



Children's Health Month 2006

History

- On May 18, 1928, the United States Congress approved a joint resolution designating the first Monday in October as "Child Health Day."
- In 1992 the American Academy of Pediatrics established October as Children's Health Month. The idea of designating a month to efforts aimed at focusing national attention on children's health issues stemmed from the Academy's "Children: Our Future" campaign which was associated with its late 1980s "Access to Health Care" initiative.

Population Profile (2005 ACS data sets)

- In 2005, roughly 25 percent of the US population, about 73 million, was under 18. Of these, about 7 percent were under the age of 5; 7 percent ages 5 to 9; 7 percent ages 10 to 14; and, 4 percent ages 15 to 17.
- There were slightly more male than female children under 18 in 2005 (37 million and 35 million, respectively).
- The majority of children, about 58 percent, were non-Hispanic white in 2005. Hispanic children comprised the next largest group at 20 percent, followed by African American children, 15 percent, and Asian children, 4 percent.
- In 2005, about 4 percent (3 million) of the US population under 18 was foreign-born.

Family Structure (Annie E. Casey- KIDS COUNT 2006 data sets)

- While 69 percent of all children lived in married-couple households in 2004, nearly a third lived in single parent households. Of these, 25 percent lived in mother-only households and 6 percent lived in father-only households.
- African-American children were significantly more likely to live in a single-parent household than children of any other race or ethnicity. In 2004, about 64 percent of African-American children lived in a single-parent household compared to 15 percent of Asian, 23 percent of non-Hispanic Whites, and 35 percent of Hispanic children.
- In 2004, about 4 percent of all children in the US lived with their grandparents as their primary caregivers.

Education

- In 2005, about 54.5 million school-age children (3 years and older), 96 percent, were enrolled in public and private schools across the United States.
- Public school enrollment in pre-kindergarten through grade 8 rose from 29.9 million in 1990 to about 33.5 million in 2005. Public school enrollment in the upper grades rose from 11.3 million in 1990 to about 14.8 million for that same year. Private school enrollment grew more slowly than public school enrollment from 1985 to 2005, rising 14 percent, from 5.6 million to 6.3 million.
- Larger percentages of African-Americans, Hispanic, and American Indian students attended high-poverty schools than non-Hispanic White or Asian students. For example, 48 percent of African-Americans, 49 percent of Hispanic, and 36 percent of American Indian 4th grade students were enrolled in schools with the highest measure of poverty, compared with 5 percent of non-Hispanic white and 16 percent of Asian 4th graders.

- In addition to attending schools with the largest concentrations of students from poor families, African-Americans and Hispanic 4th-graders were more likely to attend schools with high minority enrollments than non-Hispanic white, Asian, or American Indian fourth-graders. The majority of African-Americans, 51 percent, and Hispanic, 56 percent, 4th-graders attended schools in which 75 percent or more of the students were minorities, compared with 3 percent of non-Hispanic White, 31 percent of Asian, and 36 percent of American Indian 4th-graders.
- Between 1979 and 2004, the number of school-age children who spoke a language other than English at home increased from 3.8 to 9.9 million, or from 9 to 19 percent of all children in this age group. The number of school-age children who spoke English with difficulty also increased, from 1.3 million to 2.8 million, about 5 percent, over the same time period. However, of those who spoke a language other than English at home, the percentage who spoke English with difficulty decreased from 34 to 28 percent.
- In 2005, about 21 percent of 4th graders and 32 percent of 8th graders scored below a basic math level. About 38 percent of student in grade four and 29 percent in grade eight scored below a basic reading level.
- In 2003, the high school dropout rate for teens ages 16 to 19 in the US was 8 percent—a 27 percent improvement over the year 2000 rate of 11 percent. Drop-out rates ranged from a low of 4 percent in New Jersey, North Dakota, and Wisconsin, to a high of 12 percent in Arizona and Louisiana.
- The dropout rate for non-Hispanic White teens was 6 percent, compared to 3 percent for Asian, 8 percent for African-American, 11 percent for American Indian and Alaskan native, and 15 percent for Hispanic teens in 2003.

Health and Well-Being

- In 2004, the infant mortality rate in the United States was 6.8 deaths per 1,000 live births. The leading causes of infant deaths were congenital malformations, disorders related to short gestation and low birth weight, and sudden infant death syndrome. African-Americans had a higher rate of infant mortality, 14 per 1,000 live births, compared to 3.8 for Asians, 5.7 for non-Hispanic Whites, and 7.8 for American Indians.
- Teens between ages 15 and 19 had a mortality rate of 66 per 100,000, and the leading cause of death were accidents, homicides, and suicides. American Indian teens had the highest rate at 97 per 100,000 followed by African-Americans at 80, Hispanics at 67, non-Hispanic Whites at 63, and Asians at 38 per 100,000.
- The birth rate for teenagers ages 15 to 19 in the United States was 42 per 1,000 females in 2003. Hispanics had the highest rate at 82 per 1,000, compared to 28 for non-Hispanic white teens; 65 for African-Americans, 53 for American Indians, and, 18 for Asian teens.
- In 2004, about 84 percent of 2 year old children had received the 4:3:1 Series Coverage vaccine, protecting them against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, and measles.
- The majority of children in the United States, 54 percent, enjoyed excellent health and another 28 percent had very good health in 2004. Only two percent of all children reported being in fair or poor health.
- Almost five million children 3–17 years of age, 8 percent, had a learning disability; 10 percent of boys had a learning disability compared with 6 percent of girls.
- Four and one-half million children 3–17 years of age, 7 percent, had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Boys were more than twice as likely as girls to have ADHD, 10 and 4 percents, respectively.
- Nearly a third, 31 percent, of children ages 10 to 17 were considered overweight or obese in 2003. Overall, within the age bracket, 35 percent of boys and 26 percent of girls are obese.

- In 2004, 3.5 million children, 5 percent, in the United States did not have a usual place of health care. A higher percentage of Hispanic children, 10 percent, than African-American children, 5 percent, or non-Hispanic White children, 3 percent, did not have a usual place of health care.
- The percentage and number of children under 18 who had no health coverage increased from 7.9 million, about 11 percent, in 2004 to 8.3 million, about 11 percent, in 2005. Children living in poverty were more likely to be uninsured, at 19 percent or roughly 14 million, than all other children.

Child Poverty

- In 2005, 13 million children under 18, about 18 percent, lived in families with incomes below the federal poverty level (FPL) compared to 13 percent, 37 million, of the total population. The annual FPL is \$16,090 for a family of three and \$19,350 for a family of four. Nearly 6 million children under 18, about 8 percent, lived in extreme poverty, that is, with incomes less than 50 percent of the federal poverty level.
- While children represented 25 percent of the total population, they account for 35 percent of the total number of people living in poverty.
- In 2005, about 9 percent of children under 18 in married-couple families lived in poverty compared to 34 percent of children in single-parent households. Nearly 43 percent of children who lived in single-parent families headed by a female householder lived in poverty.
- About a third of African-Americans—36 percent, American Indian—31 percent, and Hispanic children—29 percent, lived in poverty compared to 14 percent of Asian and 11 percent of non-Hispanic white children.
- Although black, American Indian, and Latino children are disproportionately likely to be poor, White children comprised the largest group of children living in poor families—35 percent of all poor children were White.
- The District of Columbia had the highest child poverty rate at about 30 percent. Across other states, child poverty rates ranged from 7 percent in New Hampshire to 25 percent in Arkansas. Louisiana had the highest extreme child poverty rate at 13 percent; Southern states comprised 7 of the 10 states with the highest rates of extreme child poverty.
- About 26 percent of children of immigrants are poor compared to 16 percent of children of native-born parents.
- According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United States and Mexico have the highest percentages of child poverty in the developed world. Both the United States and Mexico spend less than 5 percent of their gross national product on government support for families, compared to 10 percent or more in higher-ranked countries. Scandinavian countries such as Denmark, Norway and Sweden have the lowest levels of child poverty ranging from 2 to 4 percent of children under 18.

This Fact Sheet was written in September 2006. It is based on information from a number of sources, including the Centers for Disease Control, the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Center for Health Statistics, the 2005 American Community Survey, the National Center for Children in Poverty at Columbia University, the National Center for Education Statistics at the US Department of Education, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2006 KIDS COUNT Data Book. For more information contact the Population Resource Center at (202) 467-5030, 1725 K Street NW, Suite 1102, Washington, DC