

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, including socio-cognitive development, socio-emotional development, academic performance, and criminality. Unfortunately, the effects of fatherlessness are far too visible throughout America, including in **California**.

## **THE PREVALENCE OF FATHERLESSNESS IN THE U.S. AND CALIFORNIA**

- According to 2023 census data, approximately **18 million** [children in the U.S.](#) live without a biological father, stepfather, or adoptive father present in the home.
  - **Nearly 1 in 3** children in the United States is raised by a single parent, which is the highest rate of single-parent homes in the [world](#).
  - **Nationally, more than 80%** of children in single-parent homes live with their mothers.
- **Fatherlessness is all too common in California, too.**
  - **34%** of children in California are living in [single-parent homes](#).
  - **47,871** [children reside in foster care](#) in California – living with neither parent.

## **FATHERLESSNESS AND EDUCATION**

- Research shows that a father's involvement in their child's schooling [results in](#) higher grades and a lower likelihood of students repeating a grade.
- When children have an actively involved father, they are [33% less likely to drop out of school and 43%](#) more likely to get A's.

## **FATHERLESSNESS, POVERTY, AND GOVERNMENT DEPENDENCE**

- Children without fathers at home are [4x more likely](#) to live in poverty.
  - Approximately **1,278,000** [children live in poverty](#)—**15%** of all children in the state.
  - **2,209,000** children are in families [receiving public assistance](#) in California.