

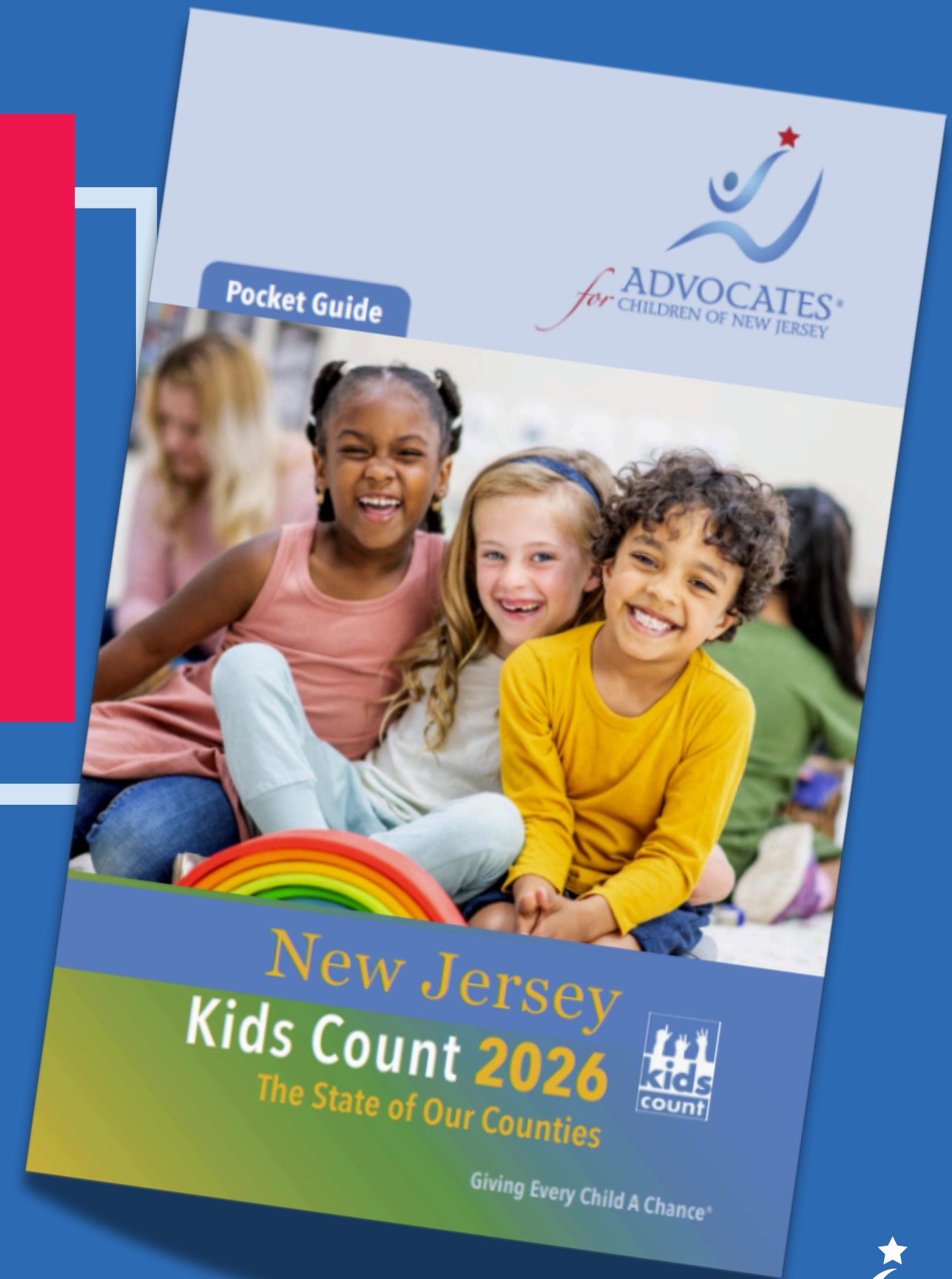
COUNTY POCKET GUIDE 2026

MAY 5, 2026

Giving Every Child A Chance

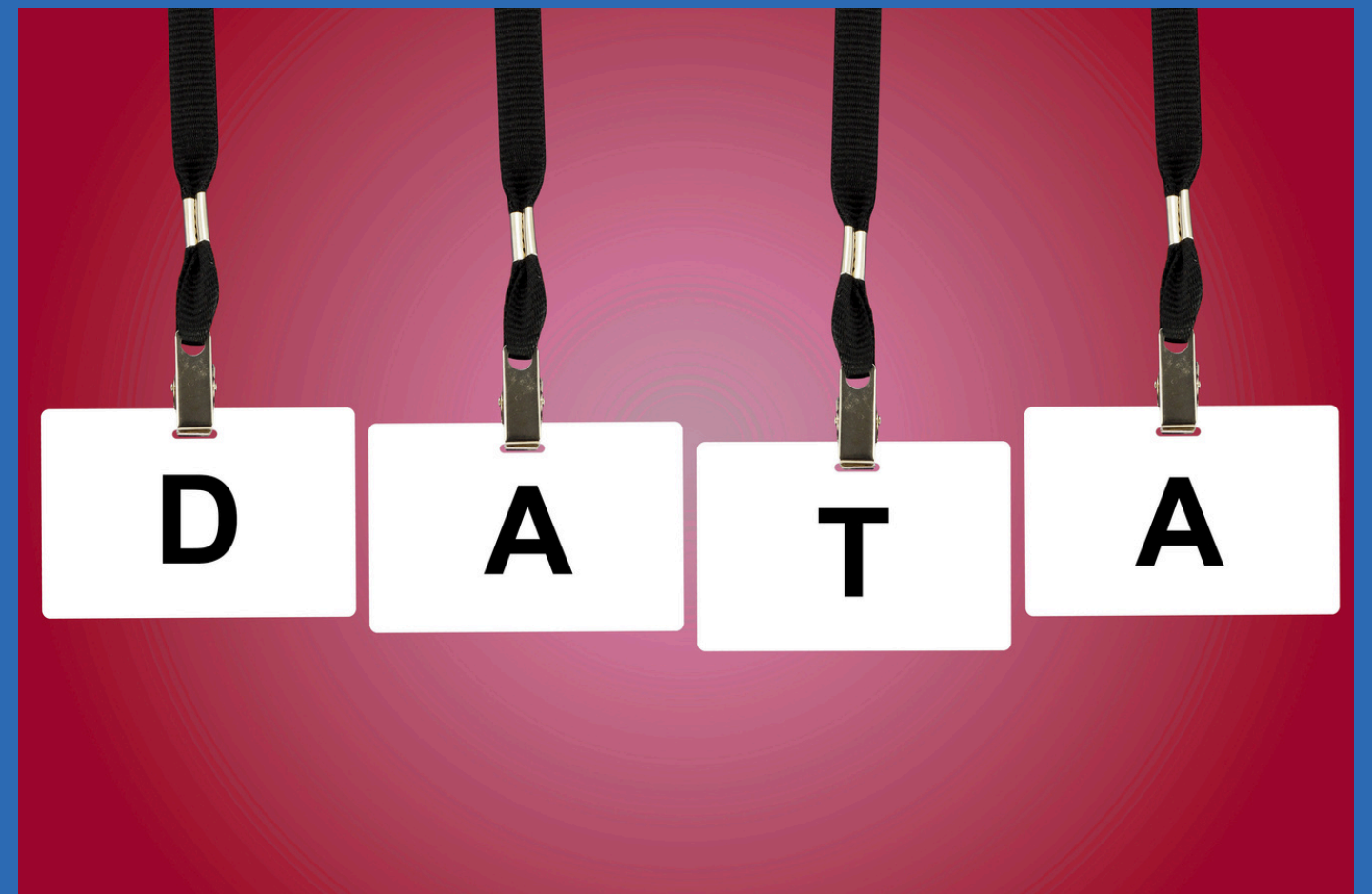
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WHERE DO WE GET DATA?

- > Kids Count data are from publicly available sources
- > Data from federal and state entities

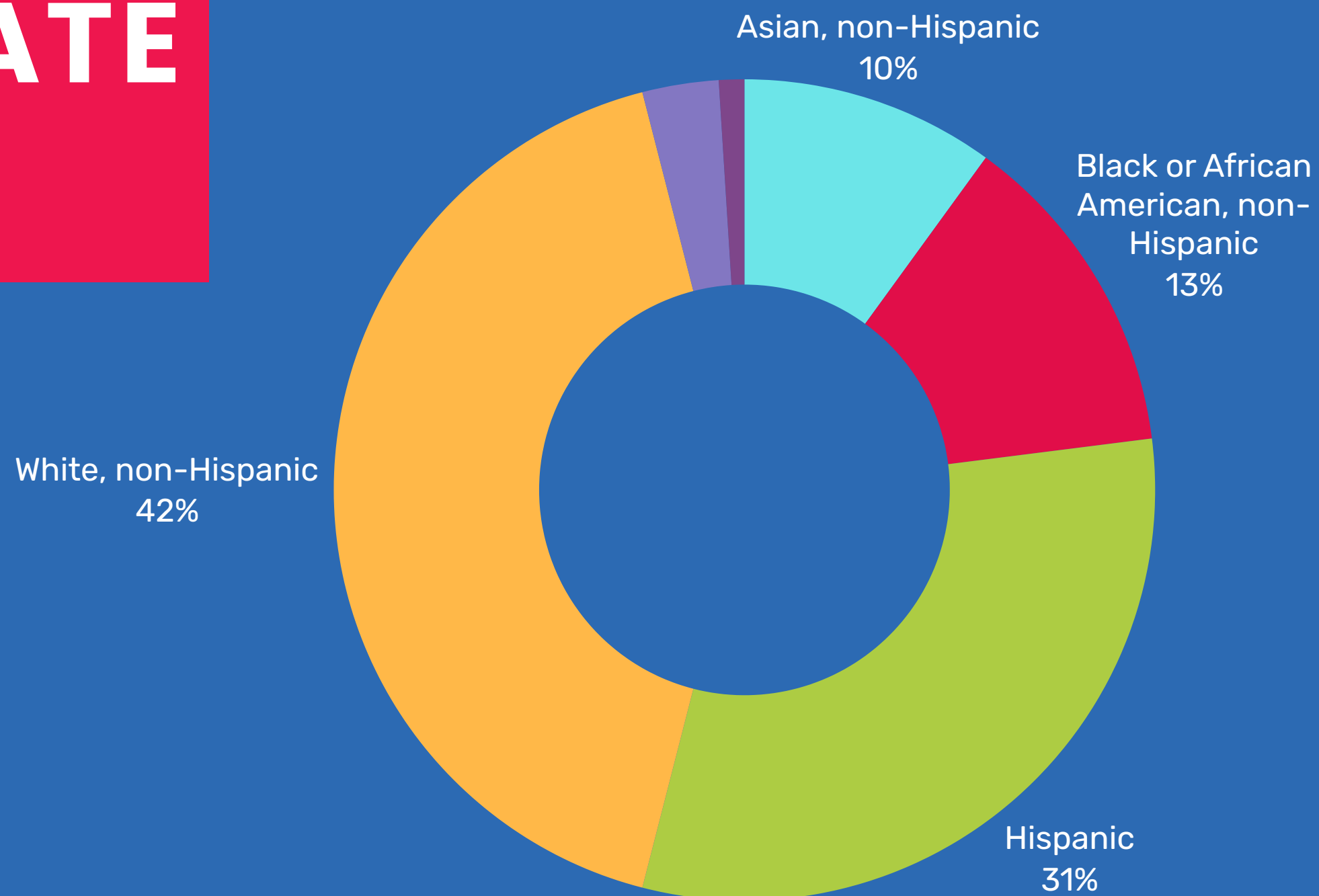


OVER 2 MILLION CHILDREN CALL THE GARDEN STATE HOME



- > 1 in 4 are under age 5
- > 70% live in married-couple households

New Jersey children under 20 are:



CHILD POVERTY IN NEW JERSEY



13%

of children living below the Federal Poverty Level in New Jersey.

- > Below federal poverty level is <100%
- > Federal poverty level measures poverty based on a basic food diet adjusted for family size & Inflation

Federal Poverty Thresholds for a Family of Four

	2024
50%	\$15,906
100%	\$31,812
200%	\$63,624

\$130,331

median income for families with children (2020–2024), up **25%** from 2015–2019.



MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME WITH KIDS ON THE RISE



- Across the 21 counties, median income varies from \$69,962 to \$195,471

CHILD HUNGER & FOOD INSECURITY IN NJ

- > Over 271,000 children (13.5%) were estimated to be food insecure
 - * Increase from previous year
- > Over 340,000, children participating in SNAP in 2025
 - * Over 19,700 less children than the previous year



BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION RATES LARGELY UNCHANGED



THIS EQUATES TO UP TO \$72,016 FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR

- > 58% of students receiving free or reduced price lunch were also receiving breakfast
- > Students whose families have an annual income of up to 224% of FPL are eligible for free school meals
- > Varies from 72% (Essex) to 31% (Hunterdon)

BIRTHS IN THE GARDEN STATE 2023

COUNTIES WHERE 50% OR MORE OF BIRTHS ARE TO FOREIGN-BORN MOTHERS

Hudson	56%
Middlesex	53%
Mercer	50%

- > 101,014 births in New Jersey
- > 36% of births were to foreign-born mothers
- > More than 1/3 of New Jersey counties have a higher share of births to foreign-born mothers than the state rate.





75%

of women in NJ were
receiving early prenatal
care in 2023.

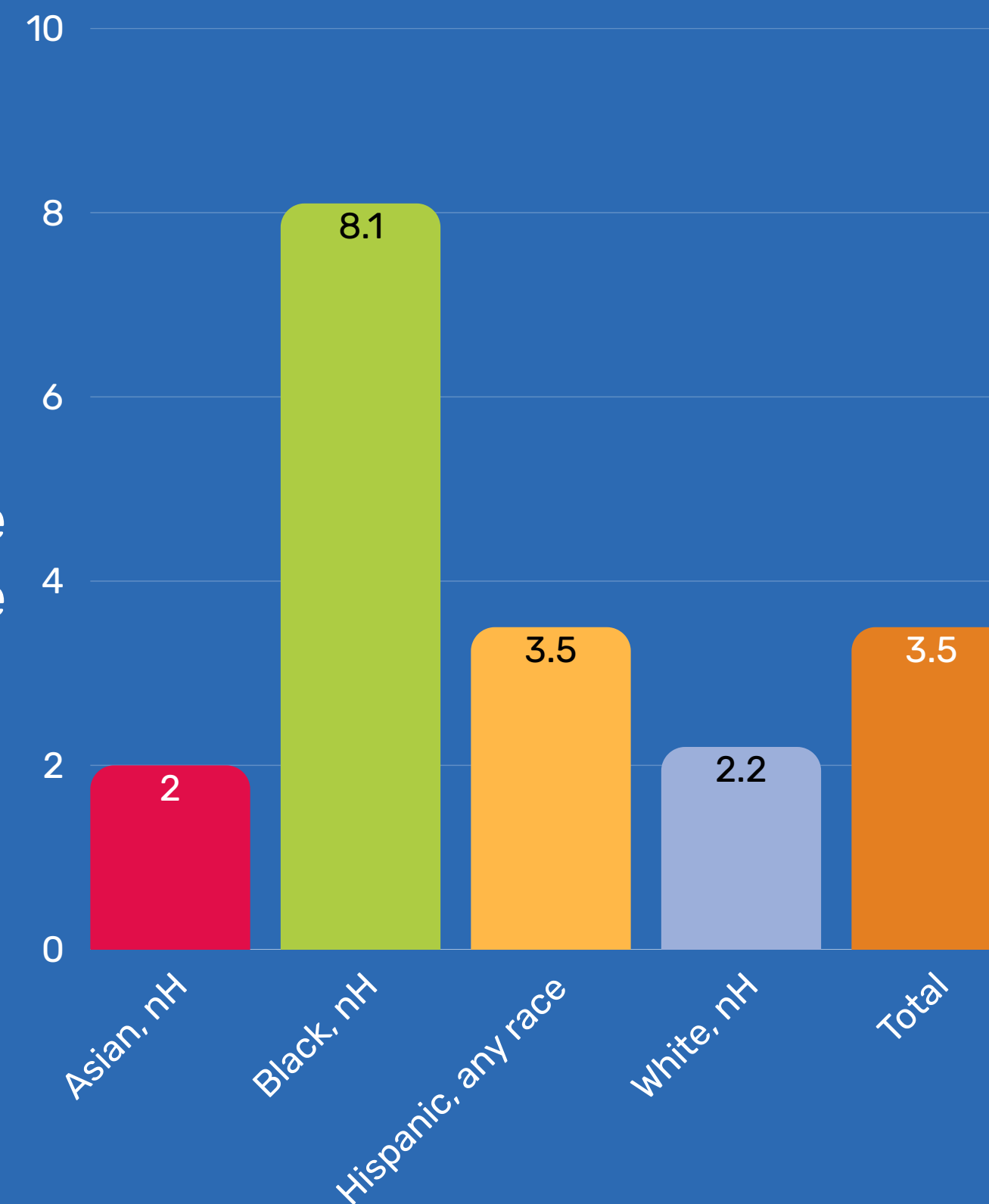
ACCESS TO EARLY PRENATAL CARE ACROSS NJ

- > Lower rates in Essex (59%) and Mercer (66%)
- > Higher rates in Sussex and Hunterdon (both 86%)

INFANT MORTALITY (IMR)

- > Infant Mortality Rate = number of babies who die before their first birthday, measured per 1,000 live births.
- > IMR was 3.5 in 2021-2023
 - * Decrease from 4.1 in 2018-2020
- > IMR for Black, non-Hispanic (nH) babies was 8.1 in 2021-2023
 - * More than two times the State's rate

Infant Mortality Rate by Racial/Ethnic Groups 2021-23



Over 100,000

Fewer recipients under 19 years of age
are receiving NJ FamilyCare in 2025



RECIPIENTS UNDER 19 RECEIVING NJ FAMILYCARE



- > NJ Familycare recipients under 19 was 834,531 in 2025
 - *11% decrease from 2023
- > All counties saw a decrease between 2023 and 2025

TRENDS IN YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES STATEWIDE

TERMS TO KNOW

Children's System of Care (CSOC) = serves children and youth under 21 with mental health, substance use, or developmental needs and their families through individualized, community-based services.

PerformCare = connects youth and families in New Jersey to behavioral health, substance use, and developmental services through CSOC.



In 2024, there were:

* 122,086 calls to PerformCare

* 63,107 youth had open cases with CSOC

* 32,778 youth were served by care management organizations

CHILD WELFARE SUPERVISION IN NEW JERSEY

- > Of the 31,148 children under Child Protection & Permanency supervision
 - * 28,129 or 90% of children are living at home receiving CP&P services
 - * 3,019 or 10% were in Out-of-Home placements (foster care)

- > There has been a slight decline in children receiving In-Home supervision and slight increase of children in Out-of Home placement statewide
 - * Counties like Essex and Salem have seen increases in both

TERMS TO KNOW

In-Home = CP&P has open-case & child is still at home receiving services

Out-of-Home = children placed in foster care with a relative, kin, or unrelated resource parent and involves court litigation.

TERMS TO KNOW

Established = A preponderance of evidence shows abuse/neglect occurred, but the acts do not warrant the severity of "substantiated" based on mitigating factors.

Substantiated = a preponderance of evidence shows abuse/neglect existed and aggravating factors are present.

CHILDREN REPORTED FOR ABUSE/NEGLECT

DID YOU KNOW:

Hundreds of reports are made daily to NJ's child abuse hotline, but over two-thirds allege suspected neglect, not abuse. And fewer than 3% require system intervention. When poverty is misidentified as neglect, vulnerable families are unjustly impacted.



Reforming Mandated Reporting in New Jersey

Moving from Reporting to Supporting Families

JANUARY 2026

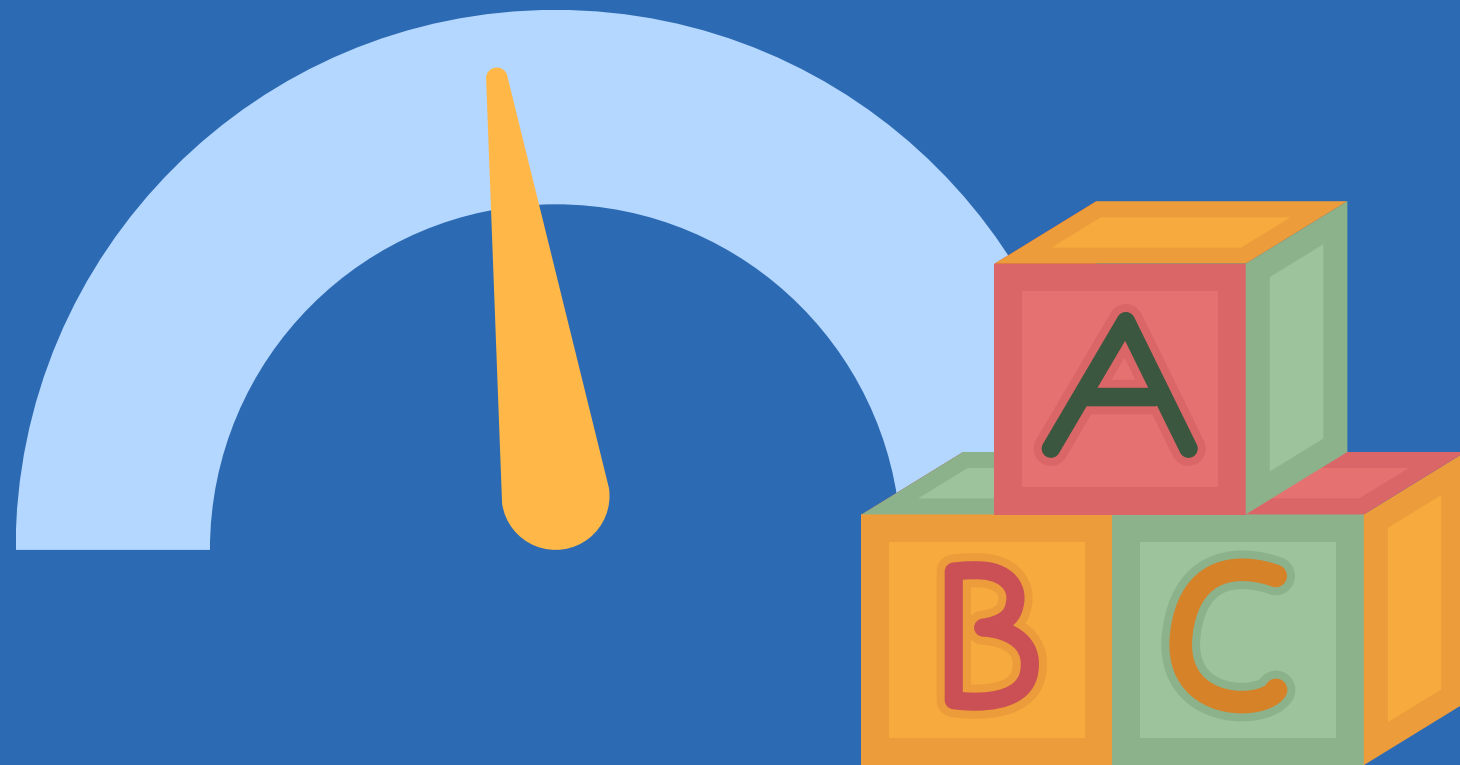


NJTFCAN
New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect

- > 88,762 children reported for abuse/neglect in 2025
- > 2% of cases were substantiated/established

46%

of licensed child care centers in NJ
serve infants.



**LICENSED DOESN'T
MEAN INFANT CARE
IS AVAILABLE**

- > More than half of the NJ child care system isn't available to babies
- > Most capacity is spread across broad or older age groups (2.5 - 13 years; 6-13 years) and not targeted to infant care
- > Infant classrooms are harder to sustain - higher costs, strict staffing ratios, and space needs limit availability

6 in 10

schools have $\geq 10\%$ or more of students chronically absent in 2023-24



PREVALENCE OF SCHOOLS WITH $\geq 10\%$ CHRONICALLY ABSENT

- > A student is considered chronically absent if they miss 10% or more of the school year
- > Public schools in NJ must create a corrective action plan if 10% or more of their students are chronically absent

PREVALENCE OF SCHOOLS WITH ≥10% CHRONICALLY ABSENT

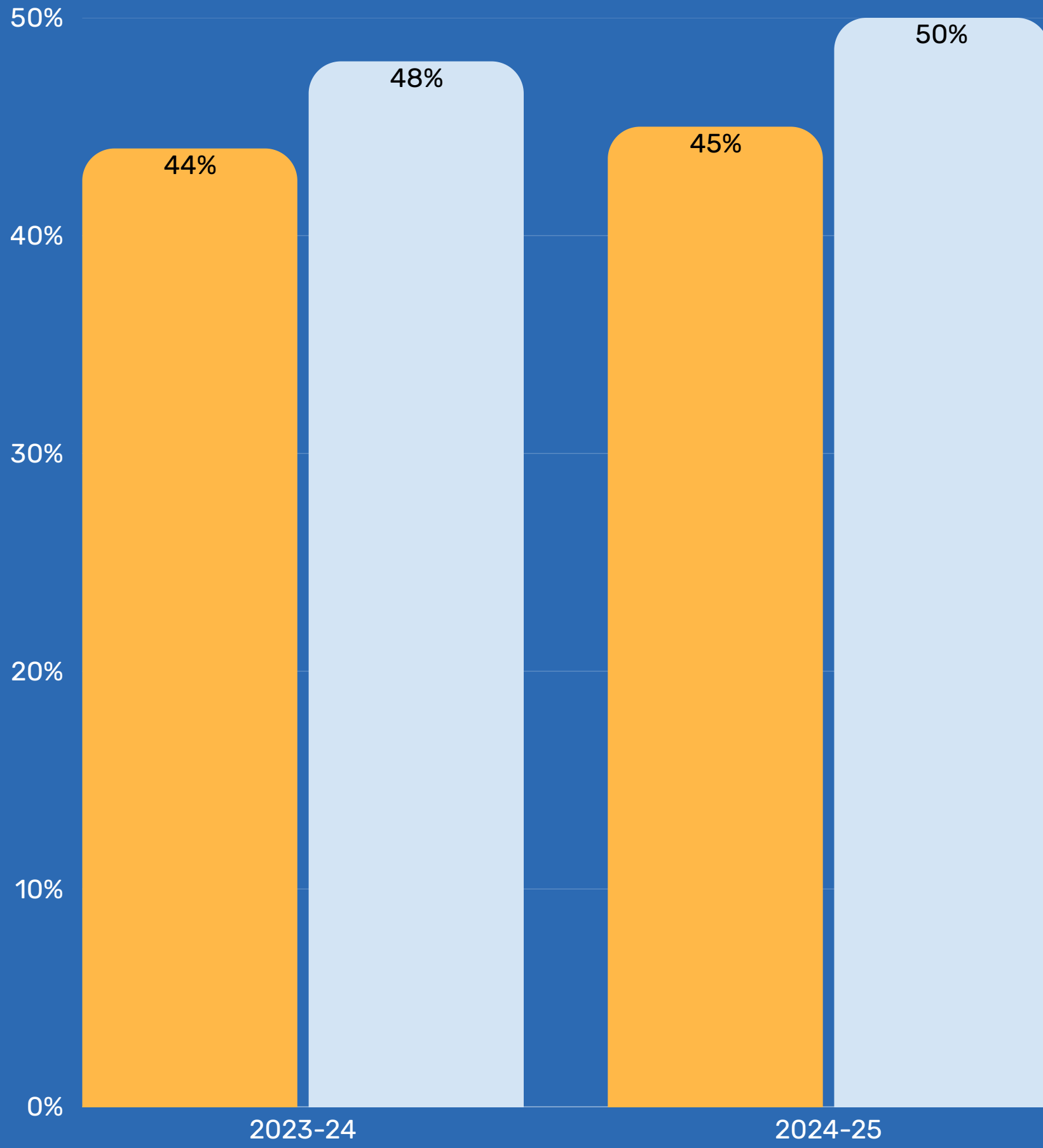
Schools Where 10% or More of Students Are Chronically Absent

2023-24

	Total Schools with Reportable Data*	Schools with 10% or More of Students Are Chronically Absent	
		#	%
Atlantic	68	58	85%
Bergen	268	102	38%
Burlington	124	80	65%
Camden	142	101	71%
Cape May	29	25	86%
Cumberland	45	43	96%
Essex	225	117	52%
Gloucester	80	55	69%
Hudson	127	110	87%
Hunterdon	45	17	38%
Mercer	103	67	65%
Middlesex	183	116	63%
Monmouth	175	105	60%
Morris	149	40	27%
Ocean	104	94	90%
Passaic	140	103	74%
Salem	29	25	86%
Somerset	80	34	43%
Sussex	44	33	75%
Union	164	94	57%
Warren	39	28	72%
New Jersey	2,363	1,447	61%

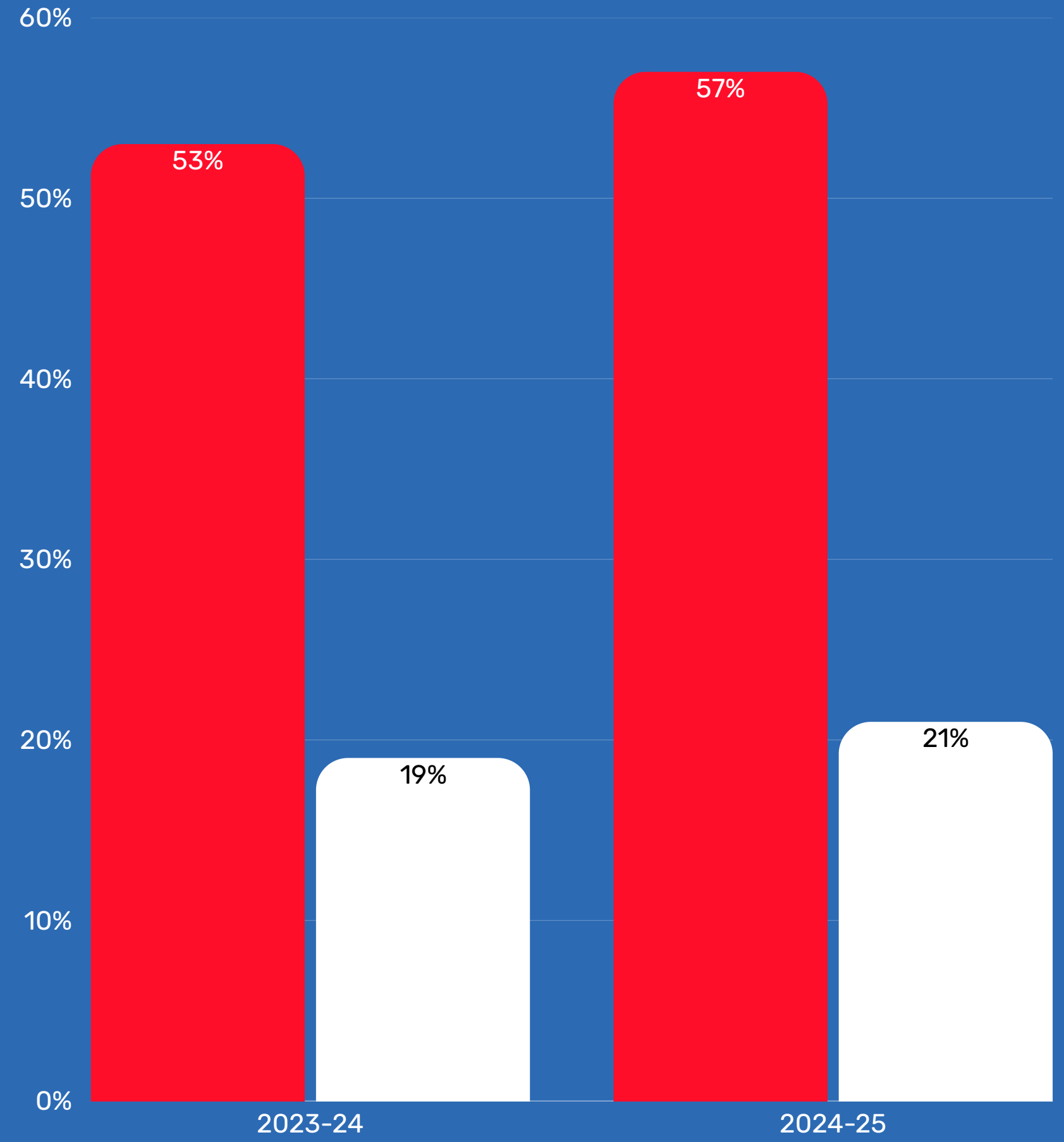
3rd Graders Meeting or Exceeding Expectations on NJSLA

● ELA ● MATH



8th Graders Meeting or Exceeding Expectations on NJSLA

● ELA ● MATH



TEENS

- > 2% of births to adolescents (ages 10-19)
- > Juvenile arrests rate and youth admissions to county detention did not have a noticeable change statewide although this varies by county.
- > When breaking data for youth admissions to detention by race/ethnicity, there has been a slight increase in percentage of Black or African American and a slight decrease in the percentage of Caucasion and Hispanic youth between 2023 and 2024.



Contact Us



for **ADVOCATES**
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**Thank You for Joining Us!
Don't forget to complete the survey.**

We Value Your
FEEDBACK!

Scan the QR Code to Complete
Our Kids Count Survey

