



# NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHILDREN IN POVERTY

MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
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[www.nccp.org](http://www.nccp.org)

# FACT SHEET

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## CHILD POVERTY IN CALIFORNIA

### Overview

This fact sheet summarizes state highlights from *Childhood Poverty Research Brief 2—Child Poverty in the States: Levels and Trends from 1979 to 1998*, published by the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP). The NCCP study analyzes child poverty trends in all 50 states from 1979–1998 and also looks at two distinct periods (1979–1993 and 1993–1998) that are defined by the national business cycle and major changes in policies affecting low-income families.

Nine states have reduced their child poverty rates by over 30 percent since 1993. The progress that many states have made in reducing their child poverty rates since 1993 demonstrates that child poverty is a solvable problem. But recent gains in some states have not yet offset the longer-term increases in child poverty in most states since 1979.

In California, key facts about child poverty include the following:

		CALIFORNIA	U. S. A.
<b>1998</b>	Child Poverty Rate (%)	23.3	18.7
	Number of Children in Poverty	2,148,779	13,285,438
<b>1979–1998</b>	Change in Number of Children in Poverty	+1,249,335	+3,027,100
	% Change in Child Poverty Rate	<b>+61.7</b>	<b>+15.1</b>
<b>1979–1993</b>	Change in Number of Children in Poverty	+1,641,131	+5,302,049
	% Change in Child Poverty Rate	<b>+90.0</b>	<b>+38.8</b>
<b>1993–1998</b>	Change in Number of Children in Poverty	–391,796	–2,274,949
	% Change in Child Poverty Rate	<b>–14.9</b>	<b>–17.1</b>
	% Change in state TANF Caseload	–23.6	–47.2

### Why Preventing Child Poverty Matters to California

Fewer children in poverty will mean more children entering school ready to learn and more successful schools, better child health and less strain on hospitals and public health systems, less stress on the juvenile justice system, less child hunger and malnutrition, and other important advances.

Note: The NCCP study analyzed annual income data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Surveys. The study uses the official measure of poverty used by the Census Bureau. In 1998, the poverty threshold for a family of four was \$16,600. Changes in child poverty rates that are significant at a 90 percent confidence interval are highlighted in bold.

For more information on child poverty and other issues affecting families in California, visit [www.nccp.org](http://www.nccp.org).