

Georgia's Preschool Development Grant

BIRTH THROUGH FIVE



REPORT 3

# FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN GEORGIA

NEEDS ASSESSMENT



# FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN GEORGIA NEEDS ASSESSMENT: REPORT 3

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Additional information on the PDG B-5 grant can be found at: [www.decal.ga.gov/BfTS/PreschoolDevelopmentGrant.aspx](http://www.decal.ga.gov/BfTS/PreschoolDevelopmentGrant.aspx)

## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Key Terms	Definitions
PDG B-5	Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five
B-5	Birth through five
DECAL	Department of Early Care and Learning, Bright from the Start
Early intervention programs	Preschool Special Education, Babies Can't Wait, Children First, Home Visiting
ECCE	Early childhood care and education
FPL	Federal poverty line
Georgia's Pre-K	Georgia's universal Pre-K program funded by the Lottery System of Georgia
Mixed-Delivery System	Infrastructure that recognizes the need for differentiation of services based on individual community needs
Quality Rated	Georgia's tiered quality rating and improvement system
Vulnerable Populations	Vulnerable and underserved populations, such as those living in poverty, experiencing homelessness, living in foster care, living in rural areas, dual-language learners, and living with disabilities



## INTRODUCTION

In December 2018, Georgia was awarded an initial Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, and the US Department of Education. This initial grant provided Georgia with a unique opportunity to strengthen its early childhood care and education (ECCE) system-level framework and better align and further expand critical birth-through-five services and programs. A key component of Georgia's initial PDG B-5 was a requirement for states to conduct a system-level Needs Assessment. The goal of the Needs Assessment was to analyze the state's existing mixed-delivery system of programs and services to determine how well Georgia was meeting the needs of families of children ages birth through five. In December 2019, Georgia was awarded a three-year renewal PDG B-5 through December 2023 to continue the activities started with the initial PDG B-5 and to address the gaps identified by the Needs Assessment.

Data collection for Georgia's Needs Assessment was conducted in the summer and fall of 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic began as the state's PDG B-5 leadership team was finalizing the results of the Needs Assessment. In addition to delaying publication of the Needs Assessment, the pandemic also delayed the state's ability to finish other projects in the initial grant and begin new projects in the renewal grant. State leaders used the PDG B-5 opportunity to collect additional data and conduct analyses to better understand the pandemic's impact on vital ECCE services.

The findings from Georgia's Needs Assessment are organized in seven distinct parts that highlight key topics. For convenience, these results are published in two forms: as a comprehensive, full report available at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/BftS/PreschoolDevelopmentGrant.aspx> and as seven standalone reports. This is the third of the seven standalone reports.

The Needs Assessment provides a snapshot of Georgia's understanding of its early childhood system. It encompasses the conditions and demographics of the state's birth-through-five population and the types of supports the state provides its youngest children and their families. It also details what is *known* about Georgia's early childhood system and, more importantly, what is *not known*.

This report, which focuses on better understanding the families of Georgia's youngest learners, is divided into two sections. The first section provides key demographic characteristics of Georgia's children and families. These data come from a report authored by Child Trends (commissioned by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning [DECAL]) that includes a wide range of demographic information from various sources. These demographics have been used to inform Georgia's PDG B-5 work. The second section reports findings related to state

efforts around family engagement. Specifically, this section details strengths and areas of growth in how Georgia engages families in its early childhood mixed-delivery system.

The other six standalone reports cover other aspects of Georgia’s Needs Assessment. Report 1 provides an overview of the Needs Assessment. It explains the methodology around the Needs Assessment and summarizes the key findings. Report 2 defines key terms in Georgia’s PDG B-5 work and presents system-level findings. The other reports cover the following topics: data and research (Report 4), access to early childhood programs and services in Georgia (Report 5), the quality of early childhood programs and services in Georgia (Report 6), and the state’s early childhood care and education (Report 7). See Appendix I for the Needs Assessment Crosswalk, which lists where among the seven reports each requirement of the Needs Assessment is addressed. The findings related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be issued in subsequent reports.

## **FINDINGS RELATED TO GEORGIA’S DEMOGRAPHICS**

Like in many other states, the demographics of Georgia’s children and families have shifted. Understanding demographic shifts helps state leaders, advocates, families, early childhood workforce staff, and other advocates better serve children and families and meet the state’s 21st century needs.

To better understand the demographics of Georgia’s children birth to age five and their families, Child Trends conducted a comprehensive analysis of data of Georgia’s children ages birth through five years. This analysis organized data into three sections: (1) overall characteristics of children ages birth to five living in Georgia, (2) specific characteristics related to infants and toddlers, and (3) details on the remaining focal populations. Georgia’s identified focal populations are defined in Report 2. Appendix II contains the full Child Trends report.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN BIRTH TO FIVE IN GEORGIA**

Georgia is the eighth-most-populous state in the US, with an estimated population of 10.6 million. Georgia is one of the fastest growing states in the US. Its 10-year growth rate of 14.4% is more than 1.5 times the US growth rate.<sup>1</sup> According to 2019 census data, more than 656,000 children under age five live in Georgia.<sup>2</sup> The following characteristics apply to Georgia’s

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1 Georgia Department of Economic Development. Demographics. <https://www.georgia.org/demographics>

2 US Census Bureau. (2019). State population by characteristics: 2010–2019. [https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-state-detail.html#par\\_textimage\\_785300169](https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2010s-state-detail.html#par_textimage_785300169)

youngest children and, unless otherwise noted, are from the Child Trends report (see Appendix II).

**Many young children live in poverty.**

Children from all racial and ethnic groups are living in families that face economic challenges. Approximately half (325,724) of all children under age five in Georgia are living in poverty or in low-income households. As Table 1 shows, approximately 24.2% of young children live in households with incomes at or below 100% of the federal poverty line (FPL). An additional 25% of young children can be classified as low income.

**Table 1. Children Under Age Five, by Poverty Level**

	<b>National</b> (n = 19,527,267)	<b>Georgia</b> (n = 647,548)
In poverty (<100% FPL)	20.3%	24.2%
Low income (100%–199% FPL)	22.3%	25.0%
Not low income or in poverty (>200% FPL)	57.5%	50.7%

Source: Child Trends’ analysis of the 2017 American Community Survey, from report in Appendix II

**Georgia’s children are racially and ethnically diverse, and this diversity intersects with economic disparities.**

Recent population estimates show that 43% of children in Georgia under age five are White, 32% are Black, 16% are Hispanic, and 10% are another race or multiracial. Significant disparities are also found when examining income levels across race and ethnicity. The largest proportion of children under age five living in poverty or in low-income households in Georgia identify as Non-Hispanic Black. The data also show that a slightly higher proportion of Hispanic children under age five in Georgia are living in poverty compared to Non-Hispanic White children (24.6% and 21.2%, respectively).

**Georgia’s children also represent diversity in terms of immigration status and home language.**

Georgia is home to many immigrants. More than one-third of children ages birth to five are foreign-born or have at least one parent who is foreign-born and who immigrated to the US in the past five years. Furthermore, approximately 16% of children in Georgia are classified as dual language learners, meaning that they speak a language other than English at home. Like findings related to income and race/ethnicity, nearly two-thirds of dual language learners (primarily Spanish speaking) ages five to 17 years old are living in poverty or live in low-income families, which is significantly higher than for children whose primary language is English.

## **Families with the youngest children are facing other significant hardships.**

In 2016, 61% of children in low-income households in Georgia were living with families burdened by high housing costs.<sup>3</sup> Thirty-four percent of children in Georgia currently live in single-parent households.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, 8% of children under age six have no parent in the labor force. While most parents in Georgia have a high school diploma, 13% of parents with children younger than age six have not attained a high school diploma, and only one in five parents of children ages birth to five have attained a four-year college degree.

## **Homelessness is a significant issue for families with young children.**

Georgia has the seventh-highest number of K-12 students experiencing homelessness in the US.<sup>5</sup> While the number of students experiencing homelessness in urban areas of Georgia decreased between the 2013–2014 academic year and the 2016–2017 academic year, there was a 33% increase in the number of students experiencing homelessness in rural areas (even after accounting for a 23% increase in total student population).<sup>6</sup> In 2017–2018, Georgia still saw an estimated 38,131 children under age six experiencing homelessness.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, 16% of students experiencing homelessness have also been diagnosed with a disability.<sup>8</sup>

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3 Note that “high housing costs” is defined as households who spent more than 30% of their monthly income on rent, mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and/or related expenses. KIDS COUNT Data Center, Annie E. Casey Foundation (2018). Georgia: Children living in low-income households with a high housing cost burden. <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/71-children-in-low-income-households-with-a-high-housing-cost-burden?loc=12&loct=2#detailed/2/12/false/870,573,869,36,868,867,133,38,35,18/any/376,377>

4 KIDS COUNT Data Center, Annie E. Casey Foundation (2018). Children living in single-parent families in Georgia. <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/663-children-living-in-single-parent-families?loc=12&loct=2#detailed/2/any/false/1752,1712,1612,1573,1522,1459,1241,1067,1000,939/any/8884,8885>

5 National Center for Homeless Education, University of North Carolina at Greensboro. (2020, January). Federal data summary, school years 2015–16 through 2017–18: Education for homeless children and youth (pp. 8–9). <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Federal-Data-Summary-SY-15.16-to-17.18-Published-1.30.2020.pdf>

6 Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness. (2019, February 27). *Student homelessness in rural America*. Appendix Table I. <https://www.icphusa.org/reports/ruralreport/>

7 The National Center on Family Homelessness uses the number of students identified as homeless by local education agencies, as required by the McKinney-Vento Act, to estimate the number of homeless children ages 0–5, based on research estimating that 51% of all homeless children are under age six. Bassuk, E. L., DeCania, C. J., Beach, C. A., & Berman, F. (2014, November). *America’s youngest outcasts: A report card on child homelessness* (pp. 99–101). Waltham, MA: National Center on Family Homelessness at American Institutes for Research. Homeless counts for grades 1 through 12 in Georgia for the 2017–2018 school year can be found at: Georgia Department of Education, Office of Federal Programs. (2019, September). *Georgia’s McKinney-Vento Program: 2018 data report*. <https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Documents/McKinney-Vento/2018%20EHY%20Data%20Report.pdf>

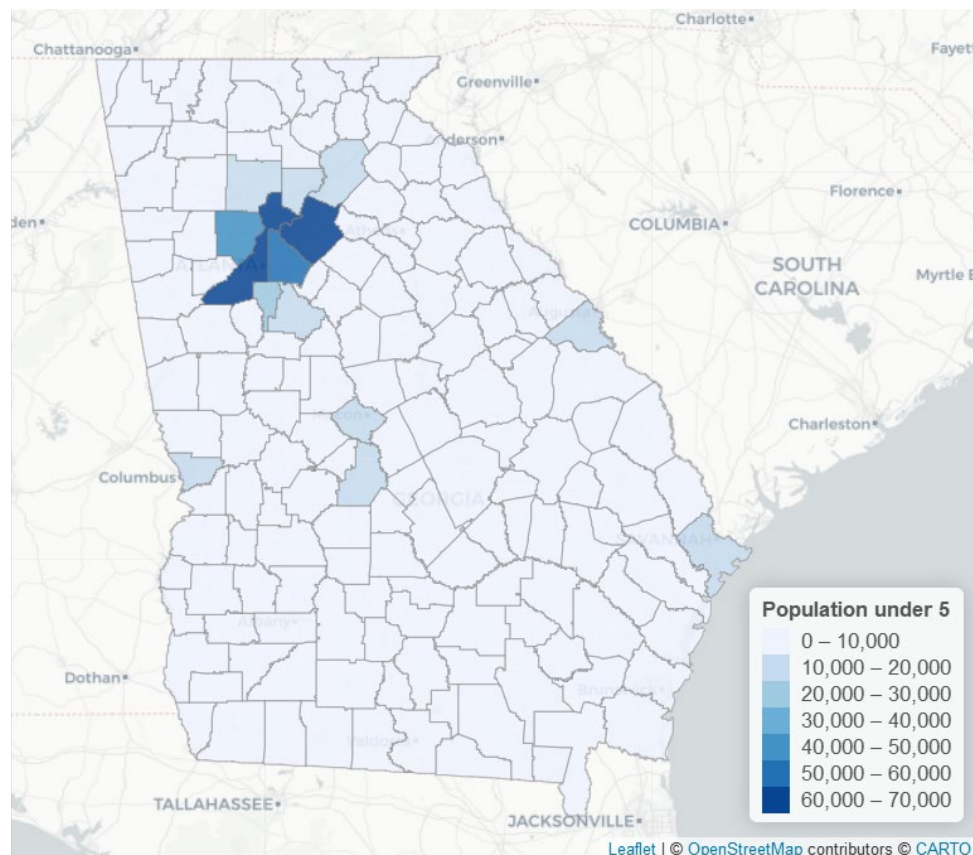
8 Georgia State University: Andrew Young School of Policy Studies & University of Georgia: Carl Vinson Institute of Government. (2016). *Economic impact of the early care and education industry in Georgia*. <http://www.dec.ga.gov/documents/attachments/EconImpactReport.pdf>



### More of Georgia's young children live in urban rather than rural areas.

While the state is predominately rural, Georgia has significant urban concentrations with large surrounding suburban areas. Most children under age five (79%) live in urban counties, and 21% in rural counties. As seen in Figure 1, Georgia's largest concentration of children under age five is in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Smaller urban areas clustered around the cities of Savannah, Augusta, Macon, and Columbus also have relatively large populations of children under age five. There is a higher relative proportion of young children in Georgia living in poverty in urban areas than in rural areas.

**Figure 1. Population of Children Under Age Five Years**



Source: Child Trends' analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Data (2013–2017), <https://www.census.gov/data/developers/data-sets/acs-5year.html>

### Characteristics of infants and toddlers do not differ significantly from the total under-five population.

The Child Trends analysis notes that Georgia has an estimated 292,321 infants and toddlers (ages 0 to 36 months). The population of infants and toddlers does not differ significantly from the larger under-age-five population. For example, for both the under-age-five population and the infant and toddler population, 15.6% of children are classified as Hispanic. A slightly higher

percentage of infants and toddlers (25.2%) are in families at 100% or less of the FPL than the total under-age-five population (24.2%).

**Compared to national averages, Georgia has a smaller percentage of young children in foster care and a smaller percentage with special health care needs.**

In 2018, 5,734 children under age six in Georgia were in foster care or about 0.7%. This is slightly lower than the 1.9% national estimate for children ages birth to five.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Georgia has a smaller percentage of children under age five with special health care needs (7.2%) than the national average (9.5%). Regarding the latter finding, it is not known whether this is due to underreporting or reflects differences in Georgia’s population of children birth to five.

**FINDINGS RELATED TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

The Needs Assessment highlighted the need to develop unique strategies and resources to support Georgia’s diverse young children and their families. To better understand strengths and areas of growth related to Georgia’s family engagement strategies, researchers from the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government conducted stakeholder engagement sessions that addressed family engagement. Several key themes related to family engagement emerged. First, stakeholders felt that the state has been increasing opportunities for authentic engagement in the state’s mixed-delivery system. However, stakeholders also identified a continued need to increase family voice in policy making at the state and community levels.

Second, the feedback also stressed that there should be a focus on building resilience in families, particularly those who are experiencing significant hardships (i.e., poverty, homelessness). Addressing trauma experienced by families was identified as a crucial part of building resilience. In Georgia, 24% of children under 18 years old have had at least two adverse experiences in their lifetime.<sup>10</sup> Adverse experiences can include frequent socioeconomic hardship, parental divorce or separation, parental death, parental incarceration, family violence, neighborhood violence, living with someone who is mentally ill or suicidal, living with someone who has a substance abuse problem, or racial bias.<sup>10</sup> Needs Assessment stakeholders expressed concerns about the impact that these experiences can have on the development of young children and on a family’s ability to support healthy development. Stakeholders said that

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9 Children’s Bureau Child Welfare Outcomes Report, 2018; FY2018 AFCARS Report; and American Community Survey, 2017.

10 KIDS COUNT Data Center, Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2017). Children who have experienced two or more adverse experiences in Georgia. <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/9709-children-who-have-experienced-two-or-more-adverse-experiences?loc=1&loct=1#detailed/2/12/false/1648,1603/any/18961,18962>

developing adequate supports and resources will help mitigate trauma and improve child and family outcomes.

Third, stakeholders identified strategies that would be effective in supporting families, particularly families experiencing hardships. For example, Georgia should focus on two-generation or multigenerational strategies that concurrently support children and parents and have the potential to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Additionally, peer learning should be developed as a strategy to meet the diversity of Georgia's families. To develop peer-learning opportunities, Georgia should make a concerted effort to recruit and train families representing the diversity of cultures, languages, and backgrounds of Georgia's families.

Finally, stakeholders also identified the need to develop additional supports and resources for families in key areas. These areas include supporting families to (1) understand child development and conduct developmental surveillance, (2) identify and select high-quality child care, and (3) transition between programs and services within the birth to five mixed-delivery system, particularly for early intervention services. Projects in Georgia's PDG B-5 Renewal Grant will address these key areas.

## CONCLUSION

Report 3 is focused on Needs Assessment findings at the family level. The first section details key demographics of Georgia's families and how these demographics are changing. The primary source for this section is a report commissioned by DECAL and created by Child Trends (see Appendix II). The findings show the increasing diversity of Georgia's children and families, that the state's poverty rate is higher than the national average, and that the needs of families transcend geographic boundaries. In other words, there are needs in rural, suburban, and urban areas of the state. A key focal population for Georgia's PDG B-5 work is infants and toddlers, and the demographics show that while this group is demographically similar to the total birth to five population, these children are slightly more likely to be living in poverty.

The second section of this report details stakeholder engagement findings related to the state's efforts around family engagement. While stakeholders were supportive of the state's engagement efforts for families of children birth to age five, they did identify areas of growth. These areas include focusing on resilience and trauma, ensuring that family engagement supports are reflective of Georgia's diversity, and increasing efforts around understanding development, accessing high-quality early education programs, and managing transitions.

In closing, this report details how demographics are changing and the need for the state to increase and diversify engagement efforts.

# APPENDIX I. NEEDS ASSESSMENT CROSSWALK

Needs Assessment Domain	Corresponding Section
Definitions: quality early childhood care and education (ECCE), ECCE availability, vulnerable or underserved children, children in rural areas, ECCE system as a whole	Report 2: Key Terms; Georgia's Mixed Delivery System
Focal Populations for the Grant: vulnerable or underserved children in your state/territory, and children who live in rural areas in your state/territory	Report 2: Focal Populations, Table 4
Quality and Availability: current quality and availability of ECCE, including availability for vulnerable or underserved children and children in rural areas	Report 1: Summary of Findings, Table 2 Report 5: all sections Report 6: all sections
Children Being Served and Awaiting Service: data available and/or plan for identifying the unduplicated number of children being served in existing programs and unduplicated number of children awaiting services in existing programs	Report 4: Introduction; Georgia's Cross-Agency Child Level Data System; Unduplicated Counts of Children
Gaps in data on quality and availability of programming and supports for children and families	Report 1: Summary of Findings, Table.2 Report 2: System Level Findings
Gaps in data or research to support collaboration between programs/services and maximize parental choice	Report 1: Summary of Findings, Table 2 Report 2: System Level Findings
Measurable indicators of progress that align with the state/territory's vision and desired outcomes for the project	Report 4: Introduction; Measurable Indicators of Progress
Issues involving early childhood care and education facilities	Report 6: Findings from Administrative Data Analyses
Barriers to the funding and provision of high-quality early childhood care and education services and supports and opportunities for more efficient use of resources	Report 1: Summary of Findings, Table 2 Report 2: System Level Findings

<b>Needs Assessment Domain</b>	<b>Corresponding Section</b>
Transition supports and gaps	<p>Report 1: Summary of Findings, Table 2</p> <p>Report 3: Findings Related to Family Engagement</p> <p>Report 5: Transitions and Access</p>
System integration and interagency collaboration	<p>Report 1: Summary of Findings, Table 2</p> <p>Report 2: System Level Findings</p>
<b>Stakeholder Input</b>	<b>Corresponding Section</b>
Parents/family members or guardians	Report 1: Process and Methods, Table 1
Child care providers from different settings (e.g., center-based, Head Start, home-based)	Report 1: Process and Methods, Table 1
Child care providers from different parts of the state including rural areas and areas with diverse populations	Report 1: Process and Methods, Table 1
Other early childhood service providers	Report 1: Process and Methods, Table 1
State/local early childhood advisory council(s) or other collaborative governance entity	Report 1: Process and Methods, Table 1
Key partner agencies	Report 1: Process and Methods, Table 1



# APPENDIX II. CHILD TRENDS REPORT

# Spotlight on Five Populations of Children in Georgia

Nadia S. Orfali Hall, Rob O’Callaghan, and Diane M. Early

## Introduction

Georgia’s Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) asked Child Trends to assist in the state’s Needs Assessment, as part of their Preschool Development Grant: Birth through Five. The purpose of the Needs Assessment was to describe Georgia’s early childhood care and education (ECCE) system for children birth to age five (B-5), to ultimately inform statewide implementation strategies for enhancing access to high-quality ECCE, particularly for low-income and disadvantaged families.

As part of this process, Georgia identified *focal populations*, or groups of underserved or disadvantaged children, that were of particular interest to the state as a means of focusing on the unique needs of young children and families. The five selected populations were children living in poverty, children with disabilities, children in foster care, children experiencing homelessness, and children who live in rural areas. In addition to understanding the number of children in each of these focal populations, Georgia is interested in understanding the race and ethnicity, age, recency of immigration, language spoken at home, poverty and low-income status, and location in the state for each group. This brief presents the results of these analyses.

### Preschool Development Grant: Birth through Five

The Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five has two purposes: “(1) build or enhance a preschool program infrastructure that would enable the delivery of high-quality preschool services to children, and (2) expand high-quality preschool programs in targeted communities that would serve as models for expanding preschool to all 4-year-olds from low- and moderate-income families.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup><https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/pdg-b-5-initiative>

## Methodology and Data

The statistics in this brief are based on analyses of Georgia’s focal populations from national and state datasets, including:

- The American Community Survey, 5-year data (2013-2017) and 2017 1-year data from IPUMS (Ruggles et al., 2019) or from the API in R software (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019); and
- The National Survey of Children’s Health (2017-2018; Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, 2019).

In addition, we used statistics published by the federal government, the state, or other research organizations where appropriate.

# Findings

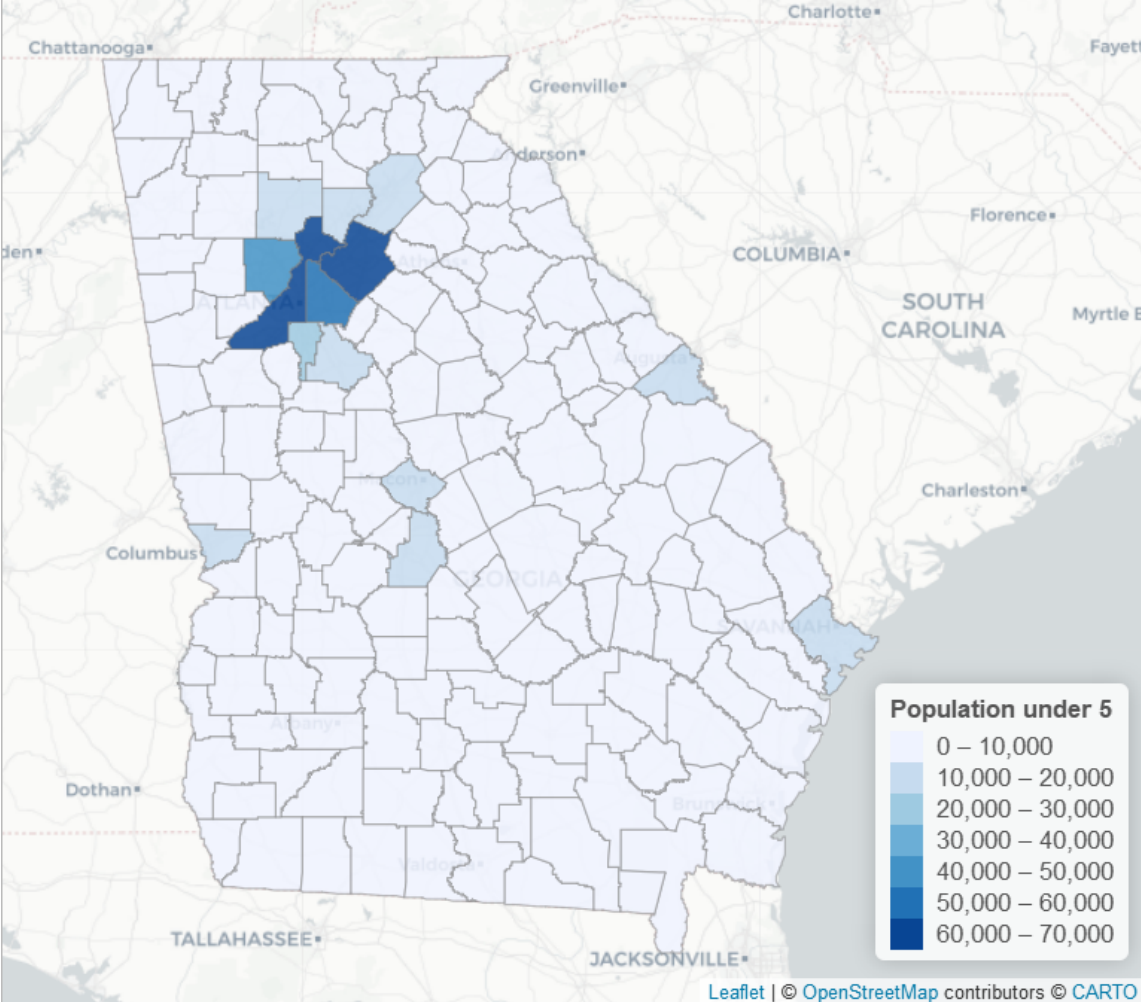
This brief organizes the findings into three sections: (1) basic characteristics of children birth to age 5 living in Georgia, (2) more specific information on characteristics of infants and toddlers, and (3) details on each focal population identified outlined in the introduction.

## Characteristics of children under age five

This section provides information about children under age five living in Georgia, including demographic information, recency of immigration, poverty level, disability status, foster care status, homelessness status, and rurality. Additionally, this section compares information about Georgia’s young children to the national population. When possible, data are presented for children in the B-5 age range; however, due to limitations in data availability, some information is only available for a wider age range. For each data section, age ranges that are different from B-5 are noted.

Figure 1 shows how the population of young children is distributed throughout Georgia; darker colors correspond to higher numbers of children. The darker counties in the north-central part of the state make up the Atlanta metropolitan area, representing the state’s largest B-5 population.

Figure 1. Population of children under age five



Source: Child Trends’ analysis of the 2013-2017 American Community Survey.

## Race and ethnicity

A large portion (42.7%) of children under age five living in Georgia are non-Hispanic White and 32.1% are Non-Hispanic Black. Compared to the total U.S. population, Georgia has more non-Hispanic Black children (32.1% vs. 13.2%) and fewer Hispanic children under age five (15.6% vs. 25.8%; see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Children under age five, by race/ethnicity

	National (n = 19,720,694)	Georgia (n = 654,065)
Non-Hispanic White	49.6%	42.7%
Non-Hispanic Black	13.2%	32.1%
Non-Hispanic other or multiple races	11.4%	9.6%
Hispanic	25.8%	15.6%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2017 American Community Survey.

## Age groups

Within the B-5 age group, Georgia has similar proportions of children under age three and age three to five compared to the nation as a whole (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Children under age five, by age group

	National (n = 19,720,694)	Georgia (n = 654,065)
Birth to under age three years	58.7%	59.1%
Age three to under age five years	41.3%	40.9%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2017 American Community Survey.

## Recency of immigration

Within the B-5 age group, Georgia has slightly more children who are foreign-born or have at least one parent who is foreign-born and immigrated to the U.S. in the past five years (36.2%) compared to the U.S. population as a whole (31.2%, see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Children under age five who are foreign-born or have at least one foreign-born parent who immigrated within the last five years

	National (n = 19,720,694)	Georgia (n = 654,065)
Foreign-born or parent immigrated within the last five years	31.2%	36.2%
Parent did not immigrate within the last five years or not an immigrant	68.3%	63.7%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2017 American Community Survey.

## Language spoken at home

Compared to national estimates, Georgia is home to a smaller percentage of children ages five to seventeen who speak a language other than English (15.6% versus 22.5%; see Table 4). The American Community Survey does not ask this question about children under age five. Since language spoken is generally stable over time, we used the percentage of children ages five to 17 that speak another language as a proxy.

**Table 4. Percentage of children ages 5-17 that speak a language other than English, by language**

	National (n = 53,843,204)	Georgia (n = 1,858,845)
English	77.6%	84.4%
Spanish	16.1%	11.4%
Other languages	6.4%	4.2%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2017 American Community Survey.

## Poverty and low-income status

A slightly higher percentage of children under age five live in poverty or in low-income households in Georgia (49.2%) compared to nationwide (42.6%; see Table 5).

**Table 5. Children under age five, by poverty level**

	National (n = 19,527,267)	Georgia (n = 647,548)
In poverty (<100% FPL)	20.3%	24.2%
Low income (100%-199% FPL)	22.3%	25.0%
Not low income or in poverty (>200% FPL)	57.5%	50.7%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2017 American Community Survey.

## Disability status

The National Survey of Children's Health (2017-2018) includes a parent-reported screener for children that "identifies children across the range and diversity of childhood chronic conditions and special needs, allowing a more comprehensive and robust assessment of children's needs and health care system performance than is attainable by focusing on a single diagnosis or type of special need."<sup>1</sup> Georgia has a similar percentage of children under age five with special health care needs (7.2%) compared to national estimates (9.5%; see Table 6).

**Table 6. Children under age five with special health care needs**

	National (n = 19,772,151)	Georgia (n = 535,237)
With special health care needs	9.5%	7.2%
Without special health care needs	90.5%	92.8%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the National Survey of Children's Health, 2018.

<sup>1</sup> See here for more information: [https://www.childhealthdata.org/docs/default-source/nsch-docs/2018-nsch-fast-facts\\_10-7-19\\_final.pdf?sfvrsn=e36d5e17\\_2](https://www.childhealthdata.org/docs/default-source/nsch-docs/2018-nsch-fast-facts_10-7-19_final.pdf?sfvrsn=e36d5e17_2)



## Children in foster care

Georgia has a lower percentage of children under age six in foster care (0.7%) compared to national estimates (1.9%; see Table 7).<sup>2</sup>

**Table 7. Percentage of children under age six in foster care**

	National (n=23,558,797)	Georgia (n=779,302)
<b>In foster care</b>	1.9%	0.7%
<b>Not in foster care</b>	98.1%	98.8%

Sources: Children's Bureau Child Welfare Outcomes Report, 2018; FY2018 AFCARS Report; and American Community Survey, 2017.

## Children experiencing homelessness

For these purposes, homelessness is defined as the McKinney-Vento Act definition.<sup>3</sup> Georgia has a similar rate of children under age six experiencing homelessness (4.8%) compared to national estimates (5.3%; see Table 8). Counts of children under age five were not available.

**Table 8. Children under age six by homelessness status**

	National (n = 23,558,797)	Georgia (n = 779,302)
<b>Experiencing homelessness</b>	5.3%	4.8%
<b>Not experiencing homelessness</b>	94.7%	95.2%

Sources: Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles; and American Community Survey, 2017.

## Rurality

Rural areas are defined by the state as counties with a total population less than 50,000 or counties designated as rural by the Georgia legislature.<sup>4</sup> Table 9 shows the percentage of children under age five living in a county with a total population less than 50,000 across the nation compared to rural counties in Georgia. A greater percentage of children under age five in Georgia live in a rural county (21.1%) compared to the nation as a whole (12.1%).

**Table 9. Children under age five, by rurality**

	National (n = 20,025,714)	Georgia (n = 657,428)
<b>Rural</b>	12.1%	21.1%
<b>Urban</b>	87.9%	78.9%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of 2013-2017 American Community Survey.

<sup>2</sup> These percentages refer to a point-in-time count of children under age six in foster care on September 30, 2017. The counts were divided by the number of children under age six as estimated in 2017.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/> for more information.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://dch.georgia.gov/sorh-maps-georgia-0> for more information.

## Characteristics of infants and toddlers

In total, Georgia has an estimated 292,321 infants and toddlers (children under age 3). This section provides analyses of a sub-group of the B-5 population, focusing primarily on children in Georgia under age three.

### Race/ethnicity

The racial/ethnic distribution of infants/toddlers in Georgia is similar to children under age five years old overall (see Table 10).

**Table 10.** Children under age three, by race/ethnicity

	Under age 3 years (n = 386,324)	Under age five years (n = 654,065)
Non-Hispanic White	42.8%	42.7%
Non-Hispanic Black	32.1%	32.1%
Non-Hispanic other or multiple races	9.6%	9.6%
Hispanic	15.6%	15.6%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2017 American Community Survey.

### Poverty and low-income status

A similar percentage of infants/toddlers in Georgia live in poverty or low-income households compared to children under age five overall (see Table 11).

**Table 11.** Children under age three, by poverty level

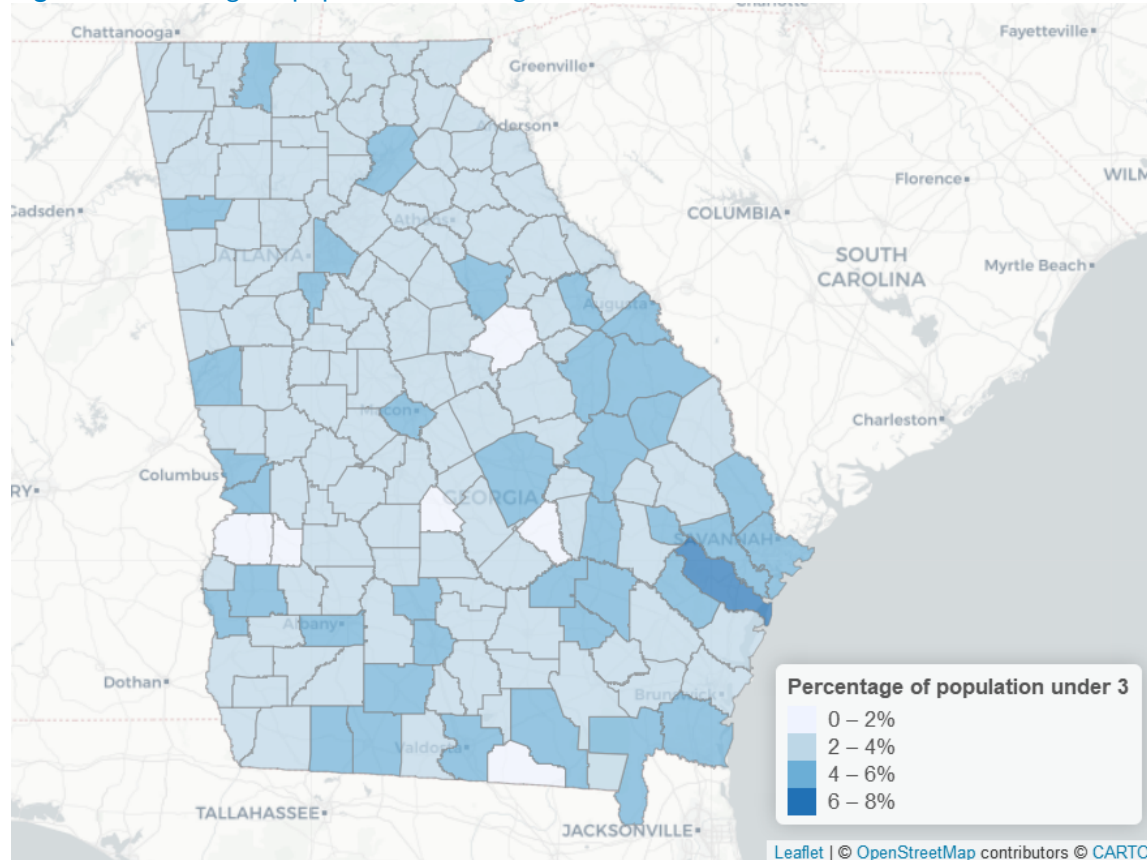
	Under age 3 years (n = 381,574)	Under age five years (n = 647,548)
In poverty (<100% FPL)	25.2%	24.2%
Low income (100%-199% FPL)	24.3%	25.0%
Not low income or in poverty (>200% FPL)	50.5%	50.7%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2017 American Community Survey.

## Location

Figure 2 shows the percentage of each county's overall population that is under three years of age; darker counties have a higher percentage of children under three. Statewide, 3.5 percent of the population is under three. In the southeastern part of the state, a higher proportion of the overall county population is under three.

**Figure 2. Percentage of population under age three**



Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2013-2017 American Community Survey.

## Characteristics of children living in poverty

In Georgia, 325,724 children under age five are living in poverty or in low-income households (see Table 5). Below we describe their race/ethnicity and present a map of their location throughout the state.

### Race/ethnicity

When examining income levels across race/ethnicity, the largest proportion of children under age five in Georgia living in poverty or low-income households are Non-Hispanic Black. A slightly higher proportion of Hispanic children under age five in Georgia are living in poverty compared to Non-Hispanic White children (24.6% and 21.2%, respectively). Over half of the children age five and under in Georgia who are not low-income or in poverty are Non-Hispanic White (56.2%; see Table 12).

**Table 12.** Children under age five, by race/ethnicity and poverty level

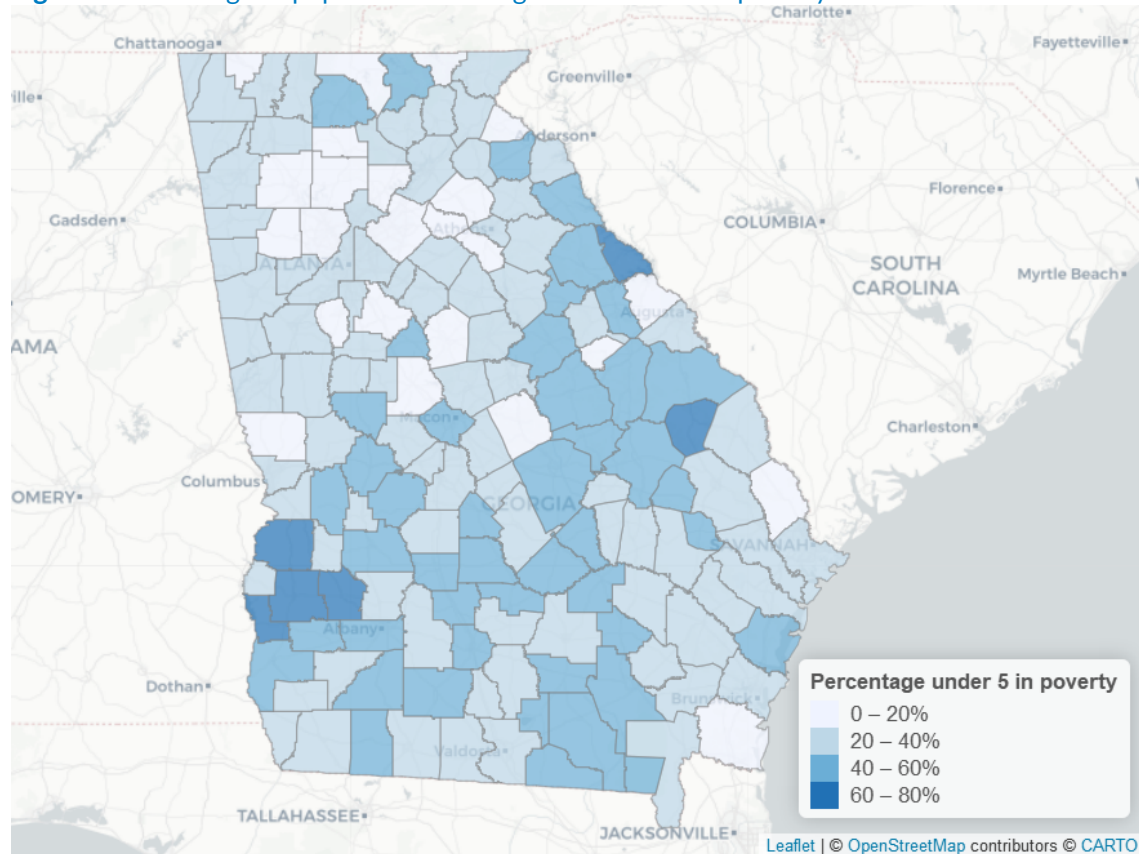
	In poverty (<100% FPL; n = 156,805)	Low income (100%-199% FPL; n = 162,157)	Not low income or in poverty (>200% FPL; n = 328,586)
Non-Hispanic White	21.2%	26.5%	56.2%
Non-Hispanic Black	47.7%	35.0%	22.6%
Non-Hispanic other or multiple races	6.5%	10.0%	11.0%
Hispanic	24.6%	18.5%	10.2%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2017 American Community Survey.

## Location

Figure 3 shows the proportion of the B-5 population whose family lives at or below the poverty line, at the county-level; darker counties have a higher percentage of young children in poverty. Rural counties, far from the Atlanta metro area, have higher rates of poverty among children under age five than those in the Atlanta metro area.

**Figure 3.** Percentage of population under age five at or below poverty level



Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2013-2017 American Community Survey.

## Characteristics of children with disabilities

In Georgia, an estimated 38,537 children under age five have special health care needs.

### Race/ethnicity

Over half of children under age five identified with special health care needs are non-Hispanic White (56.8%) compared to children without special health care needs (43.7%; see Table 13).

**Table 13.** Children under age five with special health care needs, by race/ethnicity

	With special health care needs (n = 38,537)	Without special health care needs (n = 496,700)
Non-Hispanic White	56.8%	43.7%
Non-Hispanic Black	30.9%	29.2%
Non-Hispanic other or multiple races	4.2%	11.3%
Hispanic	8.1%	15.7%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the National Survey of Children's Health, 2018.

### Poverty and low-income status

A lower percentage of children under age five identified with special health care needs are in poverty (3.6%) than children without special health care needs (18.5%; see Table 14).

**Table 14.** Children under age five with special health care needs, by poverty level

	With special health care needs (n = 38,537)	Without special health care needs (n = 496,700)
In poverty (<100% FPL)	3.6%	18.5%
Low income (100-199% FPL)	24.6%	28.5%
Not in poverty or low income (>200% FPL)	71.8%	53.0%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the National Survey of Children's Health, 2018.

### Location

The data in the National Health Care Survey is not available at a more granular level than the state, so the location of children with special health care needs is unknown.

## Characteristics of dual language learners

Dual language learners are young children who are learning more than one language at a time.

### Race/ethnicity

Among children ages five to 17 who speak only English at home, 50.2 percent are non-Hispanic White and 38.6 percent are non-Hispanic Black. The vast majority of dual language learners who speak Spanish at home are Hispanic (89.5%; see Table 15).



**Table 15.** Children age 5-17, by DLL status and race/ethnicity

	English only (n = 1,569,667)	Spanish (n = 211,207)	Other (n = 77,971)
Non-Hispanic White	50.2%	6.5%	23.7%
Non-Hispanic Black	38.6%	2.8%	19.4%
Non-Hispanic Other or Multiple Races	6.7%	1.2%	54.6%
Hispanic	4.6%	89.5%	2.3%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2017 American Community Survey.

## Poverty and low-income status

Nearly two-thirds of dual language learners ages five to 17 whose primary language is Spanish are living in poverty or are low income, which is significantly higher than children whose primary language is English (40.5%) or another language (42.8%; see Table 16).

**Table 16.** Children ages 5-17 identified as DLL, by primary language and poverty level

	English only (n = 1,558,912)	Spanish (n = 211,038)	Other (n = 77,273)
In poverty (<100% FPL)	19.2%	33.4%	18.6%
Low income (100%-199% FPL)	21.3%	31.5%	24.2%
Not in poverty (>200% FPL)	59.6%	35.1%	57.2%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2017 American Community Survey.

## Location

The language spoken at home for children ages five to 17 was not available in aggregate form at the county level.

## Characteristics of children in foster care

In 2018, Georgia had 5,734 children under age six in foster care.

## Race/ethnicity

Table 17 describes the demographics of children under age six in foster care, as reported by the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services in May 2019. Data for children under age five and for ethnicity categories were not available. The majority of children in foster care are identified as either White (53.9%) or Black (44.5%), with the remainder comprising Native American/Alaska Native (0.1%), Asian (0.2%), or Other (1.3%; combined in Table 17).

**Table 17.** Children under age six in foster care, by race/ethnicity

	In foster care (n = 5,734)
Black	44.5%
White	53.9%
Other	1.6%

Source: Georgia's Division of Family and Children Services, May 2019.

## Poverty and low-income status

Information about the income status of children in foster care was not available for this report.

## Location

Information about the location of children in foster care was not available for this report.

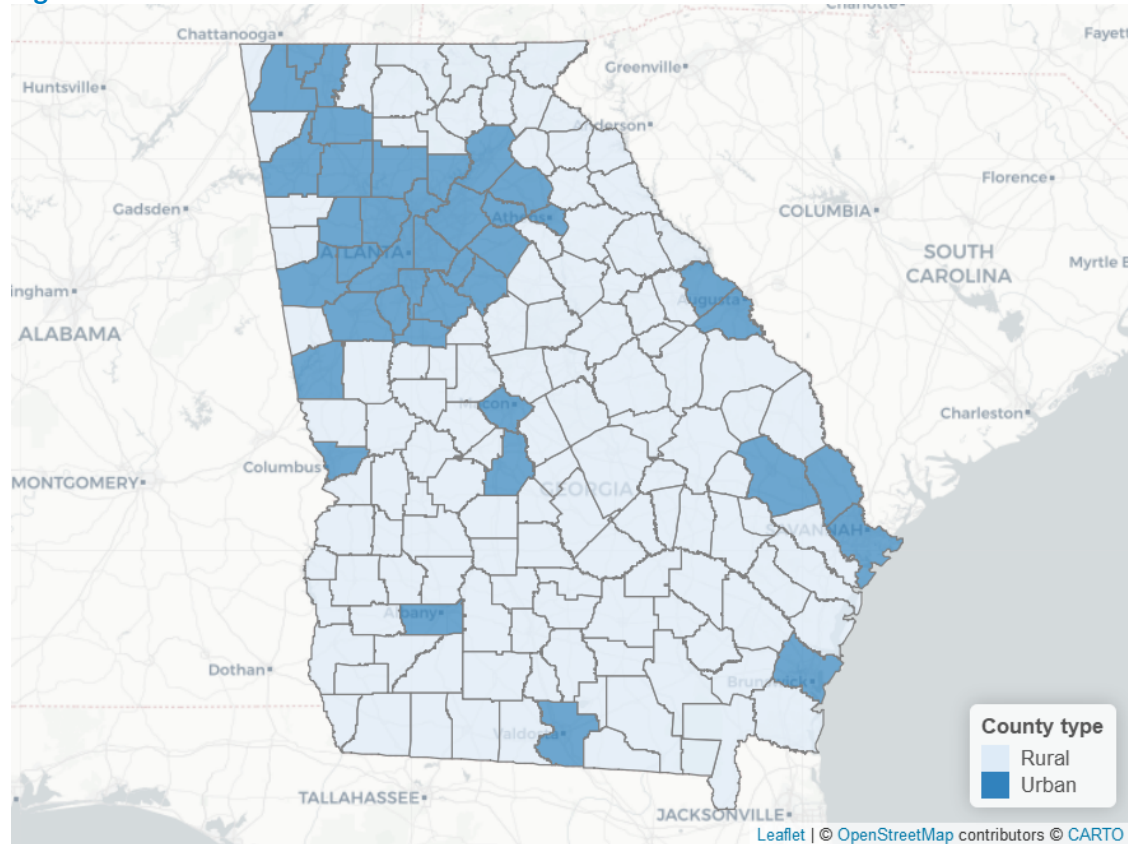
## Characteristics of children experiencing homelessness

Georgia had an estimated 24,527 children under age six experiencing homelessness in 2011 (National Center on Family Homelessness and the Georgia Alliance to End Homelessness, 2011). No demographic data are available, and the data were not broken down for children under age five.

## Characteristics of children in rural areas

In Georgia, 138,895 children under the age of five lived in counties that were defined as rural (total population less than 50,000 people). Figure 4 shows which counties were defined as rural for this analysis.

**Figure 4.** Counties defined as rural and urban



Source: State definition of rural communicated by DECAL.

## Race/ethnicity

The relative proportion of Black children under age five is higher in urban areas compared to rural areas. Specifically, in rural areas, 68.4 percent are White and 29.7 percent are Black, compared to urban areas where 53.0 percent are White and 37.5 percent are Black (see Table 21).

**Table 21.** Children under age five, by race and rurality

	Rural (n = 127,985)	Urban (n = 485,897)
<b>White</b>	68.4%	53.0%
<b>Black</b>	29.7%	37.5%
<b>Other or multiple races</b>	1.9%	9.5%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2013-2017 American Community Survey.

Similar to patterns on race and rurality, there is a higher relative proportion of Hispanic versus non-Hispanic children under age five living in urban areas in Georgia. Specifically, in rural areas, 11.3 percent of children under age five are Hispanic and 88.7 percent are not Hispanic, compared to 18.2 percent and 81.8 percent in urban areas, respectively (see Table 22).

**Table 22.** Children under age five, by ethnicity and rurality

	Rural (n = 127,985)	Urban (n = 485,897)
Hispanic	11.3%	18.2%
Not Hispanic	88.7%	81.8%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2013-2017 American Community Survey.

## Poverty and low-income status

There is a higher relative proportion of young children in Georgia living in poverty in urban areas compared to rural areas. Specifically, 17.3 percent of children under age five living in an urban area are in poverty, compared to 10.6 percent of children living in a rural area (see Table 23).

**Table 23.** Children under age five, by poverty level and rurality

	Rural (n = 136,379)	Urban (n = 511,223)
In poverty (<100% FPL)	10.6%	17.3%
Not in poverty (>100% FPL)	89.4%	82.7%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2013-2017 American Community Survey.

## Strengths and Weaknesses of Available Data

There were some strengths and weaknesses of the available data.

- **Data availability.** Data availability was a strength in that we were able to find the data to calculate the prevalence of all focal populations across the nation and in Georgia. However, not all data were available for the birth to five age group. We were able to locate the distribution of race and ethnicity for all focal populations except for children in families experiencing homelessness. We were also able to report on focal populations other than children in foster care and children experiencing homelessness by their poverty status. However, some statistics were harder to locate. For example, the American Community Survey does not collect information about the languages that children under age five speak or are learning, so information about dual language learners in that age group was inferred from children ages five to 17.
- **Aggregate data by location.** Not all data sources provided information aggregated by location (e.g., county). Since the state defines rural according to county, this meant that not all factors could be examined for children under age five living in rural areas.

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# Appendix

**Table A1.** Georgia estimates from the American Community Survey used in mapping



County	Urban or rural	Population estimate of children under age five	Percentage of total population under age three	Percentage of population under age five living in poverty
Appling	Rural	1,331	4.1%	38.8%
Atkinson	Rural	582	3.9%	49.4%
Bacon	Rural	755	4.0%	43.7%
Baker	Rural	127	2.7%	26.8%
Baldwin	Rural	2,209	3.3%	39.9%
Banks	Rural	940	2.7%	21.8%
Barrow	Urban	5,423	3.9%	16.4%
Bartow	Urban	6,689	4.0%	18.2%
Ben Hill	Rural	1,174	3.1%	40.8%
Berrien	Rural	1,112	3.2%	35.0%
Bibb	Urban	10,820	4.2%	47.5%
Bleckley	Rural	679	3.9%	26.7%
Brantley	Rural	1,112	3.4%	36.2%
Brooks	Rural	881	2.5%	39.0%
Bryan	Rural	2,444	4.1%	21.0%
Bulloch	Urban	4,126	3.2%	34.8%
Burke	Rural	1,620	4.4%	42.6%
Butts	Rural	1,394	2.6%	43.5%
Calhoun	Rural	232	2.1%	55.0%
Camden	Rural	3,900	4.6%	18.4%
Candler	Rural	653	3.4%	55.0%
Carroll	Urban	7,401	3.6%	25.8%
Catoosa	Urban	3,630	3.3%	19.6%
Charlton	Rural	727	4.0%	34.2%
Chatham	Urban	18,861	4.0%	26.5%
Chattahoochee	Rural	952	5.5%	20.8%
Chattooga	Rural	1,363	3.1%	34.2%
Cherokee	Urban	14,693	3.5%	17.2%
Clarke	Urban	6,839	3.4%	35.4%
Clay	Rural	204	4.6%	70.1%
Clayton	Urban	21,257	4.4%	38.7%
Clinch	Rural	594	4.2%	55.4%
Cobb	Urban	47,842	3.8%	15.4%
Coffee	Rural	2,891	4.0%	38.0%
Colquitt	Rural	3,303	4.3%	46.5%
Columbia	Urban	9,182	3.8%	9.6%
Cook	Rural	1,134	3.9%	33.2%
Coweta	Urban	8,695	3.6%	21.6%
Crawford	Rural	655	3.9%	29.4%
Crisp	Rural	1,516	3.1%	46.9%

County	Urban or rural	Population estimate of children under age five	Percentage of total population under age three	Percentage of population under age five living in poverty
Dade	Rural	780	2.8%	23.7%
Dawson	Rural	1,310	2.3%	23.6%
Decatur	Rural	1,814	3.4%	36.1%
DeKalb	Urban	53,127	4.3%	30.0%
Dodge	Rural	1,111	3.2%	22.5%
Dooly	Rural	549	2.1%	28.9%
Dougherty	Urban	6,372	4.2%	45.1%
Douglas	Urban	8,968	3.7%	26.8%
Early	Rural	666	3.9%	44.6%
Echols	Rural	213	1.5%	46.0%
Effingham	Urban	3,905	4.3%	14.5%
Elbert	Rural	1,154	3.0%	41.8%
Emanuel	Rural	1,505	4.4%	48.2%
Evans	Rural	793	4.5%	41.1%
Fannin	Rural	967	2.3%	9.9%
Fayette	Urban	4,823	2.5%	9.3%
Floyd	Urban	5,955	3.3%	27.1%
Forsyth	Urban	13,296	3.5%	9.8%
Franklin	Rural	1,368	3.7%	40.1%
Fulton	Urban	62,728	3.6%	25.4%
Gilmer	Rural	1,588	3.5%	41.3%
Glascocock	Rural	141	2.4%	7.1%
Glynn	Urban	5,029	3.7%	37.0%
Gordon	Urban	3,574	3.7%	30.6%
Grady	Rural	1,710	4.6%	41.6%
Greene	Rural	984	4.2%	36.0%
Gwinnett	Urban	60,963	3.9%	18.6%
Habersham	Rural	2,576	3.6%	24.9%
Hall	Urban	12,977	4.1%	28.6%
Hancock	Rural	262	0.9%	59.2%
Haralson	Rural	1,757	3.4%	22.5%
Harris	Rural	1,588	3.3%	10.4%
Hart	Rural	1,397	3.4%	30.4%
Heard	Rural	659	3.5%	22.4%
Henry	Urban	12,725	3.3%	19.5%
Houston	Urban	10,276	3.9%	27.5%
Irwin	Rural	417	3.3%	25.9%
Jackson	Urban	4,137	3.6%	19.7%
Jasper	Rural	782	3.7%	10.8%
Jeff Davis	Rural	995	4.3%	42.9%

County	Urban or rural	Population estimate of children under age five	Percentage of total population under age three	Percentage of population under age five living in poverty
Jefferson	Rural	1,100	4.4%	52.0%
Jenkins	Rural	634	4.4%	70.2%
Johnson	Rural	564	3.1%	54.5%
Jones	Rural	1,528	3.4%	25.0%
Lamar	Rural	1,011	2.5%	32.3%
Lanier	Rural	727	3.5%	44.6%
Laurens	Rural	3,202	4.1%	46.8%
Lee	Rural	1,839	2.9%	20.7%
Liberty	Rural	6,307	6.7%	26.0%
Lincoln	Rural	427	2.1%	63.9%
Long	Rural	1,417	4.6%	29.8%
Lowndes	Urban	8,082	4.5%	35.9%
Lumpkin	Rural	1,360	2.5%	20.0%
Macon	Rural	603	2.8%	55.4%
Madison	Rural	1,684	3.4%	23.0%
Marion	Rural	457	2.9%	43.5%
McDuffie	Rural	1,523	4.4%	54.1%
McIntosh	Rural	623	3.1%	48.5%
Meriwether	Rural	1,208	3.4%	28.1%
Miller	Rural	346	2.8%	32.1%
Mitchell	Rural	1,377	2.9%	44.4%
Monroe	Rural	1,394	3.5%	12.8%
Montgomery	Rural	472	3.7%	33.0%
Morgan	Rural	979	2.7%	29.5%
Murray	Rural	2,447	4.1%	28.6%
Muscogee	Urban	14,793	4.4%	32.8%
Newton	Urban	6,868	3.8%	27.5%
Oconee	Rural	1,887	3.1%	12.9%
Oglethorpe	Rural	800	3.4%	25.8%
Paulding	Urban	9,943	3.8%	11.3%
Peach	Rural	1,494	2.9%	32.5%
Pickens	Rural	1,425	2.6%	10.2%
Pierce	Rural	1,165	3.5%	30.7%
Pike	Rural	856	2.6%	25.0%
Polk	Rural	2,780	4.0%	32.8%
Pulaski	Rural	347	1.6%	42.5%
Putnam	Rural	1,068	2.8%	38.1%
Quitman	Rural	88	2.7%	29.5%
Rabun	Rural	712	3.0%	21.7%
Randolph	Rural	513	5.1%	78.0%

County	Urban or rural	Population estimate of children under age five	Percentage of total population under age three	Percentage of population under age five living in poverty
Richmond	Urban	13,956	4.1%	36.0%
Rockdale	Urban	5,265	3.6%	36.6%
Schley	Rural	279	3.3%	37.3%
Screven	Rural	864	3.8%	35.7%
Seminole	Rural	481	3.1%	39.9%
Spalding	Urban	4,142	3.6%	36.2%
Stephens	Rural	1,442	2.7%	14.7%
Stewart	Rural	198	1.8%	78.8%
Sumter	Rural	1,938	3.9%	49.8%
Talbot	Rural	248	2.5%	28.2%
Taliaferro	Rural	73	2.7%	54.4%
Tattnall	Rural	1,431	3.4%	39.9%
Taylor	Rural	425	3.2%	44.2%
Telfair	Rural	653	2.5%	55.7%
Terrell	Rural	597	3.8%	67.7%
Thomas	Rural	2,886	4.1%	26.8%
Tift	Rural	2,837	4.8%	54.7%
Toombs	Rural	1,990	4.3%	38.7%
Towns	Rural	408	2.6%	16.9%
Treutlen	Rural	463	3.7%	35.9%
Troup	Urban	4,593	4.0%	35.8%
Turner	Rural	510	4.0%	48.6%
Twiggs	Rural	441	3.1%	34.4%
Union	Rural	757	2.1%	48.7%
Upson	Rural	1,627	4.0%	47.8%
Walker	Urban	3,859	3.5%	21.7%
Walton	Urban	5,525	3.7%	21.2%
Ware	Rural	2,398	4.0%	43.1%
Warren	Rural	275	3.6%	35.3%
Washington	Rural	1,181	3.7%	41.6%
Wayne	Rural	2,095	3.6%	29.5%
Webster	Rural	92	1.9%	25.0%
Wheeler	Rural	338	1.6%	58.6%
White	Rural	1,264	2.3%	35.2%
Whitfield	Urban	7,194	3.9%	33.3%
Wilcox	Rural	463	3.1%	40.4%
Wilkes	Rural	525	3.2%	51.4%
Wilkinson	Rural	509	2.8%	15.3%
Worth	Rural	1,273	2.5%	27.7%

Source: Child Trends' analysis of the 2013-2017 American Community Survey and Georgia's state definition of rural.







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[www.decal.ga.gov/BftS/PreschoolDevelopmentGrant.aspx](http://www.decal.ga.gov/BftS/PreschoolDevelopmentGrant.aspx)