

Washington County is a Downeast, coastal county with approximately 5,825 children.

Areas of Strength

Washington County had the highest rate of children in public preschool at 87.1% for 2023-2024, up from 62.8% the prior year. Washington was also fifth for the rate of child care sites that were of high-quality, ranked with 4 or 5 stars in the Rising Stars system. Quality early education prepares children to be successful in school. In 2022, the child poverty rate in Washington was reduced four percentage points and the median household income rose substantially.

INDICATOR	STATE RANK
Public Preschool	1
High quality child care	5

Areas of Challenge

In 2022, Washington County had the highest average annual unemployment rate and second highest child poverty rate. Families need access to jobs that pay a living wage to support their children. With over 10% of babies with low birth weights in 2022, Washington ranked fifteenth. No youth in Washington had access to evidence-based community mental health treatment that can prevent institutional placement. Access to health care prenatally and throughout childhood is important for all children to be healthy.

INDICATOR	STATE RANK
Unemployment rate	16
Evidence-based mental health	16 (tie)
Child poverty	15
Infants with low birth weights	15

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

	Washington	Maine
Children under age 5, 2022	1,414	62,120
Children ages 5 -17, 2022	4,410	187,186
Total Children ages 0 -17, 2022	5,824	249,306
Births, 2022	263	12,081
Children of color, Census 2020 †	1,074	41,514
Children in poverty, 2022	1,042	29,991
Children ages 0 -18 participating in MaineCare, SFY 2023	4,385	133,431
Children receiving SNAP, Dec 2023	2,035	55,559
Economically disadvantaged students, under 185% of poverty, 2023-2024	1,923	63,983



HEALTH

	Current number	Current rate	Previous rate	Better or Worse?	State rate
Children under age 19 without health insurance, 2021	323	5.4%	8.6%		4.3%
Infants with low birth weights, 2022	29	11.1%	6.6%		8.2%
Youth in evidence-based practices of HCT FFT or HCT MST*, rate per 1,000, September 2023	-	0.00	0.00		1.04
Children in foster care, December 2023, rate per 1,000	36	6.2	4.5		9.6
Substantiated child abuse, 2022, rate per 1,000	122	20.2	23.0		15.8

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

	Current number	Current rate	Previous rate	Better or Worse?	State rate
Child poverty, 2022	1,042	18.5%	22.5%		12.4%
Median household income, 2022	N/A	\$55,381	\$42,755		\$69,485
Teens not in school and not working, 2018-2022	99	6.7%	5.7%		4.2%
Unemployment Rate, 2022	N/A	4.3%	6.5%		3.0%
All parents in workforce, children under 6, 2018-2022	1,063	62.9%	60.7%		69.6%

EDUCATION

	Current number	Current rate	Previous rate	Better or Worse?	State rate
Four-year-olds in public preschool, 2023-2024	236	87.1%	62.8%		48.5%
High school graduation rate, 2022	238	82.1%	85.8%		86.1%
Chronic absenteeism in schools with 12th graders**, 2021-2022	505	32.3%	38.8%		31.4%
High-quality child care sites (Rising Stars 4 or 5)††, December 2023	6	22.2%	26.7%		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.