We know that when children are healthy, they are more likely to succeed in school and in life. That’s why The Children’s Partnership works to level the playing field so that all children have the resources and opportunities they need to be healthy and thrive.

This infographic, the fifth in a series, provides an overview of key child health facts in California and nationally to inform the work ahead. Now more than ever, we must work together to make California the best state to raise healthy, thriving children.

**MASKED HEALTH INEQUITIES**

The perpetual practice of racial misclassification of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people in the United States presents stark challenges to accurately highlight health inequities, particularly in health care and educational settings. Because AI/AN communities have been greatly undercounted and uncounted in data collection efforts across state, county and federal agencies—including in the federal census—data that reveals disparities is highly limited. Racial misclassification drastically underestimates the burden of disease that AI/AN communities face and masks disparities compared to the general population or other groups.

**POPULATION**

There are at least 199,642 children and youth under 18 who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN), including those who also identify with another race or ethnicity, making up just over 2% of the state’s 9 million children. Of these children at least:

- Nearly 90% of the AI/AN population live in URBAN AREAS.
- 28,268 identify as AI/AN alone.
- 125,532 identify as AI/AN and Latinx.
- 2,906 identify as AI/AN and Black.
- 29,604 identify as AI/AN and white.
- 11,548 identify as AI/AN and two or more races, not including Latinx.

Nearly 90% of the AI/AN population live in URBAN AREAS.

**MENTAL HEALTH**

On average, more than 1 in 3 (34%) AI/AN youth in middle and high schools reported experiencing feelings of **CHRONIC SADNESS AND HOPELESSNESS**, compared to the 33% across all 7th, 9th, and 11th graders. Nearly 1 in 2 (44%) of AI/AN 11th graders experienced these feelings—the highest of any subgroup.

Nationally, overall, the highest teenage suicide rates are among AI/AN teenagers. In the last fifteen years, **SUICIDE RATES FOR AI/AN GIRLS HAVE RISEN BY 60%**—the largest increase among any demographic group in the country.

In California, **1 in 4 (25%)** AI/AN teens across the state in 11th grade had considered suicide in the last year before they were surveyed—the highest of any subgroup.
HEALTH COVERAGE AND ACCESS

About 93% of AI/AN children 18 and under have health insurance, leaving at least **5,400 CHILDREN UNINSURED.**

About 1 in 3 AI/AN children and youth under 21 (17,400) rely on Medi-Cal for health coverage, compared to nearly 1 in 2 of all children and youth under 21 in California.

Furthermore, many AI/AN families receive direct health care from Indian Health Service contracted facilities, which is not considered health insurance coverage.

COVID-19

Nationally, the overall COVID-19 incidence among the AI/AN community is **3.5 TIMES HIGHER** than that among white people. Additionally, the age-adjusted COVID-19 mortality rate is higher for AI/AN people than for any other group—it is almost **2.5 TIMES THE DEATH RATE** for white people.

In California, there are about **2,400 AI/AN children** and **12,594 AI/AN adults** who have COVID-19.

MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH

Nationally, the rate of pregnancy-related mortality (number of deaths per 100,000 live births) among AI/AN people is **TWICE AS HIGH** as it is compared to white people: **28.3** for non-Latinx AI/AN women compared to **13.4** for non-Latinx white women.

In California, the rate of **INFANT MORTALITY** (number of deaths per 1,000 births) in AI/AN families is just over the average rate across all populations and white populations: **4.3** among AI/AN families, **4.5** among all families and **3.6** among all white families.

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

More than **1 in 2 (59%)** or **16,676 AI/AN children** live in families whose income falls below the **FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL,** compared to **15%** of all children in California. Almost **1 in 3 (35%)** of AI/AN children live in households that are burdened by **HOUSING AND UTILITY COSTS.**

SCHOOL SUCCESS AND SAFETY

AI/AN students are more likely to be targeted by policing at their schools: they are **2 TIMES MORE LIKELY** than white students to be arrested at California schools. AI/AN students are suspended at disproportionate rates: the suspension rate among AI/AN students is **5.4%, DOUBLE THE RATE OF ALL STUDENTS (2.5%).** AI/AN students lose out on more learning time compared to their peers: nearly **1 in 4 (22%)** of AI/AN students have missed **10% or more of the academic year,** compared to slightly over **1 in 10 (12%)** of all students.

FOOD ACCESS

Nationally, nearly **1 in 3 AI/AN households** with children have **FOOD-INSECURE,** twice the average rate across all households in the US. Across the US, many reservations and counties with the highest numbers of indigenous community members are **FOOD DESERTS,** meaning communities have to travel 100 miles or more to purchase food.

ORAL HEALTH

Nationally, AI/AN preschool children ages 3–5 have the highest rate of **TOOTH DECAY** among any group in the United States: more than **2 in 3 (71%)** AI/AN children between 3–5 years old have tooth decay, compared to **1 in 4 (25%)** of white children.

When compared to other population groups, AI/AN children in the United States are also **4 TIMES MORE LIKELY than white children to have untreated tooth decay:** slightly more than **43%** of AI/AN children between **3–5 years of age have untreated decay** compared to only **10%** of white non-Latinx children.

CHILD WELFARE

AI/AN children and youth are **REMOVED FROM THEIR HOMES at 4 TIMES the average rate across all children and youth in CA,** and **5 TIMES the rate of white children.**

The need for continued support and adequate enforcement of the Indian Child Welfare Act remains a top priority.

DIGITAL CONNECTEDNESS

Nationally, **34%** of AI/AN households have **NO HIGH-SPEED INTERNET** access at home, and almost **16%** have **NO COMPUTER.** In California, about **10%** of AI/AN children live in a household **without a broadband connected device.**

PRESENTED BY:

**all in: Health Care for All Families**

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**California Consortium for Urban Indian Health**
**www.ccuih.org**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

The Children’s Partnership, Two Feathers and the California Consortium for Urban Indian Health collected data on American Indian and Alaska Native children from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, the 2019 CA Health Interview Survey, the 2019 National Survey of Children’s Health, the 2017-2019 California Healthy Kids Survey, and a few other discrete sources. All data is specific to AI/AN children and youth in California unless noted explicitly as national data. Full citations can be found at: bit.ly/ACHildIsAChild.