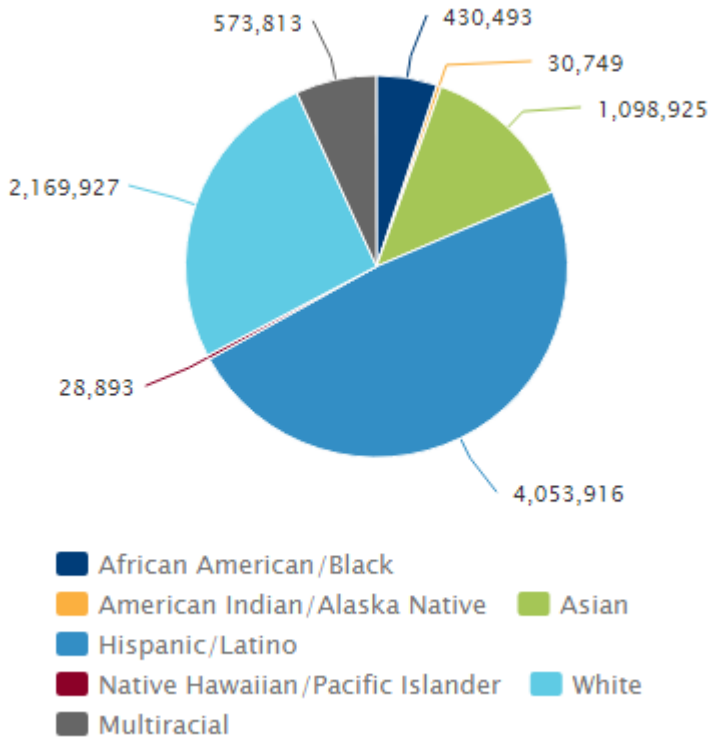
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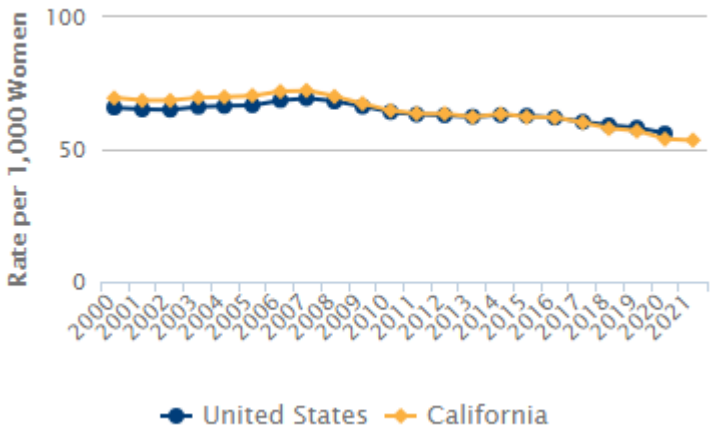
Demographics of California's Children

Child Population, by Race/Ethnicity: 2025
California



Definition: Estimated child population ages 0-17, by race/ethnicity (e.g., in 2025, 573,813 multiracial children lived in California).
Data Source: California Dept. of Finance, Population Estimates and Projections; U.S. Census Bureau, Population and Housing Unit Estimates (Mar. 2025).

Births per 1,000 Women Ages 15-44



What It Is

Indicators on kidsdata.org cover a range of demographic measures from a variety of sources:

The number of births overall and per 1,000 women (the general fertility rate), and the number and percentage of births by mother's race/ethnicity, come from the California Department of Public Health.

The number and percentage of births by mother's marital status are available for California and the U.S.; these data come from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and also are available by mother's race/ethnicity.

Estimates of the child population from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community survey are available overall and by race/ethnicity for counties, cities, school districts, and legislative districts; also available are estimates of the number and percentage of California and U.S. children living in rural and urban areas.

County-level estimates (from 1995) and projections (to 2060) of the child population overall, by gender and age group, and by race/ethnicity, are available from the California Department of Finance; also available are estimates and projections for the total population.

Why This Topic Is Important

Child and family demographic trends help project potential needs for education, child care, health care, and other services. Demographic projections point to an overall shortage of children relative to older populations, which will lead to workforce and taxpayer shortages in the coming decades. This means each child is more important to the future of California and the U.S. than ever before. It also means that leaders need to invest in programs and policies that nurture and help all children reach their potential, particularly those facing disadvantage, and to align service systems with shifting demographics, such as increasing racial and ethnic diversity. For example, leaders can ensure that culturally appropriate services are available for families and that communities with higher concentrations of children have adequate resources in place to support them.

Demographic factors also matter because the circumstances into which children are born and grow up—as well as larger structural forces such as economics, institutions, and policies—strongly influence wellness over the

Definition: Number of live births per 1,000 women ages 15-44, i.e., general fertility rate (e.g., in 2021, the birth rate among California women ages 15-44 was 53.5 births per 1,000 women).
Data Source: California Dept. of Public Health, Birth Statistical Master Files & California Vital Data (Cal-ViDa) Query Tool; California Dept. of Finance, Population Estimates and Projections; CDC WONDER Online Database, Natality Public-Use Data (Feb. 2022).

Youth Sexual Orientation, by Grade Level: 2017-2019

California	Percent				
Grade Level	Bisexual	Gay or Lesbian	Straight	Something Else	Not Sure
Grade 7	4.4%	0.8%	80.4%	2.0%	5.9%
Grade 9	5.9%	1.6%	83.9%	1.5%	3.9%
Grade 11	6.3%	2.1%	83.7%	1.4%	3.4%
Non-Traditional	7.4%	2.2%	81.9%	1.8%	2.5%

Definition: Estimated percentage of public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs, by sexual orientation (e.g., in 2017-2019, 4.4% of California 7th graders were bisexual).
Data Source: WestEd, California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) and Biennial State CHKS. California Dept. of Education (Mar. 2022).

lifecourse. Decades of research demonstrate inequities in children's well being by race/ethnicity, parent education level, socioeconomic status, geography, and other factors.

How Children Are Faring

The number of children in California has declined since the mid-2000s, from more than 9.5 million in 2004 to fewer than 8.4 million in 2025. Population projections indicate this figure will fall below 7 million by 2040. The proportion of children in the state's total population also is decreasing, from an estimated 28% in 1995 to 22% in 2024, with a projected drop to 17% by 2040. In line with these trends, California's birth rate has declined in recent decades, from 76 births per 1,000 women in 1995 to 54 per 1,000 in 2021.

Population structure and dynamics vary widely at the local level. According to 2025 estimates, five Southern California counties are home to more than half of the state's child population—Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino—with more than one in five children living in Los Angeles County alone. Counties in the Central Valley have among the highest birth rates and proportions of children within the population; e.g., in 2021 the birth rate in Kings County was 72 per 1,000 women (compared with 47 per 1,000 for Los Angeles and 39 per 1,000 for San Francisco), and in 2024 the percentage of children in Kings County relative to the population overall was 28% (compared with 20% for Los Angeles and 14% for San Francisco).

Hispanic/Latino children represent a large and growing share of California's child population, while the white child population has been shrinking. In 2025, nearly half of all children in the state (48%) were Hispanic/Latino, compared with around one fourth (26%) for white children. At the county level, estimates of the proportion of Hispanic/Latino children in the total child population ranged from 11% to 91%, while the proportion of white children ranged from 4% to 66%. Statewide, 13% of California children were Asian, 5% were African American/black, 7% were multiracial, and fewer than 1% were American Indian/Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic:
https://kidsdata.org/topic/7/demographics/summary

