

FATHERLESSNESS IN ILLINOIS

Jack Brewer | 2024

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 **Illinois**.

THE PREVALENCE OF FATHERLESSNESS IN THE U.S. AND ILLINOIS

- 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 Illinois, too.**
 - **34%** of children in Illinois are living in [single-parent homes](#).
 - **21,086** [children reside in foster care](#) in Illinois – 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 **425,000** [children live in poverty](#)—**16%** of all children in the state.
 - **752,000** children are in families [receiving public assistance](#) in Illinois.