

Piscataquis County, home of Baxter State Park, is Maine’s least populated and most rural county and has approximately 3,020 children.

Areas of Strength

In Piscataquis County, the rate of four-year-olds in public preschool doubled in one year and had the second highest rate in the state. Quality early childhood education helps young children thrive. Median household income, child poverty and the unemployment rate all improved. As of December 2023, Piscataquis had the lowest rate of children in foster care. Families are stronger when their economic needs are met. Piscataquis also had the fourth lowest rate of infants born with low birth weights.

Areas of Challenge

Piscataquis County had the third highest child poverty rate among all counties and had the third lowest median household income. Piscataquis also had the third lowest high school graduation rate in 2022 at 76.7%, as well as the second highest rate of teens not in school and not working. When there are opportunities for high-paying jobs in the local community, youth can see the benefits in secondary education and beyond.

INDICATOR	STATE RANK
Children in foster care	1
Public preschool	2
Infants with low birth weights	4

INDICATOR	STATE RANK
Teens not in school and not working	15
Child poverty	14
Median household income	14
High school graduation rate	14

The Maine Children’s Alliance is part of the national [KIDS COUNT](#)® network of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. In a user-friendly internet platform, KIDS COUNT® makes available the most recent, reliable data on the well-being of children in Maine and the nation.

From the hundreds of indicators in the areas of health, education, and economic status on KIDS COUNT, the selected indicators in this County Profile are among those where county-level data is available where it is clear which direction we want the indicator to go to make improvements for Maine children. By understanding the data and making informed policy decisions in response, we can help ensure children and families in Maine have the best opportunity to thrive.

Each County Profile includes a summary of the county’s strengths and challenges, demographic data, and then information on the fourteen indicators of child health and well-being for the current year, previous year, and in comparison to the state rate.



DEMOGRAPHICS

	Piscataquis	Maine
Children under age 5, 2022	865	62,120
Children ages 5 -17, 2022	2,152	187,186
Total Children ages 0 -17, 2022	3,017	249,306
Births, 2022	104	12,081
Children of color, Census 2020 †	424	41,514
Children in poverty, 2022	528	29,991
Children ages 0 -18 participating in MaineCare, SFY 2023	2,132	133,431
Children receiving SNAP, Dec 2023	1,026	55,559
Economically disadvantaged students, under 185% of poverty, 2023-2024	1,193	63,983



HEALTH

	Current number	Current rate	Previous rate	Better or Worse?	State rate
Children under age 19 without health insurance, 2021	150	4.9%	7.4%		4.3%
Infants with low birth weights, 2022	7	6.7%	9.8%		8.2%
Youth in evidence-based practices of HCT FFT or HCT MST*, rate per 1,000, September 2023	2	1.43	1.43		1.04
Children in foster care, December 2023, rate per 1,000	8	2.7	12.3		9.6
Substantiated child abuse, 2022, rate per 1,000	56	18.6	13.5		15.8

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

	Current number	Current rate	Previous rate	Better or Worse?	State rate
Child poverty, 2022	528	18.2%	21.3%		12.4%
Median household income, 2022	N/A	\$52,529	\$49,999		\$69,485
Teens not in school and not working, 2018-2022	66	9.8%	7.5%		4.2%
Unemployment Rate, 2022	N/A	3.8%	5.0%		3.0%
All parents in workforce, children under 6, 2018-2022	641	69.0%	65.2%		69.6%

EDUCATION

	Current number	Current rate	Previous rate	Better or Worse?	State rate
Four-year-olds in public preschool, 2023-2024	122	83.6%	40.6%		48.5%
High school graduation rate, 2022	158	76.7%	75.1%		86.1%
Chronic absenteeism in schools with 12th graders**, 2021-2022	335	30.4%	34.5%		31.4%
High-quality child care sites (Rising Stars 4 or 5)††, December 2023	2	10.0%	14.3%		17.7%

= Better, = Worse, = No change (defined as less than 1% change) compared to county data from prior year.

Notes:

Maine’s standardized reading tests do not include proficiency determinations so academic achievement indicators are not included.

† See [Children by race & ethnicity, 2020 Census](#) for the numbers and percents of children by each race and ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino; and among Non-Hispanic children the following races: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black or African-American, Two or More Races/ Some Other Race and white.

* HCT-MST and HCT-FFT are the acronyms of two evidence-based intensive home and community mental health treatment services for families and youth to prevent institutional placements.

** Secondary school chronic absenteeism (18 days or more) among all public schools that offer grades 9-12, including 60% publicly funded private schools and excluding technical schools.

†† As of March 2023, Rising Stars is Maine’s method of assessing and encouraging quality early care programs. It is mandatory and licensed child care programs start at 2 stars.