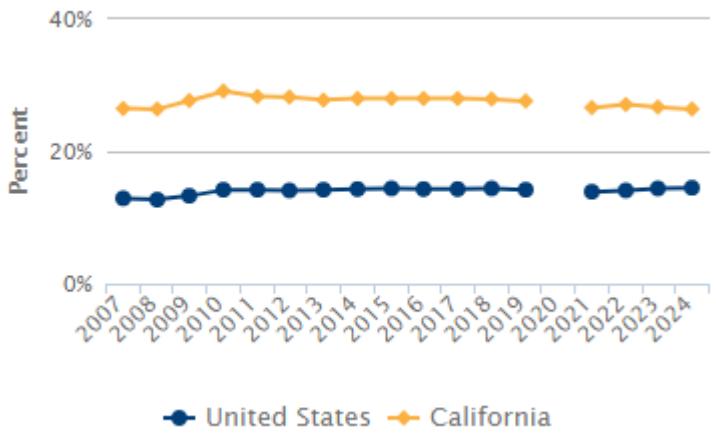
KidsData

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Housing Affordability and Resources in California

Percentage of Children Ages 0-17 Living in Crowded Households



Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 living in households with more than one person per room of the home (e.g., in 2024, 26.4% of California children lived in crowded households).
Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey public use microdata (Aug. 2026).

Percentage of Children Living in Households with a Broadband-Connected Device: 2024

Locations	Percent
United States	96.4%
California	97.2%
Alameda County	97.9%
Contra Costa County	98.3%
Fresno County	94.8%
Kern County	96.8%
Los Angeles County	97.2%
Orange County	97.6%
Riverside County	98.2%
Sacramento County	98.2%
San Bernardino County	97.2%
San Diego County	97.8%
Santa Clara County	98.5%

Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 living in households with a desktop, laptop, tablet, smartphone, or other computer connected to high-speed internet service, by age group (e.g., in 2024, 97.2% of California children ages 5-17 lived in households with a broadband-connected device).
Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey public use microdata (Aug. 2026).

Percentage of Households with a High Housing Cost Burden: 2021

What It Is

Kidsdata.org provides four measures related to housing affordability and resources:

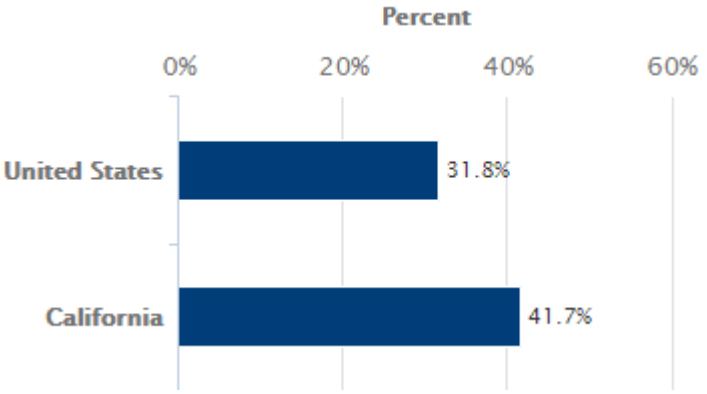
- Fair Market Rent, by Unit Size
- Households with a High Housing Cost Burden
- Children Living in Crowded Households
- Children Living in Households with a Broadband-Connected Device

Why This Topic Is Important

Housing plays a critical role in children's health and well being, beyond providing immediate shelter. Children and families need affordable, stable, safe homes, adequate household resources, healthy neighborhoods, and access to quality opportunities, education, and services—all of these factors are intricately connected and influence life outcomes at all ages. However, housing system inequities persist, limiting access to safe, affordable housing and related resources for low-income families, people of color, immigrants, those with disabilities, and other groups.

The U.S. has set a public health objective of reducing the proportion of families whose housing costs represent more than 30% of total household income, the level at which housing is considered unaffordable. California housing is among the most costly in the nation, creating a significant challenge for many of the state's middle- and low-income families. According to recent estimates, only around 2 in 5 low-income children in the U.S. and 1 in 4 low-income children in California live in affordable housing. Spending more than 30% of income on housing may mean forgoing food, health care, or other essential items, which is associated with an increased risk of disease, mental and behavioral health problems, and poor school performance. Families with a high housing cost burden also may struggle to afford important resources such as broadband-connected devices, which are increasingly important for education, employment, access to health care, civic participation, social connections, and other family needs. Statewide and nationally, this digital divide has a disproportionate impact on rural and tribal communities, lower-income populations, families of color, women, people with disabilities, and immigrants.

In some cases, a lack of affordable housing can result in families living in crowded households. Residential crowding is linked to poor health outcomes, including infectious disease



Definition: Estimated percentage of households that spend at least 30% of household income on rent or mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, utilities, and other related housing costs (e.g., in 2021, 41.7% of California households experienced a high housing cost burden).
Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey summary files and public use microdata (Mar. 2024).

Fair Market Rent for a Two-Bedroom Unit: 2020

Locations	Monthly Cost
Alameda and Contra Costa Counties	$2,239
El Dorado, Placer, and Sacramento Counties	$1,349
Fresno County	$980
Kern County	$946
Los Angeles County	$1,956
Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties	$3,339
Orange County	$2,216
Riverside and San Bernardino Counties	$1,289
San Diego County	$2,037
Santa Clara County	$2,970

Definition: Estimated monthly cost of rent and all tenant-paid utilities (excluding telephone, internet, and cable or satellite television services) in standard-quality rental housing, by unit size (e.g., in fiscal year 2020, fair market rent for a two-bedroom unit in Los Angeles County was $1,956).
Data Source: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Fair Market Rents (Apr. 2020).

transmission, mental health difficulties, stress, family conflict, and problems with sleep and school work. Even when families are not in crowded homes, unaffordable or unstable housing can disrupt children's opportunities for educational success due to increased chances of moving, changing schools, and interrupting instruction.

How Children Are Faring

Fair market rents vary widely across California regions, from $770 (Modoc County) to $3,339 (Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties) per month for a two-bedroom unit in fiscal year 2020.

In 2021, an estimated 42% of California households were housing cost-burdened, meaning they spent at least 30% of income on housing. This figure is down from 49% in 2010 but remains higher than national estimates which were 38% or lower over this period. Among counties with data in 2016-2020, estimates ranged from 28% (Inyo) to 47% (Los Angeles) of households experiencing a high housing cost burden.

The share of California children ages 0-17 living in crowded households (i.e., in homes with more than one person per room) was 26% in 2024, approaching twice the share of children nationwide. Similar to other housing and economic measures, percentages vary at the local level; for example, across California counties and county groups with data in 2024, the proportion of children experiencing household overcrowding ranged from 6% to 42%.

In 2024, 97% of California children lived in households with a device connected to high-speed internet service, similar to 96% nationally. Children's internet access at home varies by region and demographic characteristics, with larger estimated shares of children in English-proficient households, children living with two parents, children in higher-income families, and Asian American, multiracial, and white children having broadband-connected devices in the home compared with children in other groups.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic:
https://m.kidsdata.org/topic/41/housing-affordability-and-resources/summary