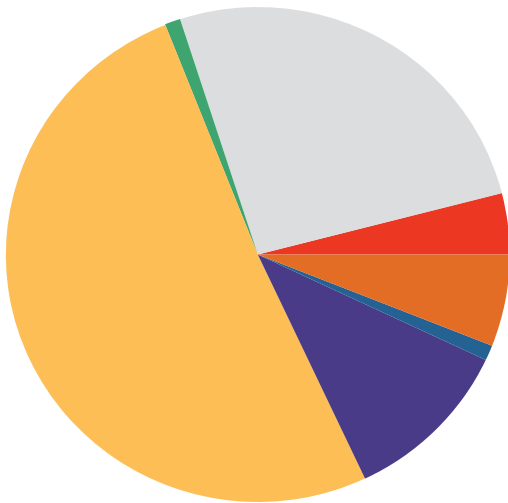
# Demographics

## 9,118,201 Children live in California.

Immigrant children are a core part of our state, **with half of California's children** — approximately **4.5 million** — living in immigrant families.

An estimated **1,100,000** children live in families where one or more of their parents are undocumented immigrants

### CHILDREN OF COLOR ACCOUNT FOR THE MAJORITY OF CALIFORNIA'S CHILD POPULATION.



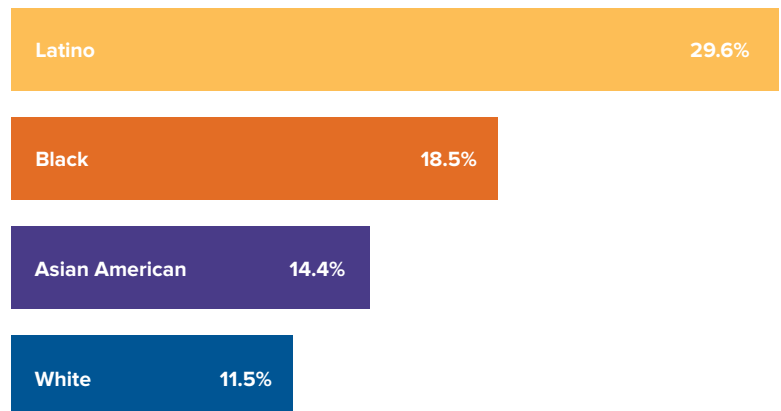
American Indian/Alaska Native - 0.4%  
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander - 0.4%  
Black - 5.3%  
Multiracial - 4.7%  
Asian American - 11.0%  
White - 26.9%  
Latino - 51.4%

### NEARLY HALF OF CALIFORNIA'S CHILDREN LIVE IN OR NEAR POVERTY

(based on the Census Bureau's poverty threshold)

**4.7%** of children are in deep poverty  
**21.6%** of children are poor  
**46.0%** of children are poor or near poor

### CHILD POVERTY RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY

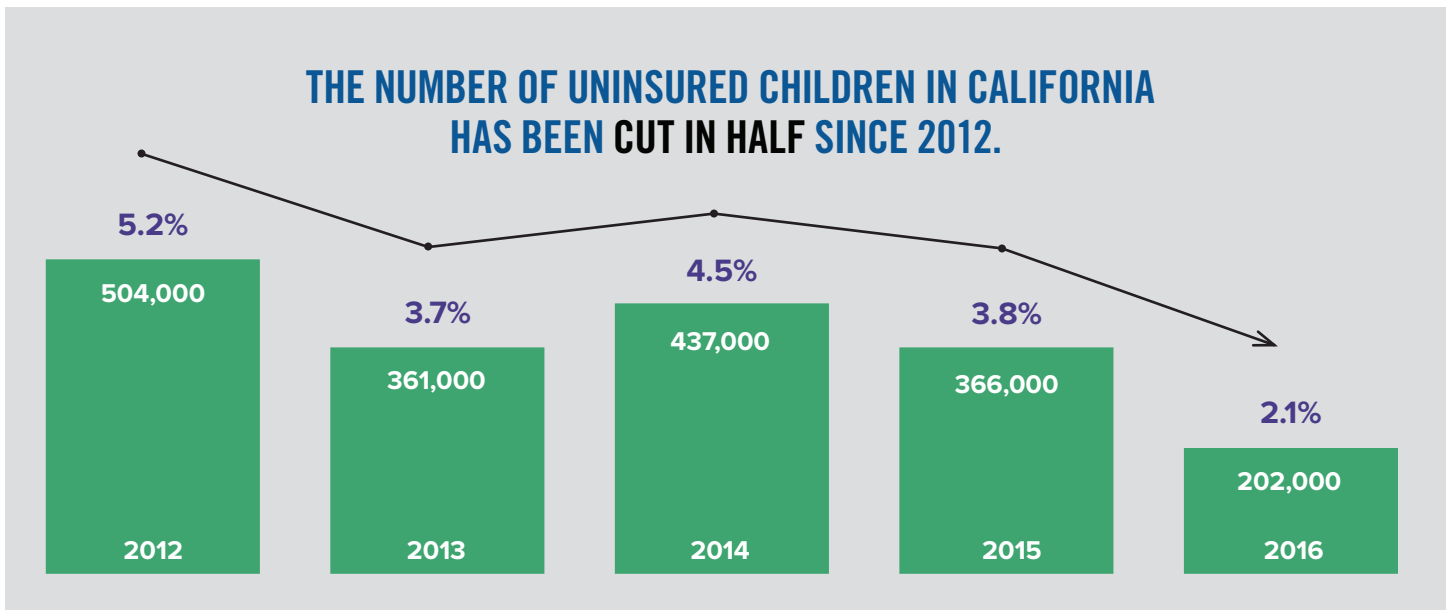


# Health

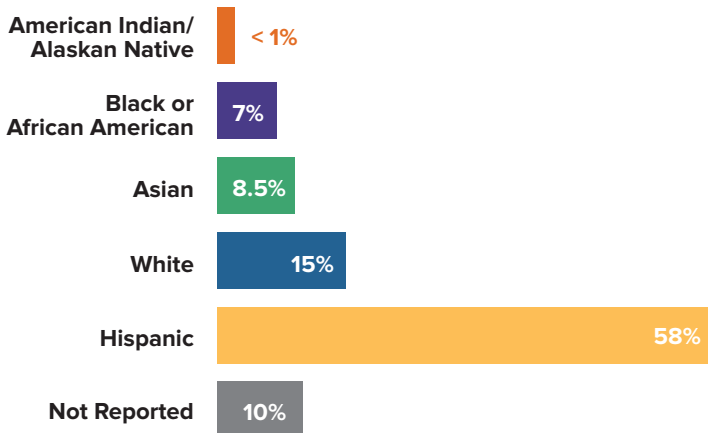
Ensuring All Children Have Access to Quality, Affordable Health Coverage and Care

California has made significant progress in improving children’s health outcomes, thanks in large part to federal programs – such as the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, and CHIP – and state investments like Health4All Kids.

Now that nearly all children in California have access to coverage, the state must make it simple to keep coverage that is affordable and meaningful, as well as ensure timely access to the comprehensive pediatric care children need to thrive.



### RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN MEDI-CAL



### Nearly 1/3

of California children have untreated tooth decay, and Latino and low-income children experience more untreated tooth decay than others.

### 580,000

children do not have access to needed school-based mental health services.





# Questions for Candidates

1

More than half of California's children rely on Medicaid for their health coverage. If the federal government makes cuts or structural changes to Medicaid, how will you ensure that no child in California loses coverage or benefits?

2

Dental disease is the most common chronic disease in children, while poor oral health in pregnant women is tied to premature birth and poor birth outcomes. Medi-Cal offers a comprehensive dental benefit to children and pregnant women through Denti-Cal. If the federal government changes the funding for Medicaid, what will you do to address the dental care needs of children and pregnant women?

3

Bringing care to where children live is critical to securing access to care. What will you do to ensure that children have access to health services, including mental and oral health, in community settings like schools and child care centers? How do community-based health providers, like home visitors, community health workers, and promotores, contribute to your vision for a health care workforce?

4

Many adults in California, including parents, lack health insurance. Research shows that when parents have health insurance, their kids are more likely to have health coverage and use it. What should California do about uninsured parents, including undocumented immigrant parents?

5

Brain research confirms that untreated childhood trauma and toxic stress lead to problems throughout a person's lifespan including adult-onset disease. Building resiliency and healing is possible through trauma-informed health care, education, anti-poverty measures, and juvenile justice reform. What initiatives would you champion to mitigate the effects of toxic stress or trauma and build resilience in children?



# Education

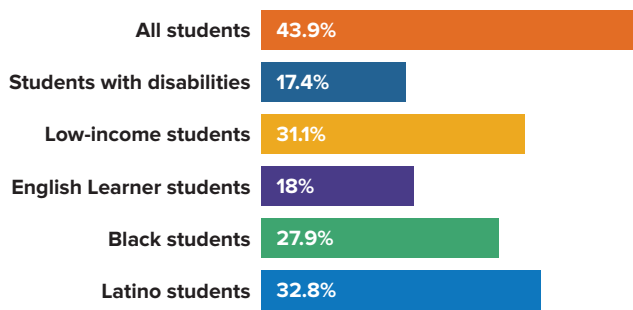
Adequately and Equitably Investing in Public Education to Activate the Potential of Every Child

Though public school funding has increased considerably since the passage of Proposition 30 and the implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), California still lags behind most states in per pupil funding. Educational outcomes are low, and troubling disparities by race/ethnicity, gender, language, and ability level still persist.

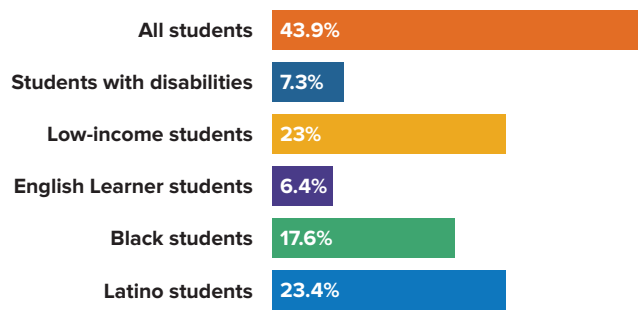
There are over **6.2 million** students attending public schools in California.

## EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES VARY SUBSTANTIALLY ACROSS RACE, INCOME, LANGUAGE, AND OTHER FACTORS.

PERCENTAGE OF 3RD GRADERS THAT MET OR EXCEEDED THE STATE'S LITERACY STANDARDS IN 2017



PERCENTAGE OF 8TH GRADERS THAT MET OR EXCEEDED THE STATE'S LITERACY STANDARDS IN 2017



In recent years, suspension rates have dropped across the state, however, disparities between student subgroups persist, particularly for Black students.

In the 2016-17 school year, Black students made up **5.8 percent** of total enrollment, but **15.5 percent** of students suspended at least once.

Suspensions directly **reduce the graduation rates** of suspended students.

The long-term cost of suspensions for one graduating class in California is approximately **\$2.7 billion**.

## Questions for Candidates

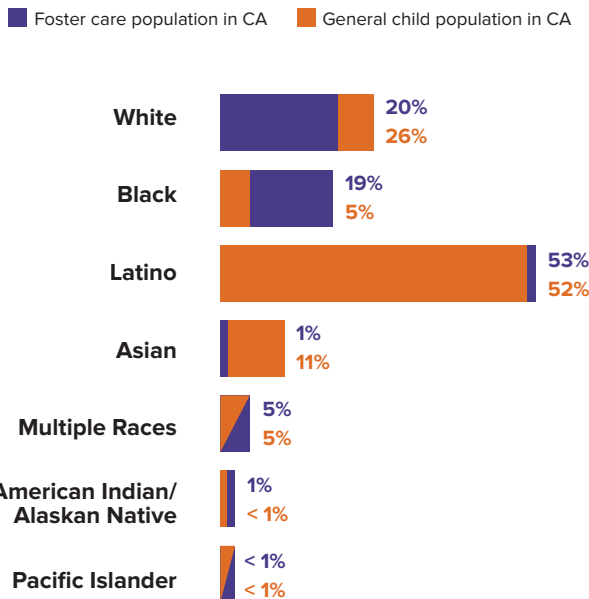
- 1 Building on the Local Control Funding Formula, how can California improve school accountability, transparency, and community engagement to better meet the needs of low income students, foster youth and English learners?
- 2 How can counties and districts be supported in providing academic and social-emotional supports to students, especially to high need students?
- 3 How will you limit the use of suspensions and expulsions to ensure that children remain in school?

# Child Welfare

Improving Outcomes for Children Involved in California's Child Welfare System

California's child welfare system has historically been overly reliant on foster care, group homes, and congregate care, resulting in adverse outcomes for children and youth. California's Continuum of Care Reform, which became law in 2015, promises to solidify the importance of committed, nurturing, and permanent families to facilitate children's successful transitions into adulthood. Positive investments in communities, prevention, and early intervention, are needed to strengthen families and support the development of all children.

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF COLOR — ESPECIALLY BLACK CHILDREN — ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY REPRESENTED IN CALIFORNIA'S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM.



## Questions for Candidates

- 1 What will you do to ensure that California's Continuum of Care Reform efforts are successful?
- 2 Children and families who come into contact with the child welfare system have typically experienced intergenerational trauma. How will you ensure that our most vulnerable children are receiving the appropriate trauma-informed care?
- 3 How will you ensure that the child welfare system has the capacity and resources to recruit and train prospective foster parents?
- 4 What role does technology play in facilitating information exchange efforts to support providers, youth, and others involved with California's child welfare system?

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE CONTACT WITH THE DELINQUENCY SYSTEM.



In L.A. County, an estimated **4 out of 5** youths in probation placement or camp had been referred to child protective services for maltreatment at least once.

In 2016, an estimated \_\_\_\_\_  
**74,000 Children**  
 in California were abused and neglected.

Approximately \_\_\_\_\_  
**54,000 Children**  
 were placed in foster care, group homes, or congregate care settings.

# Immigration

## Standing by Children in Immigrant Families

Federal actions have created an environment that is particularly harmful to children in immigrant families. Executive orders to expand immigration enforcement and limit immigration; decisions to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) programs; and federal proposals to limit access and utilization of public benefits put children across the state at risk. These actions have led to deportation and/or detention of family members and a climate of fear that may result in reduced incomes, housing and food insecurity, and an increased risk of entering the child welfare system for children.

Children in immigrant families are the driving force behind future growth of the population, labor force, and economy. California needs to do more to ensure that all children—regardless of immigration status—are safe, healthy, and able to thrive.



Half of all California children (about 4.5 million) live in immigrant families.



California is home to over **200,000 DACA-enrolled individuals** of the estimated 800,000 living in the U.S.

About **1 in 6 children** in California have at least one parent who is undocumented.



## Questions for Candidates

1

Research shows that heightened immigration enforcement has harmful effects on children's well-being. How will you ensure that children in immigrant families are better supported?

2

Children with parents or other family members at risk of detention or deportation are more likely to experience trauma and increased stress, which can affect their health and other aspects of their lives. What will you do to ensure that these children receive the mental health support and other resources to lessen the effects of this trauma?

3

What actions will you take to ensure that current laws to guarantee safe havens for immigrant children are being implemented adequately?

4

As the federal government moves to limit access and utilization of public benefits for children in immigrant and mixed-status families, how will you ensure that the basic needs of these children are met?



# Poverty

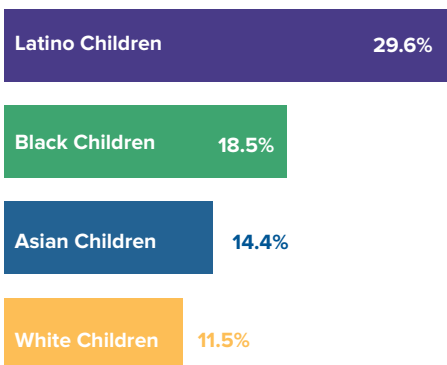
Ending the Cycle of Poverty for Children in California

Despite the state's prosperity, California has the highest child poverty rate in the nation, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure. Poverty has a devastating impact on child health and well-being and undermines academic and future economic success. California must ensure that children living in poverty have the necessary resources to prosper and thrive.



More than **1 in 5** California children live in poverty

## CHILD POVERTY DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTS CHILDREN OF COLOR.



## CHILD POVERTY NEGATIVELY IMPACTS:

- Brain development
- Educational outcomes
- Health
- Graduation rates
- Income as an adult

# 83%

of poor children in California lived in families with at least one working adult.

## SAFETY NET PROGRAMS PLAY A KEY ROLE IN REDUCING POVERTY.

Without programs like CalFresh, the federal and state Earned Income Tax Credit, CalWORKs, child tax credit, and school meals, **1.3 million** more children would be poor and the percentage of children in deep poverty would be doubled.

## Questions for Candidates

1

What would you do to end child poverty during your time in office?

2

Public assistance programs such as CalFresh, CalWORKs, and the Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program provide important resources for families living in poverty. What will you do to ensure that these programs are optimized such that they meet the needs of all California children living in poverty?

3

Research suggests that child poverty has substantial economic costs both in terms of lost productivity and earnings, and increased health and crime costs. How would you shift resources toward preventing child poverty, rather than paying the cost for the consequences of poverty?

4

Poverty measures do not capture the true cost of meeting basic needs in California. What is your vision for ensuring that families have the economic security to meet the basic needs of all children?

# Technology

Leveraging Technology to Improve the Future of California's Children

Advances in technology have the potential to enhance health care, education, child welfare, and other areas that touch the lives of California's children, but the state has been slow in promoting innovations such as telehealth and virtual dental homes, and in securing other digital priorities including STEM education and affordable broadband access for low-income families. California must do more to leverage advances in technology to improve health, education, and wellbeing of all children.



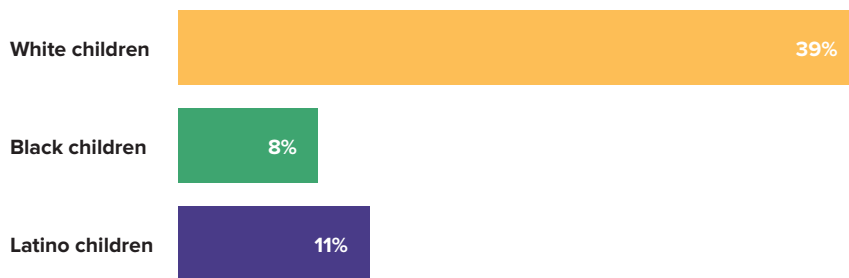
Only **one in ten** California elementary students receives interactive and engaging science instruction on a regular basis.



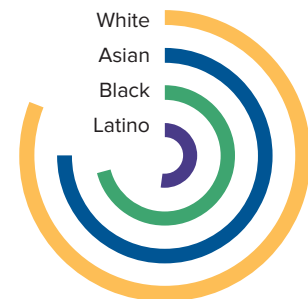
In rural areas of California, approximately **43 percent** of households reported internet access was unavailable, or unreliable.

## DISPARITIES PERSIST FOR CHILDREN OF COLOR IN TERMS OF STEM EDUCATION AND CAREERS

In 2011, 39 percent of White eighth graders reached the proficiency level in science while only 8 percent of Black students and 11 percent of Latino students reached that level.



Latino families are still much less likely to use broadband than Black, Asian, and White families



## Questions for Candidates

- 1 How will you work to increase equitable access to broadband and information technology resources to help children learn and thrive?
- 2 How will you increase STEM opportunities for families in low-income communities?
- 3 Telehealth has been proven to increase access and outcomes for children and youth where there are healthcare access issues or provider shortages. How will you prioritize advancing telehealth technologies, updating Medi-Cal reimbursement, and other policies to address children's needs?

# Youth Justice

Transforming Our Youth Justice System to Ensure Equity and Well-Being

Youth engaging in developmentally appropriate behavior too often come into contact with law enforcement, resulting in justice system involvement - especially minority youth. Youth who commit serious and violent offenses are often victims of violence, neglect, and other abuse, the effects of which are worsened by punishment systems. Investment in positive youth development can help alleviate public safety concerns and the underlying root causes of unhealthy behaviors by improving access for youth to quality support and services in their own communities.



California spent more than **\$20 billion** to prosecute, incarcerate, and supervise people across the state, in the 2014-2015 fiscal year.



Racial disparities have increased at each step of justice system processing, even as the actual numbers of youth in the system decline.



Despite declining numbers, California still prosecuted over **11,000 youth** in 2015 for “status offenses” like truancy, running away, curfew violations and probation violations.

## Questions for Candidates

1

How will you ensure that California continues to reduce its reliance on formal justice systems, and focus more on solutions proven to work — like education, health care, and community-based interventions?

2

Given how costly law enforcement systems have been and remain, what changes would you like to see in how money is allocated by the state to address youth delinquency and crime?

3

The juvenile justice system, including law enforcement, prosecution and defense offices, courts and probation is mostly a localized county-based system. What is the role of the Governor and the state in ensuring that practices across the 58 counties are consistent, fair and effective?



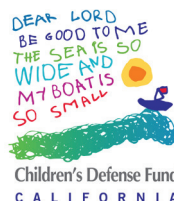


Resources available at [www.childrenspartnership.org/tools-list/voter-guide-2018/](http://www.childrenspartnership.org/tools-list/voter-guide-2018/)



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