

The County and State Data Cards are organized by NC Child into five results areas: A Strong Start, Family Economic Security, Nurturing Homes & Communities, High-Quality Education, and Health & Wellness. Results are population-level conditions of well-being that promote children's healthy growth and development.

To provide a snapshot of how each indicator has changed over time, a base year and the most recent data year available are presented for each data point.

Comparison data are provided for illustrative purposes, and users should exercise caution when drawing conclusions or trends from two point-in-time statistics. Due to delays in data collection and reporting, base and current data years may vary across indicators. Additionally, due to differences in data collection, timeframes, and methodology, county-level information from the data cards should not be compared to state averages reported in different data sources.

In most cases, indicators are presented as rates or percentages. Although comparisons can be made across counties using rates and percentages, users are encouraged to exercise caution when comparing statistics based on low number events. Rates based on small numbers are unstable and should be interpreted with caution.

- A *percentage* represents a ratio expressed as a fraction of 100. A percentage is a rate per 100.
- A *rate* is a ratio expressed per a certain number of units, commonly per 1,000 or 100,000. A rate is not a percentage.

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DATA SOURCES

Demographic Data

Child population under age 18

- What It Measures: The number of children 0-17 years old.
- Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2020-2024. [Table B01001 "Sex by Age"](#).

Percent of children under age 5

- What It Measures: The percent of the total child population that are 0-4 years old.
- Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2020-2024. [Table B01001 "Sex by Age"](#).

Live births

- What It Measures: The number of babies born alive.
- Data Source: N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, State Center for Health Statistics. 2024 North Carolina Live Birth Data. [Resident Births by County of Residence and Race/Ethnicity of Mother.](#)

A Strong Start

Women who receive early prenatal care

- What It Measures: The percentage of women with a live birth who were determined to have received prenatal care during their first trimester of pregnancy.
- Data Source: N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, State Center for Health Statistics. 2024 North Carolina Live Birth Data, retrieved via special data request

Babies born at a low birthweight

- What It Measures: The percentage of newborns weighing less than 2,500 grams, or approximately 5.5 pounds.
- Data Source: N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, State Center for Health Statistics. 2024 North Carolina Live Birth Data. [Resident Births by County of Residence and Birthweight Group.](#)

Babies born pre-term

- What It Measures: The percentage of live births before 37 weeks of gestation.
- Data Source: N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, State Center for Health Statistics. 2024 North Carolina Live Birth Data. [Resident Births by County of Residence and Obstetric Estimate of Gestation.](#)

Family Economic Security

Children living in poor homes

- What It Measures: The percentage of children under age 18 who live in households with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level as defined by the U.S. Office of Budget and Management. In 2024, 200% of the federal poverty level was \$62,400 for a family of four.
- Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2020-2024. [Table B17024 "Age by Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months".](#)

Children in households that are food insecure

- What It Measures: The percentage of children under age 18 who live in households that lack consistent access to adequate, nutritious food.
- Data Source: Ribar, D.C., Harris, V., Dewey, A., Dawes, S., and Engelhard, E. (2026). Map the Meal Gap: An Analysis of Local Food Insecurity and Food Costs in the United States in 2024. Feeding America National Organization.

Median household income

- What It Measures: The threshold that divides household income into two halves, with 50 percent of households falling below that benchmark and 50 percent of households above.
- Data Note: This measure includes income of the householder and all other people 15 years and older in the household, whether or not they are related to the householder. Importantly, this measure of income does not reflect the value of public programs and assistance such as tax credits, housing assistance, food assistance, and others on household incomes.
- Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2020-2024. [Table B19013 "Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months \(in 2024 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars\)"](#).

Nurturing Homes and Communities

Delinquency rate per 1,000 youth ages 8-17

- What It Measures: The rate per 1,000 juveniles of delinquent complaints received by court services offices. Also referred to as the 'juvenile crime rate'.
- Data Note: Effective Dec. 1, 2019, North Carolina's *Raise the Age* legislation ended the automatic prosecution of 16- and 17-year-olds in the adult criminal justice system. As a result, this indicator was expanded to include juveniles ages 6–17 (previously 6–15).
However, beginning Dec. 1, 2024, youth ages 16 and 17 who are charged with Class A–E felonies will again begin their cases in adult court. These cases may only be transferred to juvenile court if both the prosecutor and the defense agree.
While this change does not affect comparisons between 2020–2023, data from 2024 onward will not be directly comparable due to the policy shift.
- Data Source: N.C. Department of Public Safety [County Data Books](#), 2024. Data provided is for calendar year 2024.

Children assessed for abuse or neglect per 1,000

- What It Measures: The rate of children under age 18 who were assessed for abuse or neglect per 1,000 in 2024.

- Data Source: Duncan, D.F., Kum, H.C., Flair, K.A., Stewart, C.J., Vaughn, J.S., Guest, S., Rose, R.A., Malley, K.M.D. and Gwaltney, A.Y. Management Assistance for Child Welfare, Work First, and Food & Nutrition Services in North Carolina (v3.2). University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Jordan Institute for Families. Retrieved via special data request.

Pediatric behavioral health visits to the emergency department per 1,000

- What It Measures: The rate of pediatric behavioral health visits per 1,000 pediatric emergency department encounters.
- Data Source: North Carolina Healthcare Association. Retrieved via special data request.

High-Quality Education

3rd grade students scoring proficient in reading

- What It Measures: The percentage of third grade students who score proficient or higher on the state-level end-of-grade reading assessment.
- Data Source: N.C. Department of Public Instruction, Accountability Services Division. 2024-2025 State, District, and School-Level Drilldown Performance Data. [School Assessment and Other Indicator Data](#).
- Data notes:
 1. Standardized tests were not required during the 2019-2020 academic year due to the pandemic.
 2. The NC Department of Instruction reports data by school district. Most school districts in North Carolina are at the county level. There are 26 school districts that overlap within 11 counties. For these districts, NC Child weighted the data based on school enrollment to calculate an end-of-grade reading assessment score at the county level.

High school students graduating on time

- What It Measures: The percentage of ninth grade students who graduate in four years with a high school diploma.
- Data Source: N.C. Department of Public Instruction. [2024-2025 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate](#).
- Data note: The NC Department of Instruction reports data by school district. Most school districts in North Carolina are at the county level. There are 26 school districts that overlap within 11 counties. For these districts, NC Child weighted the data based on school enrollment to calculate a high school graduation rate at the county level. School enrollment data was not available at the county level by race and ethnicity.

Enrollment in licensed child care as a percentage of children with working parents

- What It Measures: Total licensed child care enrollment as a percentage of the number of children in a region with all parents in their household either working or actively looking for work.
- Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 2020-2024. [Table DP03 "Selected Economic Characteristics"](#). & NC DHHS Division of Child Development and Early Education. Retrieved via special data request.

Health and Wellness

Children without health insurance

- What It Measures: The percentage of children under age 19 who currently lack health insurance coverage. A respondent is considered uninsured if they lacked coverage at the time the survey was administered.
- Data Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates \(SAHIE\) program, 2024](#).

Infant mortality per 1,000 live births

- What It Measures: The rate of infant deaths per 1,000 babies born alive.
- Data Source: N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, State Center for Health Statistics. North Carolina Infant Mortality Report, [2024 Resident Infant Death Rates \(per 1,000 live births\)](#).

Child deaths per 100,000

- What It Measures: The rate of child deaths from all causes per 100,000 children under age 18.
- Data Source: N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, State Center for Health Statistics. 2024 County Health Data Book. 2020-2024 [Unadjusted Child Death Rates per 100,000 Population](#).