

Fatherhood is foundational to strong families, and strong families are essential to a strong Nation. An absent father affects all aspects of a child's life, from socio-cognitive and socio-emotional development to academic performance and criminality—and unfortunately, the effects of **fatherlessness** are visible in **North Dakota**.

FATHERLESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES

- Approximately **18.4 million** [children in the U.S.](#) live without a biological father, stepfather, or adoptive father present in the home.
- **23%** of children in the U.S. are raised by a single parent. This is more than three times the world average (**7%**) of [children raised by a single parent](#) and the highest rate of any country on Earth.
- Approximately **41%** of children are [born to unwed mothers](#). For women under age 30, the unwed birth rate increases to **53%**.
- Fathers are [absent in approximately](#) **80%** of single-parent homes.
- Fatherless children are **more likely** [to suffer from](#) psychosocial development issues, live in poverty, drop out of school, engage in school violence, abuse substances, and enter the juvenile justice system.

FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY IN NORTH DAKOTA

- **48,000** North Dakota [children](#) live in single-parent households, representing **28%** of all North Dakota children.
- There were **3,302** births to unmarried women in North Dakota in 2020, **33%** of all births that year.
- There are about **319** [teen births](#) in North Dakota per year.
- There were **2,104** children in [foster care](#) in North Dakota as of 2020.
- **33,995** [children](#) have one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions in North Dakota or **23%** of all North Dakota children.
- About **3,000** teens ages 12–17 have [abused](#) alcohol or drugs in the past year in North Dakota.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IN NORTH DAKOTA

- 66% of North Dakota 4th-graders scored “below proficient” in [reading](#) for their class level.
- 63% of North Dakota 8th-graders scored “below proficient” in [mathematics](#) for their class level.
- 26% of North [Dakota 4th-graders](#) are considered “chronically absent” from school.
- 5,672 North Dakota [children](#) ages 6–17 repeated one or more grades, 5% of all children in that age group.
- 12% of North Dakota [high school students](#) do not graduate on time.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE IN NORTH DAKOTA

- 31,541 children receive [SNAP benefits](#) in North Dakota, for 16.5% of all North Dakota children.
- 15,424 infants and children are [receiving](#) WIC benefits in North Dakota.
- There are approximately 19,263 North Dakota children living in [poverty](#), which is about 10.9% of all children.

