

Early Care and K-12 Education

New York City has the nation's largest public education system, serving more than 178,000 children under 5 in early care and education (ECE) programs and over 900,000 students in grades K-12.

In 2025, nearly 45,000 3-year-olds were enrolled in 3-K—a 155% increase since 2020. Child care voucher utilization increased by 71% between 2023 and 2025, with the largest increases among infants, toddlers, and 3-year-olds.

The cost of child care has continued to increase, with over 90% of families unable to afford care without a publicly-funded option. Publicly-funded child care serves 39% of all children under 5 in NYC. However, only 16% of infants and toddlers are served through the public system. Additionally, only 15% of 3-K and 11% of Pre-K seats serve children in extended-day, year round programs. Nearly half of preschoolers with disabilities did not receive all their mandated services.

Among school-age children, student performance has improved in elementary and middle school in recent years, and graduation rates have increased 16% over the last decade, with the largest gains among Black and Latine students. However, disparities among K-12 students persist: a record high 156,000 students lived in temporary housing last year, and Black students faced disciplinary actions at twice the rate of their peers.



QUICK FACTS

2 in 5

children under 5 are enrolled in the publicly funded ECE system.

Center-based child care for one infant/toddler costs

\$23,760

annually.

Almost

one third

of all preschoolers with disabilities waited more than the legally mandated 60-day period for an IEP meeting.

Between 2021 and 2025, the number of students living in shelter increased by

132%

17%

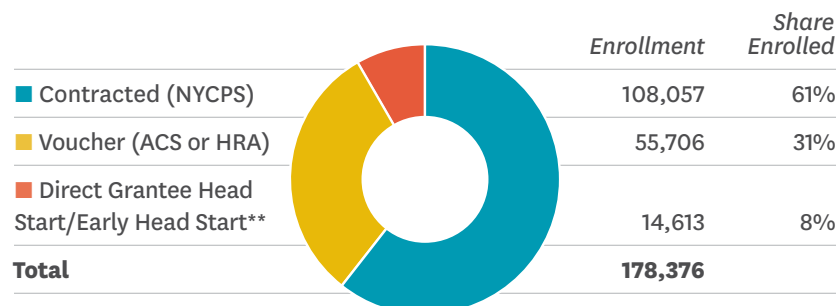
of all NYC public school students are English Language Learners.

Publicly Funded Early Care and Education (ECE) System Overview

There are 178,166 children under 5 enrolled in publicly funded ECE seats in NYC. Nearly two thirds are in seats contracted through New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) 3-K, Pre-K, or subsidized child care for infants and toddlers; one third are served through HRA or ACS vouchers; and 8% are served through direct grantee Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

FIGURE 5.01

Children Under 5 Enrolled in Publicly Funded Care by Type, 2025*



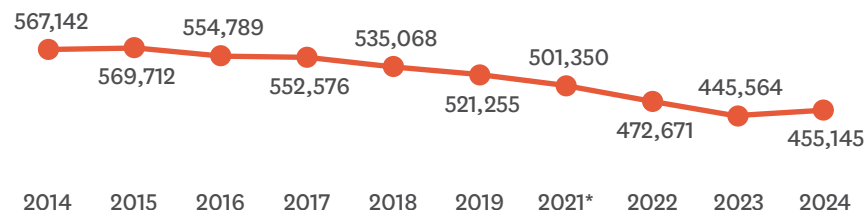
*NYCPS Contracted enrollment and Voucher enrollment data are from 2025; Head Start/Early HS enrollment data is from 2024.

**In Figure 5.01, Head Start/Early HS captures enrollment through programs administered by Direct Federal Grantees, while New York City Public Schools Head Start/Early HS is captured under the Contracted system. This edition of Keeping Track is the first to include enrollment in Direct Grantee Head Start programs in its ECE public system enrollment numbers.

Over the past decade, NYC's population of children under 5 declined by approximately 114,000. Combined with the expansion of the public early care and education system, this contributed to a record-high share of children under 5 (39%) enrolled in publicly funded care in 2025.

FIGURE 5.02

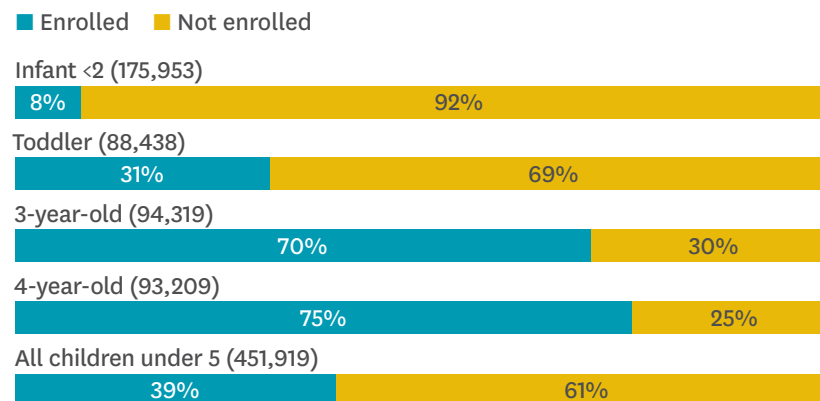
Population of Children Under 5



*Due to disruptions and biases in data collection during 2020, we have not reported ACS 1-year estimates for 2020.

FIGURE 5.03

Share of Children Under 5 Enrolled in Public ECE System by Age Group, 2025*



*NYCPS Contracted enrollment and Voucher enrollment data are from 2025; Head Start/Early HS enrollment data is from 2024. Child population estimates are from 2024.

Half of all children under five in the publicly funded system (89,045) are enrolled in universal, free NYCPS contracted Pre-K and 3-K seats. The remaining half (89,121) meet eligibility criteria for enrollment in NYCPS contracted extended day/year seats, voucher-funded seats, or Head Start and Early Head Start seats.

FIGURE 5.04

Income Eligibility Thresholds for NYC ECE Publicly Funded Programs

Program type	Income eligibility threshold	Annual income (family of four)	Children's age
NYCPS Contracted Pre-K And 3K	Universal	n/a	3's and 4's
NYCPS Contracted Extended Day/Year Care for 3's and 4's	85% of the State Median Income	\$113,567	3's and 4's
NYCPS Contracted Extended-Day/Year Care for Infant/Toddler	85% of the State Median Income	\$113,567	Infants and toddlers
NYCPS Contracted Head Start/ Early Head Start	100% FPL	\$33,000	Infants, toddlers, 3's and 4's
Direct Grantees Head Start/ Early Head Start	100% FPL	\$33,000	Infants, toddlers, 3's and 4's
HRA Vouchers (Cash Assistance, Mandated)	Cash assistance	Varies	6 weeks to 13 years*
ACS Vouchers (Child Welfare)	–	n/a	6 weeks to 13 years
ACS Vouchers (Low-Income, Non Mandated)	85% of the State Median Income	\$113,567	6 weeks to 13 years

*Children 13–19 with special needs can be served by vouchers.

Nearly half of 264,000 infants and toddlers in NYC live in families that are income-eligible for subsidized care. For some subsidized programs families must also meet other criteria, such as working, pursuing education, looking for work or housing, etc.

FIGURE 5.05

Infants and Toddlers by Income Eligibility for Subsidized Care, 2024

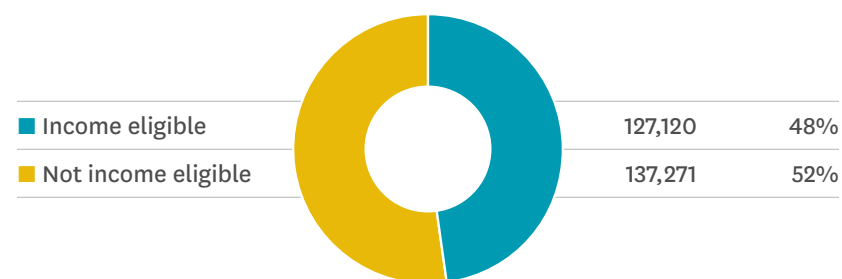
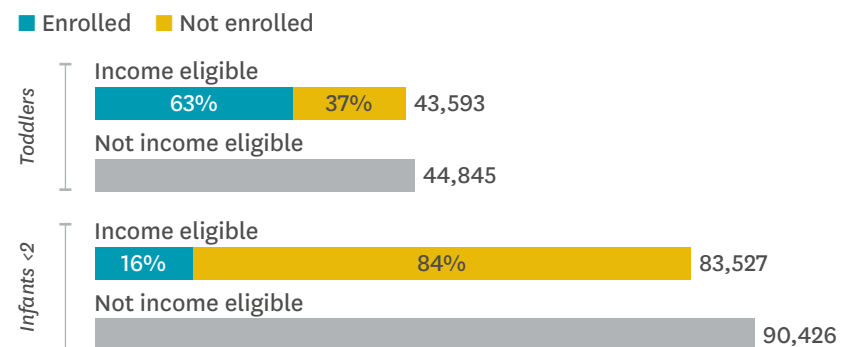


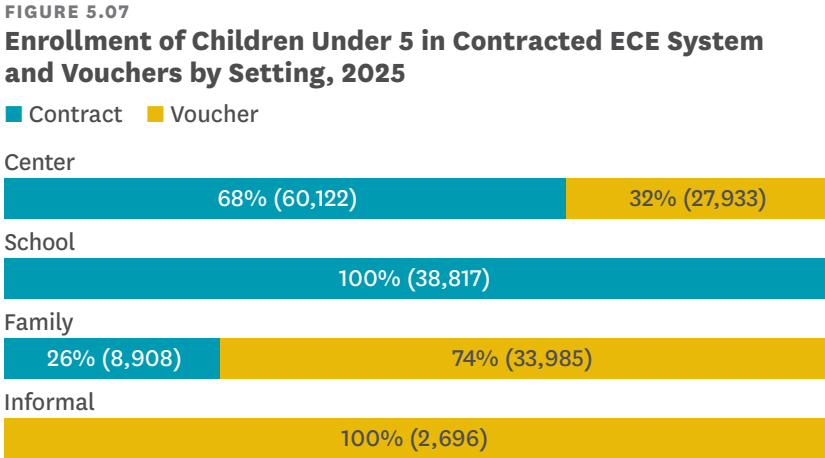
FIGURE 5.06

Infants and Toddlers: Income Eligibility and Enrollment in Publicly Funded ECE System, 2025*



*NYCPS Contracted enrollment and Voucher enrollment data are from 2025; Head Start/Early HS enrollment data is from 2024. Infant and toddler population estimates are from 2024.

Across contracted care and vouchers, 54% of children under 5 are enrolled in center-based care, 24% in schools, 21% in licensed family-care settings, and 2% in informal care settings.



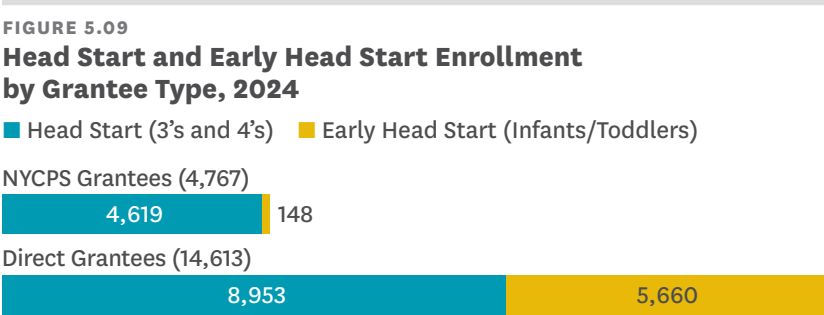
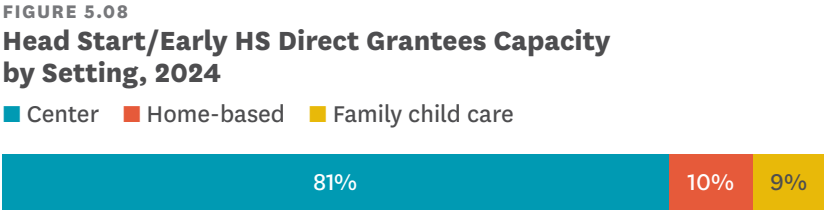
Centers: Includes community-based centers contracted with NYC Public Schools and non-contracted, private centers that accept vouchers.

Schools: District schools including public, charter, special education schools, and standalone Pre-K Centers.

Family: Includes licensed family child care providers contracted with NYC Public Schools and affiliated with Family Child Care Networks, as well as non-contracted, private licensed family child care providers that accept vouchers.

Informal: Vouchers used for child care provided by a relative, friend, or neighbor in the home of the provider or child.

Head Start/Early Head Start services are provided in centers (81%), by licensed family child care providers (9%), and through home visits with parents of infants and toddlers (10%).



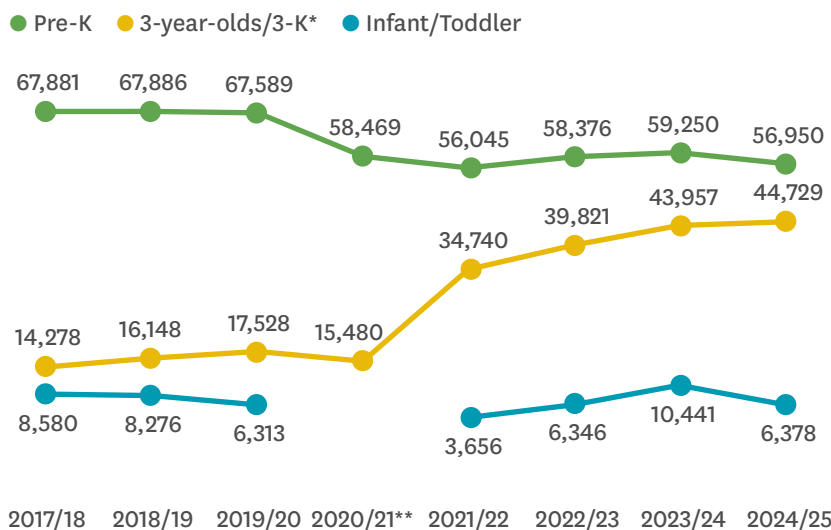
Historically, Head Start and Early Head Start contracts have been awarded through grantees who receive funding directly from the Federal Office of Head Start (Direct Grantees) and through New York City Public Schools sub-delegate agencies (NYCPS Grantees). Starting on December 31, 2025, the federal Office of Head Start ended its contract with NYCPS and will provide funding exclusively via contracts with Direct Grantee organizations in the future. NYCPS uses city funding to maintain Transitional Seats for former Head Start sub-delegates.

Publicly Funded ECE Contracted Care (Birth to 5)

Of 108,057 children under 5 in contracted care in SY 2024/25, 52% were 4-year-olds, 41% were 3-year-olds, and just over 6% were infants and toddlers. Between SY 2019/20 and SY 2024/25, contracted care enrollment increased 18%, driven primarily by a 155% increase in 3-K. While over 70% of infants and toddlers are served by licensed family child care providers, enrollment of 3 and 4-year-olds is more concentrated within center-based and school settings.

FIGURE 5.10

Contracted ECE System Enrollment: Pre-K, 3-K, and Infant/Toddler



*Data for 3-year-olds/3-K in SY 2017/18 and SY 2018/19 captures enrollment of 3-year-olds in EarlyLearn as well as the initial pilot of universal 3-K seats. In SY 2019/20, the city-contracted EarlyLearn system transitioned from ACS to DOE, and 3-year-olds served in EarlyLearn were merged into 3-K.

**Data for SY 2020/21 unavailable for infants/toddlers due to COVID-19 pandemic data disruption.

FIGURE 5.11

Contracted ECE System Enrollment by Age Group and Setting, SY 2024/25

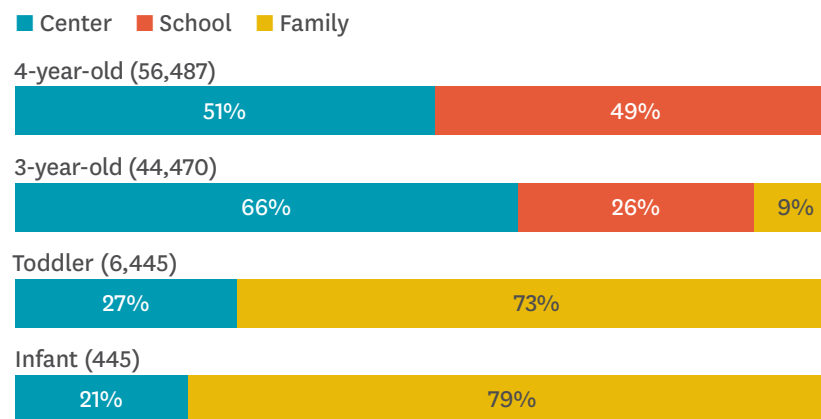
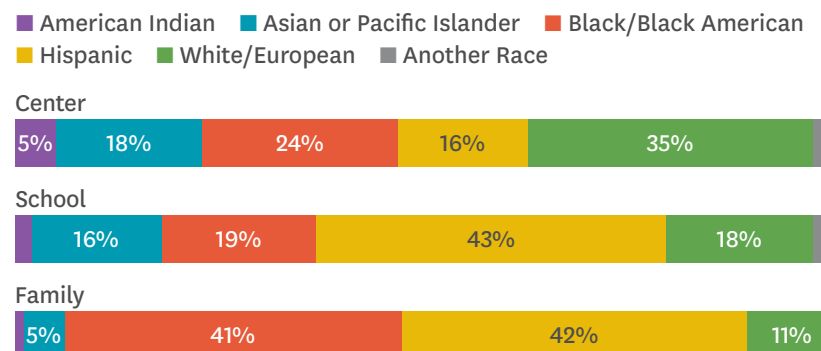


FIGURE 5.12

Contracted ECE System Enrollment by Setting and Race/Ethnicity, SY 2024/25



In SY 2024-25, 80% of contracted system capacity—over 106,000 budgeted seats—was for school-day, school-year care. The remaining 27,522 seats served children in extended-day, year-round programming. Only 15% of 3-K and 11% of Pre-K seats serve children in extended-day, year round programs. Licensed family child care providers offer 77% of extended-day, year round seats, compared to 23% of centers. In over half of all NYC neighborhoods, more than 80% of contracted seats provide only school day, school year care.

FIGURE 5.13

Contracted ECE System Budgeted Capacity by Length of Care and Age, SY 2024/25

■ School day/year ■ Extended day/year-round

Pre-K Capacity (71,047)



3-K Capacity (47,293)



Infant/Toddler Capacity (2,453)



FIGURE 5.14

Contracted ECE System Budgeted Capacity by Length of Care and Setting, SY 2024/25

■ School day/year ■ Extended day/year-round

Center (74,335)



School (46,485)



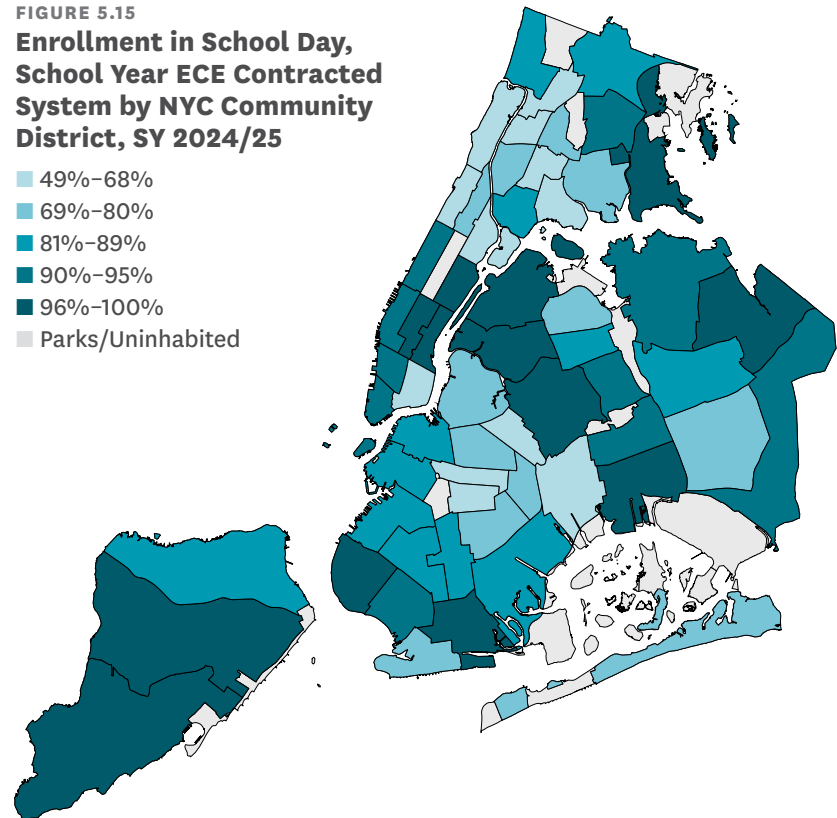
Family (13,495)



FIGURE 5.15

Enrollment in School Day, School Year ECE Contracted System by NYC Community District, SY 2024/25

■ 49%–68%
 ■ 69%–80%
 ■ 81%–89%
 ■ 90%–95%
 ■ 96%–100%
 ■ Parks/Uninhabited



School Day, School Year programs: 6.3 hours per day; 180 days per year. **Extended Day, Year-Round programs:** 8 to 10 hours per day; 225 or 260 days per year.

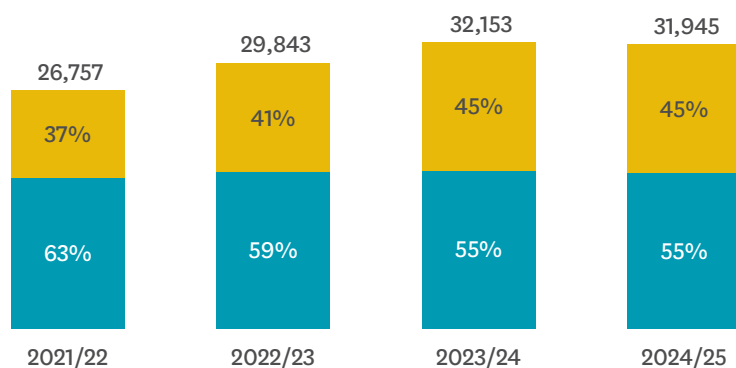
Preschool Special Education

In SY 2024/25, there were 31,945 preschool students with disabilities with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), of whom 14,534 (45%) never received at least one of their mandated services. Between SY 2021/22 and SY 2024/25, the number of preschool students with an IEP increased by 19%, while the number of children who did not receive the entirety of their mandated services increased by 48%.

FIGURE 5.16

Preschool Students with Disabilities by Placement and Full Compliance with IEP

■ Fully served ■ Not fully served

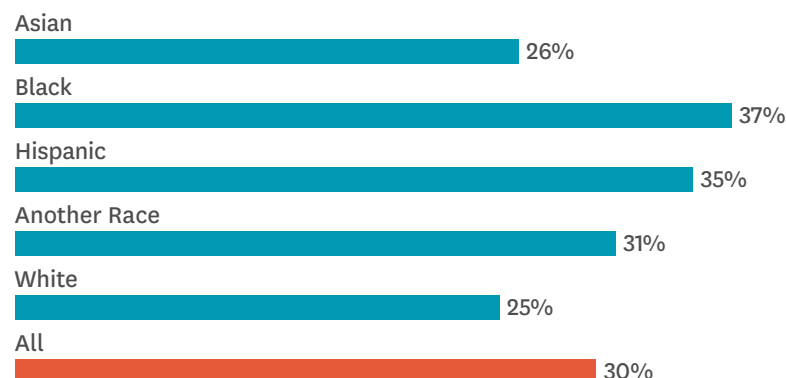


Data on children “fully served” captures instances when child had a seat in the type of special education class they needed and had at least one session of each of their mandated service (SEIT, speech, OT, etc.) at some point during the school year. This category obscures a number of access barriers, including cases where children had to wait months for services to start or had a months-long interruption after services began.

Almost one third of all preschool students who were referred for preschool special education in SY 2024/25 waited more than 60 days (the legal deadline) for their IEP meeting to determine what services were needed.

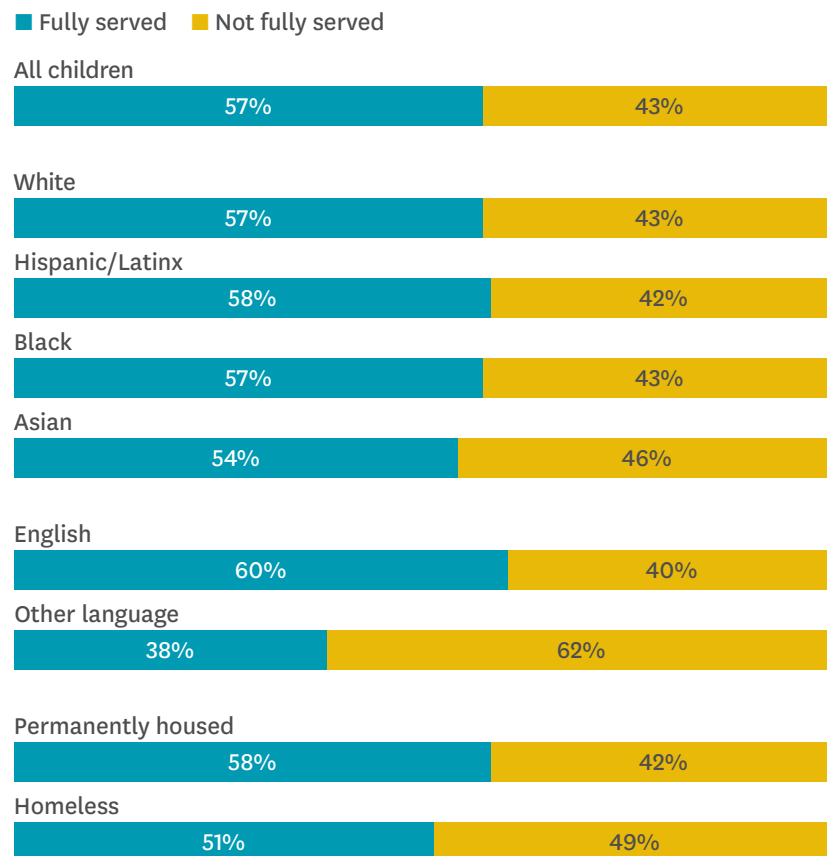
FIGURE 5.17

Eligible Preschoolers who Waited More than 60 Days for their First IEP Meeting, SY 2024/2025



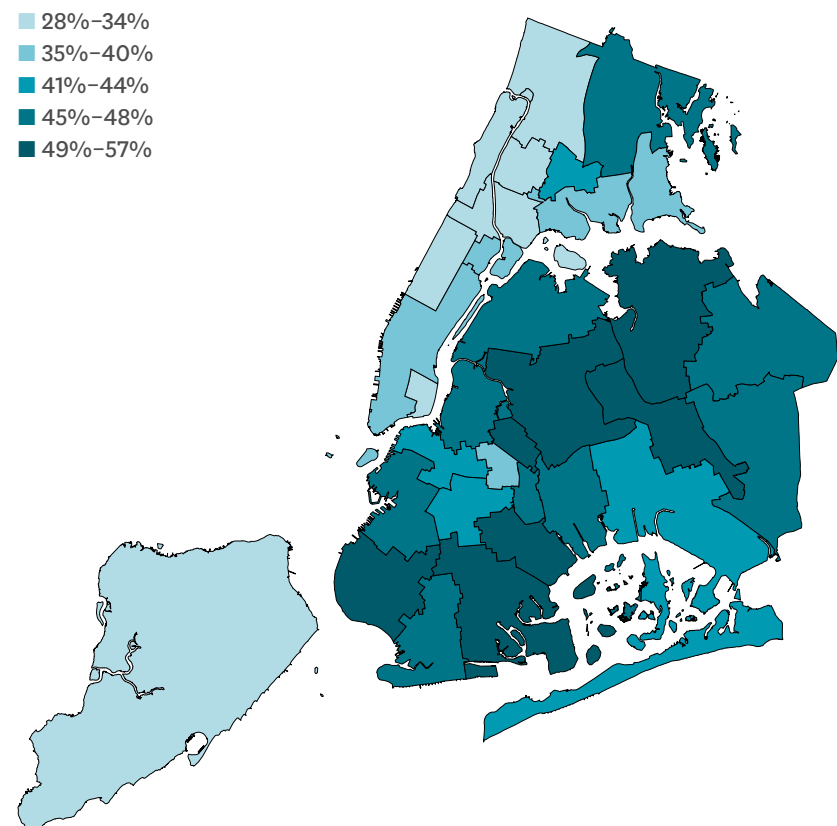
In SY 2024/25, 47% of all preschoolers with IEPs (born in 2020 or 2021) attended 3-K or Pre-K programs. However, 43% of these children did not receive their mandated special education services by the end of the school year.

FIGURE 5.18
Children with Disabilities Enrolled in Pre-K and 3-K by Placement and Full Compliance with IEP, SY 2024/2025



The school districts with the greatest share of students who did not receive all of their Preschool Special Education services were concentrated in Brooklyn and Queens.

FIGURE 5.19
Children with Disabilities Enrolled in 3-K and Pre-K Not Fully Served by School District, SY 2024/25

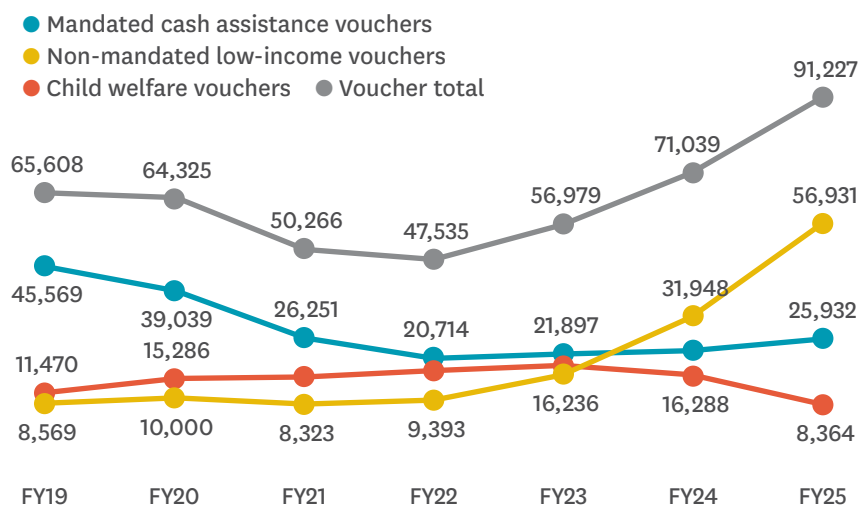


Publicly Funded Child Care Vouchers (Birth to 13)

In Fiscal Year 2025, families used 91,227 child care vouchers for children birth to 13. Between Fiscal Years 2022 and 2025, ACS non-mandated low-income vouchers increased by more than 500%.

FIGURE 5.20

Child Care Voucher Enrollment by Voucher Type



Vouchers are available for children age 0–13, as well as children 13–19 with special needs. Families can access child care vouchers in the following ways:

Mandated HRA vouchers for families receiving cash assistance (Income varies based on household circumstances)

ACS non-mandated low-income vouchers for families under 85% of the State median income (\$113,567 for a family of 4)

ACS Child Welfare vouchers for foster families or a family receiving prevention or protective services.

As of February 2025, 58% of all vouchers (55,706), served children under 5, and 42% (41,105) served school-age children for child care beyond the school day. Between 2023 and 2025, use of vouchers doubled among infants, toddlers, and 3-year-olds.

FIGURE 5.21

Voucher Utilization by Age Group, February 2023 and 2025*

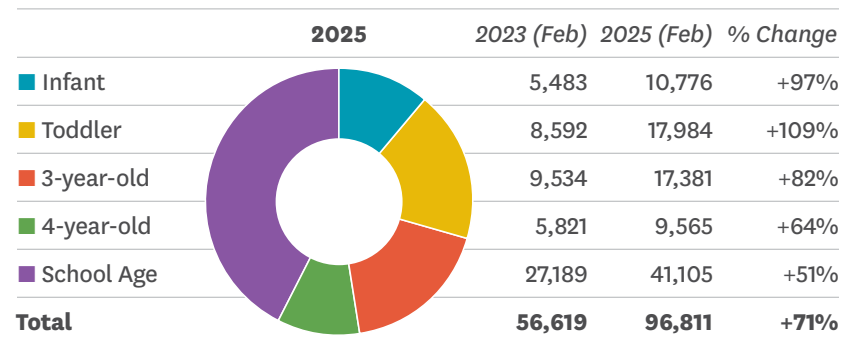
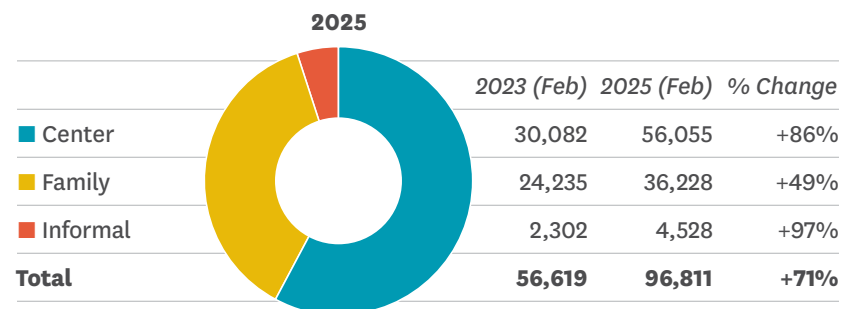


FIGURE 5.22

Voucher Utilization by Setting, February 2023 and 2025



*The total number of vouchers in Figure 5.20 differs from the total in Figures 5.21 and 5.22 due to differences in data sources. See Sources and Notes for details.

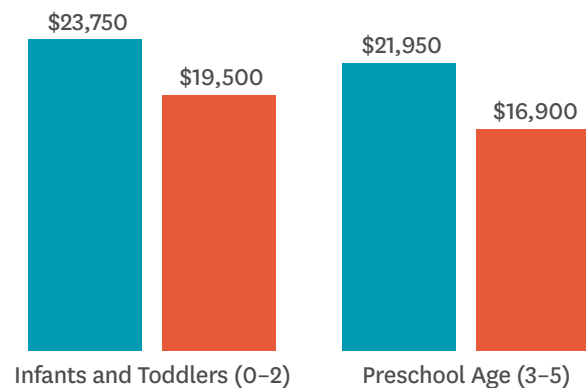
Cost Burden/Affordability

According to the New York State Child Care Market Rate Survey, center-based care costs 22% more than home-based care for infants and toddlers, and 30% more for preschool-age children ages 3–5.

FIGURE 5.23

Estimated Annual Cost of Care by Age and Setting, 2024

■ Center-Based Care ■ Home-Based Care*



*Terms home-based care and family child care are used interchangeably and refer to licensed family child care providers.

Child Care Affordability is a measure that shows the proportion of families with children whose child care costs fall at or above the federally recommended threshold of 7% of yearly household income.

Cost Burden is a measure of the share of median household income that families would spend out of pocket on care for one child under 5.

Across settings, approximately 90% of NYC families cannot afford infant and toddler child care without publicly funded options. Furthermore, the cost burden for child care is as high as 72% for single parents seeking center-based care.

FIGURE 5.24

Child Care Affordability by Family Type and Setting, 2024

■ Infants and Toddlers (Ages 0–2) ■ Preschool Age Children (Ages 3–5)

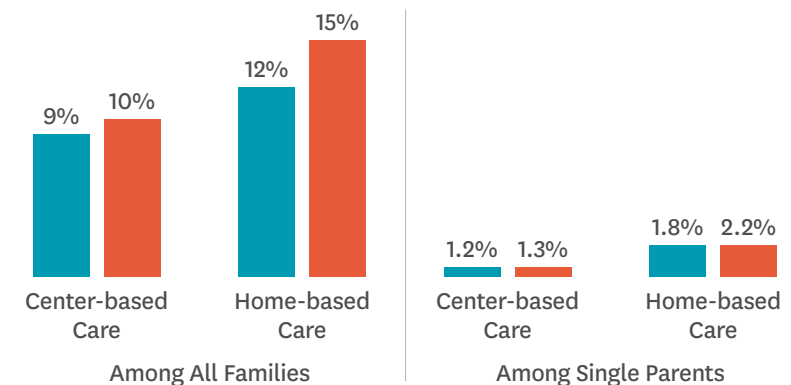
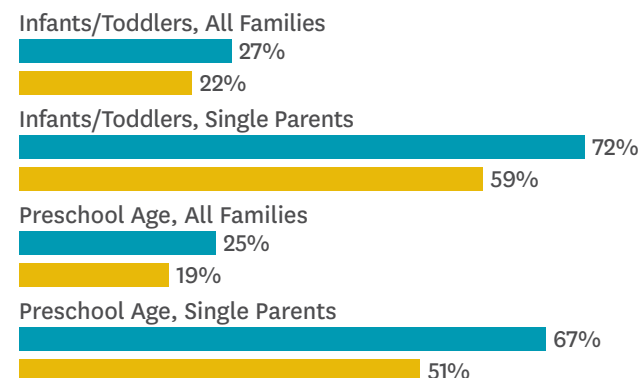


FIGURE 5.25

Child Care Cost Burden by Age Cohort and Setting, 2024

■ Center-based ■ Home-based



Student Characteristics: All Grades (Pre-K through 12)

In School Year 2024/25, 1.29 million students were enrolled in NYC schools. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, school enrollment has declined in public and private schools, while enrollment in charter schools increased, even during the pandemic.

FIGURE 5.26

Pre-K through 12 Enrollment in Public, Private, and Charter Schools

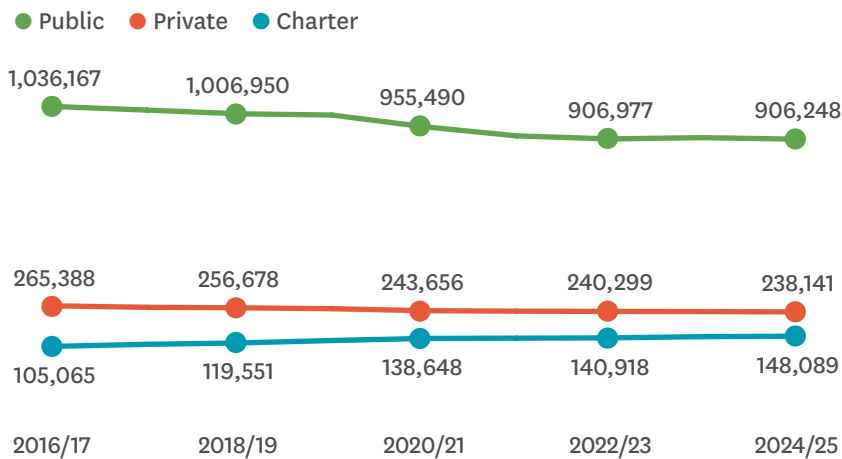


FIGURE 5.27

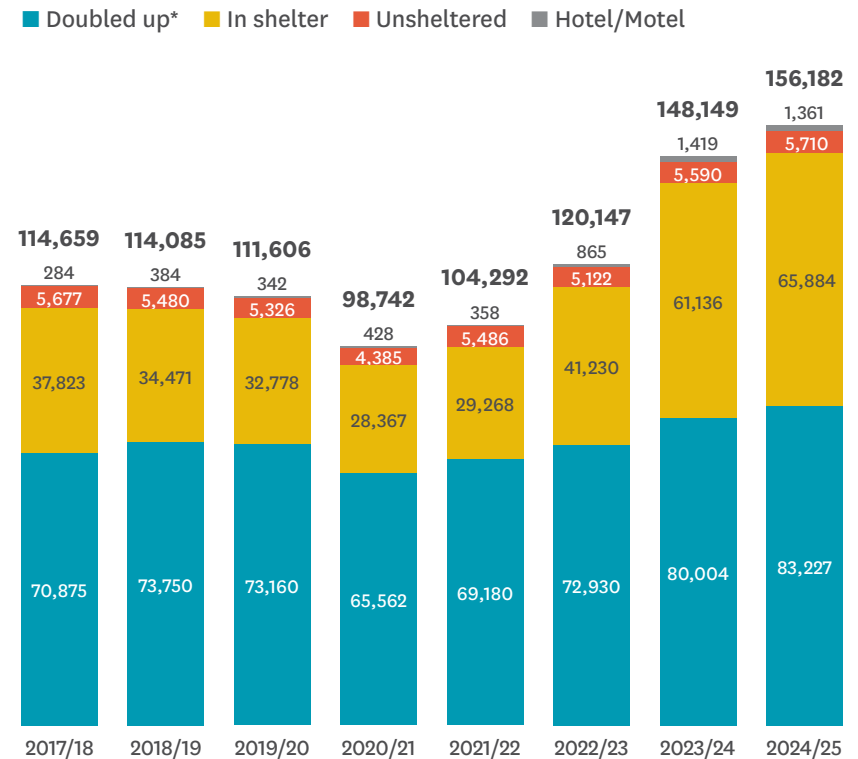
Pre-K to 12 Enrollment in Public, Private, Charter Schools by Race/Ethnicity, SY 2024/25

	Public	Private	Charter
Asian and Pacific Islander	18.7%	6.2%	3.7%
Black	19.3%	7.7%	44.8%
Hispanic	42.3%	11.0%	44.4%
White	16.1%	70.2%	4.4%
Multi-Racial	2.0%	4.8%	1.4%
Native American	1.2%	0.3%	1.1%
Total Enrollment	906,248	238,141	148,089

For the tenth consecutive year, the number of students experiencing homelessness surpassed 100,000, reaching a record high of 156,182 students in SY 2024/25. Between SY 2020/21 and SY 2024/25, the number of students living in shelter increased by 132%, while the number of students living in “doubled-up” housing increased by 27%.

FIGURE 5.28

NYC Students in Temporary Housing (Public and Charter) by Nighttime Residence



*Doubled-up refers to those children and youth sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason. See Sources and Notes for all Nighttime Residence definitions.

In SY 2024/25, one in five students in NYC Public Schools had a disability; one in six was an English Language Learner (ELL); and three in four were from families living in poverty.*

FIGURE 5.29

Public School Students with a Disability by Borough, SY 2024/25

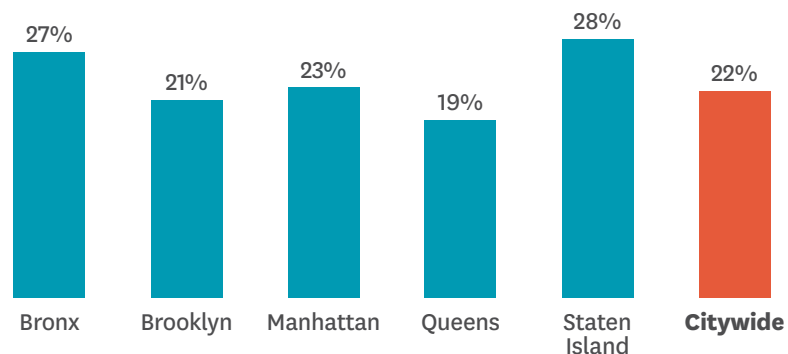
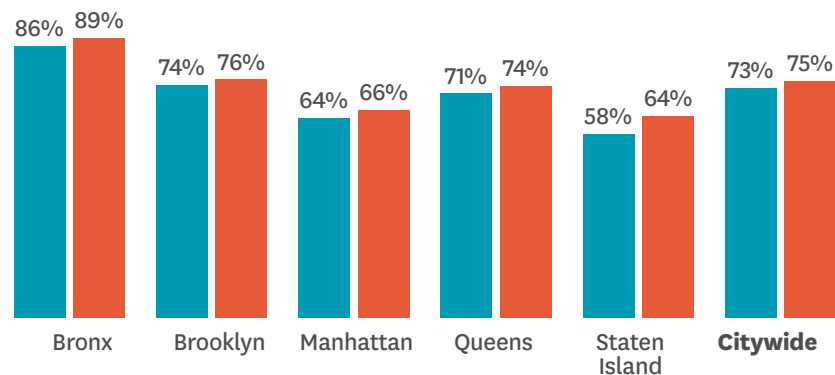


FIGURE 5.30

Public School Students in Poverty by Borough

■ SY 2020/21 ■ SY 2024/25



*In poverty: Students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch or HRA benefits, as defined by NYC Public Schools.

Since SY 2020/21, the share of English Language Learners has increased across all boroughs, especially in Manhattan and Queens. In several school districts (Sunnyside, Bushwick and Washington Heights), nearly one third of students are ELLs.

FIGURE 5.31

Public School English Language Learners by Borough

● Bronx ● Brooklyn ● Manhattan ● Queens ● Staten Island ● NYC

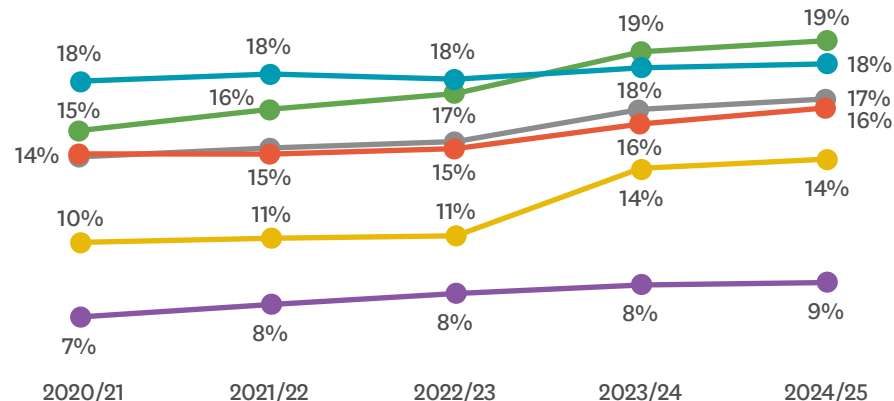
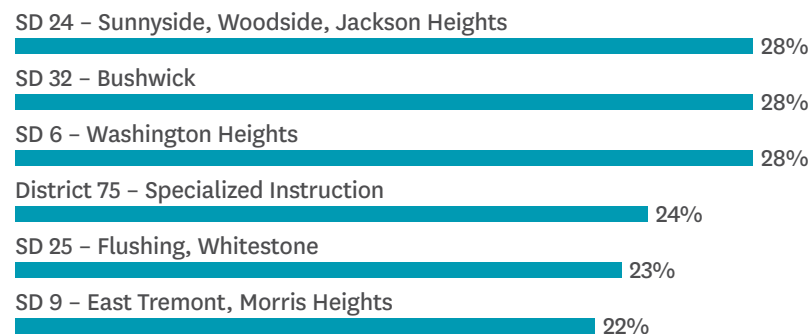


FIGURE 5.32

School Districts with the Highest Share of English Language Learners, SY 2024/25



Student Performance

In SY 2024/25, proficiency rates for grades 3–8 were 56% for reading and 57% for math. Between SY 2022/23 (when tests were first aligned with current standards) and SY 2024/25, reading proficiency rates rose by 4 percentage points, while math rates increased by 7 percentage points.

FIGURE 5.33

Third Through Eighth Graders Passing State Reading and Math Tests (Public Schools), SY 2022/23 and SY 2024/25

	SY 2022/23		SY 2024/25	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
All Students Grades 3–8	52%	50%	56%	57%
Asian	72%	78%	75%	81%
Black	40%	34%	47%	43%
Latino	39%	36%	43%	43%
White	70%	70%	73%	75%
Multi-Racial	73%	72%	76%	75%
Native American	51%	49%	55%	56%
English Language Learners	11%	21%	12%	30%
Former English Language Learners	69%	70%	72%	74%
English Language Proficient	56%	53%	63%	61%
Students with Disabilities	22%	24%	27%	29%
Students without Disabilities	60%	57%	65%	65%
Students in Temporary Housing	32%	28%	33%	35%
Students Not in Temporary Housing	54%	53%	60%	61%
Students in Foster Care	26%	22%	30%	30%
Students Not in Foster Care	52%	50%	56%	57%
Economically Disadvantaged	45%	43%	51%	51%
Not Economically Disadvantaged	72%	71%	78%	78%

*In 2023, NYSED aligned the Math and ELA tests to new standards. Therefore, results from 2022 and earlier should not be directly compared to results from 2023 and later.

The 2025 graduation rate in NYC was 81%, while the dropout rate was 5%. Between 2015 and 2025, graduation rates increased 16 percentage points, and dropout rates fell by half. Black and Hispanic students had the most notable increase in graduation rates (an 18 percentage point increase for both groups).

FIGURE 5.34

Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

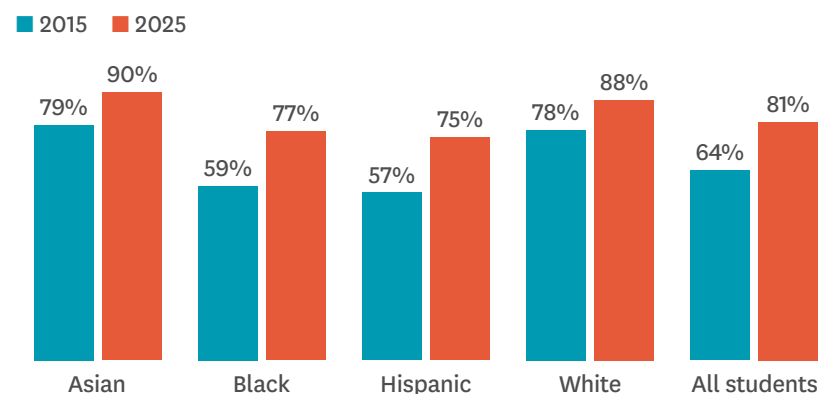
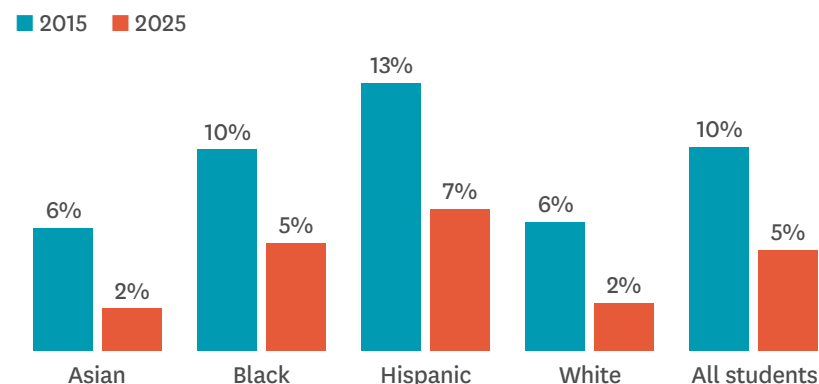


FIGURE 5.35

Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity



Student Discipline

There have been approximately 36,000 disciplinary actions in NYC Public Schools each year since SY 2022/23. Black students experience disciplinary actions at approximately twice the rate of their peers.

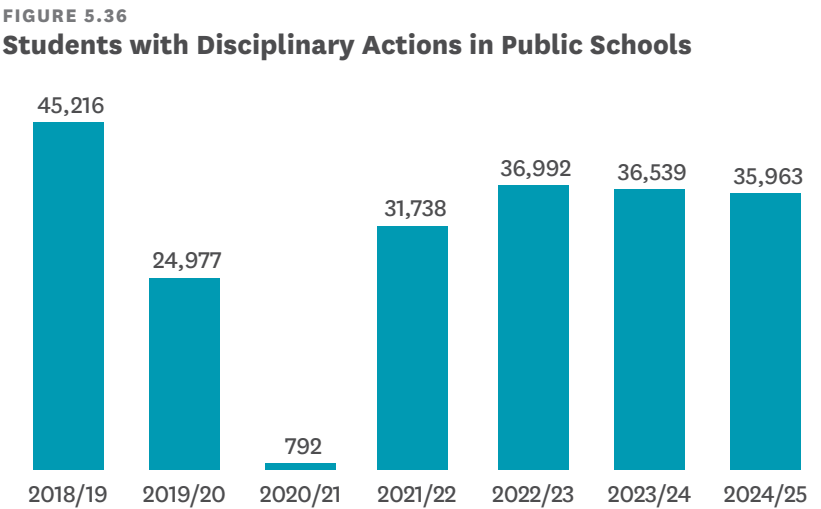
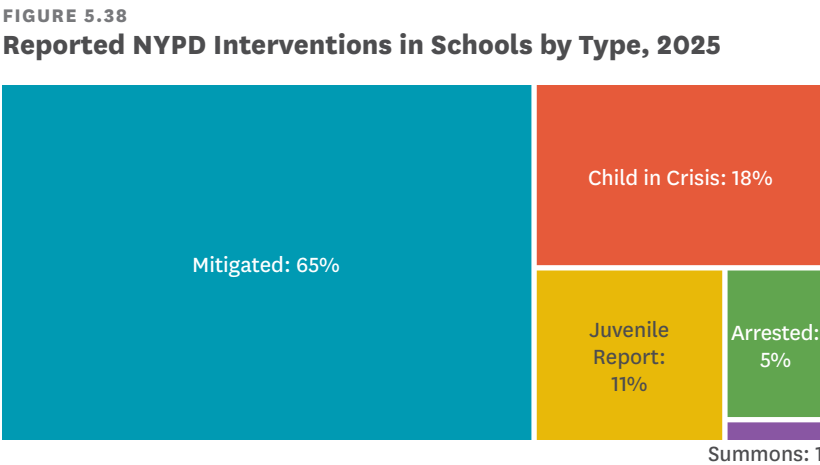


FIGURE 5.37
Students with Disciplinary Actions in Public Schools by Student Race/Ethnicity (rate per 1,000 students)

	SY 2022/23	SY 2023/24	SY 2024/25
Asian	14.3	13.6	15.1
Black	80.0	76.1	77.6
Hispanic	40.0	37.5	39.5
White	25.4	21.9	24.7
Multi-Racial	24.5	23.5	27.1
American Indian/Alaskan Native	36.3	34.3	39.8
All Students	40.8	40.1	39.7
Number of Disciplinary Actions	36,992	36,539	35,963

In 2025, there were 12,881 NYPD interventions in NYC schools. Over 80% were in response to offenses that resulted in school mitigation or in response to students in emotional distress (child-in-crisis).



Child-in-crisis refers to incidents where a student “displaying signs of emotional distress” is removed from the classroom and taken to the hospital for a psychological evaluation.

