



Basic Facts About Low-income Children, 2010

Children Aged 6 through 11

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Children represent 24 percent of the population. Yet, they comprise 34 percent of all people in poverty.¹ Among all children, 44 percent live in low-income families and approximately one in every five (21 percent) live in poor families. Among children ages 6 through 11 in middle childhood, 44 percent live in low-income families, including 21 percent living in poor families. Winding up in a low-income or poor family does not happen by chance. There are a range of factors associated with children's experiences of economic insecurity, including race/ethnicity and parents' educational attainment and employment. This fact sheet, which is an update to the series based on the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS), describes the demographic, socio-economic, and geographic characteristics of children and their parents – highlighting the important factors that appear to distinguish low-income and poor children from their less disadvantaged counterparts.



National Center for Children in Poverty

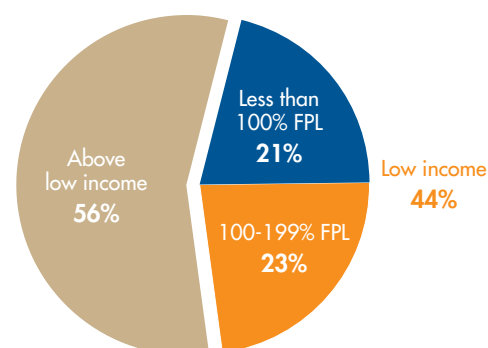
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How many children in middle childhood ages 6 through 11 in the United States live in low-income families?

There are more than 24 million children in middle childhood ages 6 through 11 in the United States.

- ◆ 44 percent – 10.7 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 21 percent – 5.2 million – live in poor families.

Children in middle childhood by family income, 2010



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What is the federal poverty level (FPL) in 2011?²

- ◆ \$22,350 for a family of four.
- ◆ \$18,530 for a family of three.
- ◆ \$14,710 for a family of two.

Is a poverty-level income enough to support a family?³

Research suggests that, on average, families need an income equal to about two times the federal poverty level to meet their most basic needs.³ Families with incomes below this level are referred to as low income:

- ◆ \$44,700 for a family of four.
- ◆ \$37,060 for a family of three.
- ◆ \$29,420 for a family of two.

These dollar amounts approximate the average minimum income families need to make ends meet, but actual expenses vary greatly by locality. For a family of four, the cost of basic family expenses is about \$64,000 per year in Los Angeles, CA, \$57,000 in Newark, NJ, \$47,000 in Billings, MT, and \$42,000 in Jackson, MI.⁴ The U.S. Census Bureau recently developed a new supplemental poverty measure that reflects a more comprehensive estimate of the resources families have at their disposal and sets the thresholds at a dollar amount representative of what families need to purchase a bundle of commodities beyond just food. In addition, the new supplemental measure is sensitive to the needs of different family types as well as geographic differences in housing costs.

Has the percentage of children in middle childhood living in low-income and poor families changed over time?

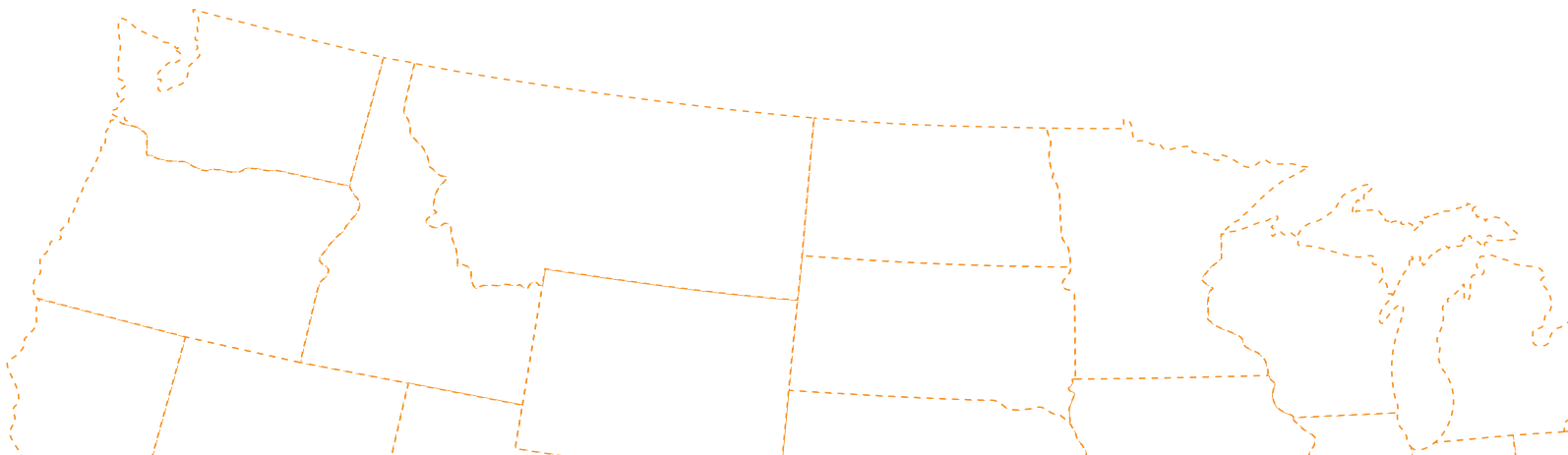
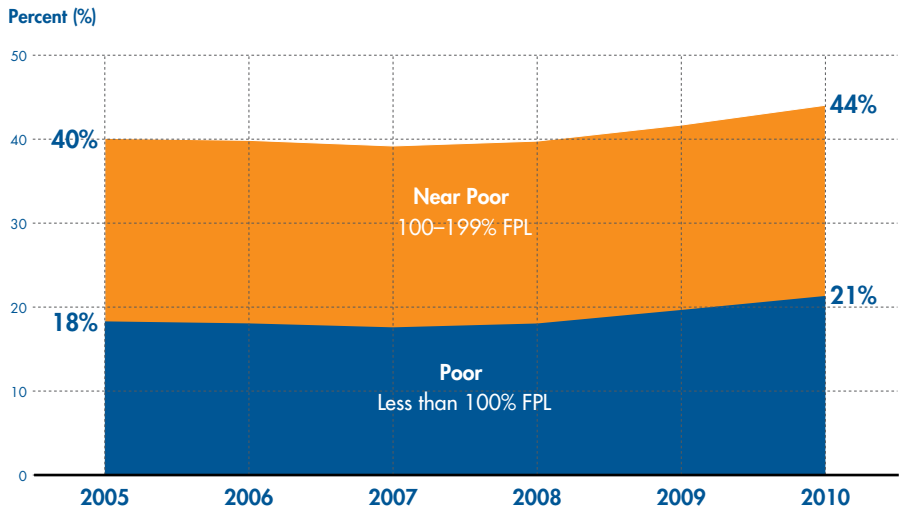
The percentage of children in middle childhood living in low-income families (both poor and near poor) has been *on the rise* – increasing from 40 percent in 2005 to 44 percent in 2010. During this time period, the overall

number of children in middle childhood increased by four percent while the number that was low-income and poor increased by eight percent and 23 percent, respectively.

Percentage change of children in middle childhood living in low-income and poor families, 2005–2010

	2005	2010	Percent change
Low income	9,294,667	10,656,348	15%
Poor	4,241,923	5,161,391	22%

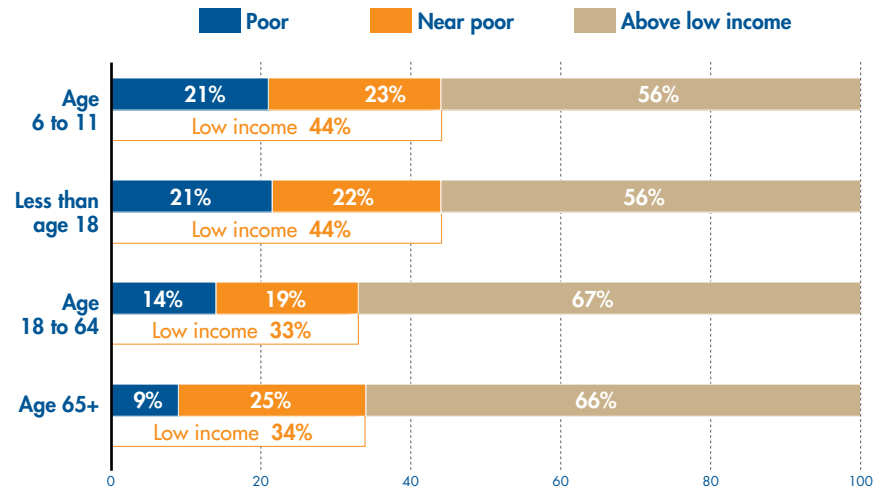
Children ages 6 through 11 living in low-income and poor families, 2005–2010



How do children in middle childhood compare to the rest of the population?

The percentage of children in middle childhood in low-income families surpasses that of adults. In addition, children in this age group are twice as likely as adults aged 65 and older to live in poor families.

Family income by age, 2010



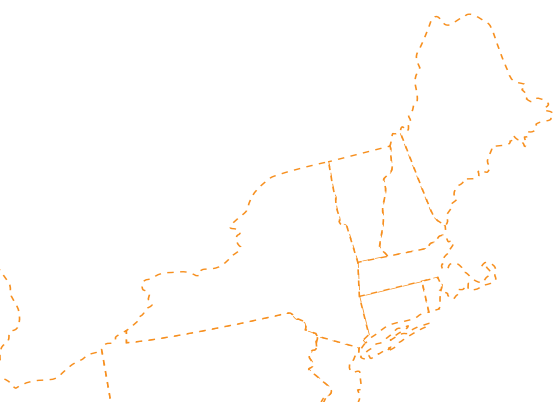
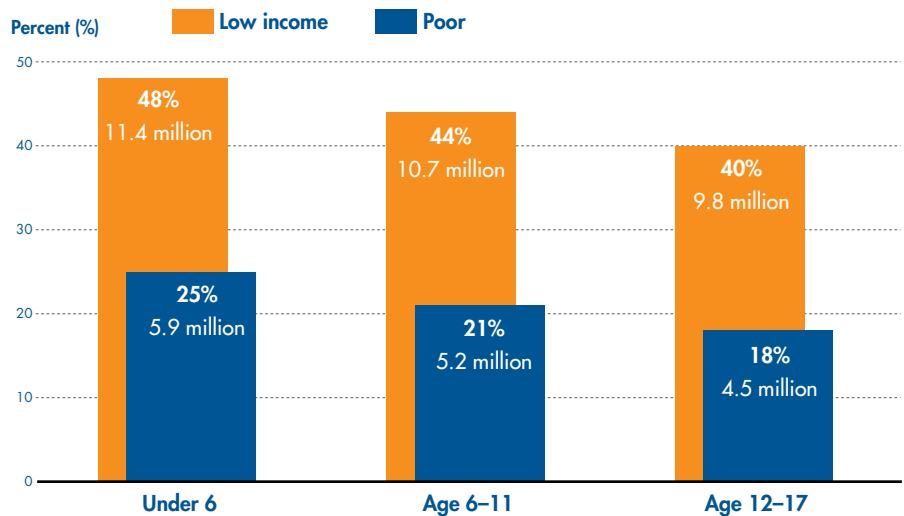
Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Does the percentage of children in low-income families vary by children's age?

The overall percentages of children living in low-income and poor families mask important variation by age. Young children under age 6 are the most likely to live in low-income families, followed by children ages 6 through 11, and children ages 12 through 17.

- ◆ 48 percent of children under age 6 – 11.4 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 44 percent of children ages 6 through 11 – 10.7 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 40 percent of children ages 12 through 17 years – 9.8 million – live in low-income families.

Percentage of children in low-income and poor families by age, 2010

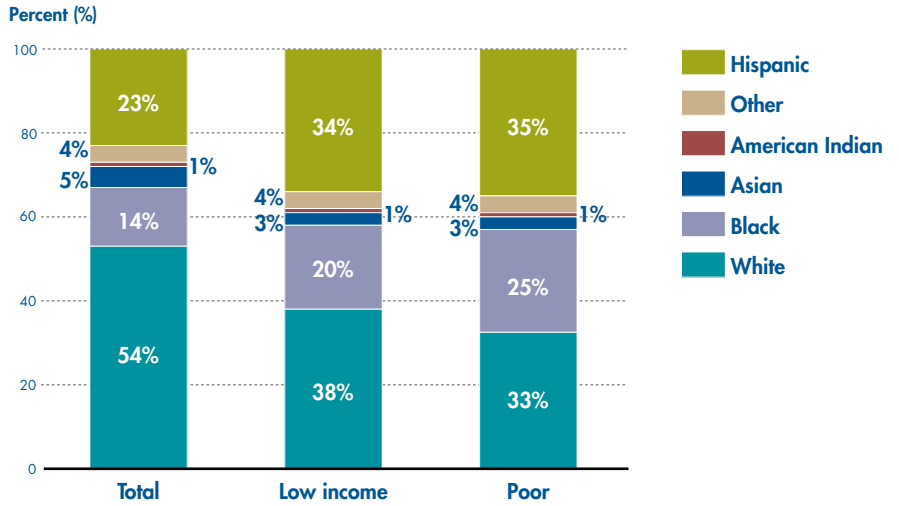


Does the percentage of children in middle childhood in low-income families vary by race/ethnicity?⁵

Black, American Indian, and Hispanic children comprise a disproportionate share of the low-income population aged 6 through 11. Together, they represent 38 percent of all children in middle childhood but more than one-half (55 percent) of low-income children in middle childhood. They are also more than twice as likely to live in a low-income family compared to white and Asian children.

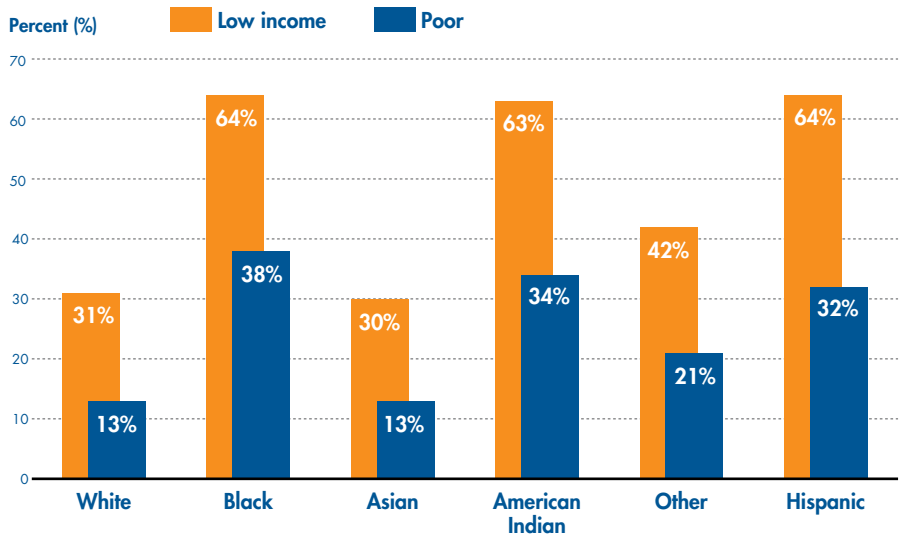
- ◆ 31 percent of white children in middle childhood – 4.1 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 64 percent of black children in middle childhood – 2.1 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 30 percent of Asian children in middle childhood – 0.3 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 63 percent of American Indian children in middle childhood – nearly 0.1 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 42 percent of children in middle childhood of some other race – 0.4 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 64 percent of Hispanic children in middle childhood – 3.6 million – live in low-income families.

Race/ethnicity among children ages 6 through 11 by family income, 2010



Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Percentage of children ages 6 through 11 in low-income and poor families by race/ethnicity, 2010



Does the percentage of children in middle childhood vary by parents' country of birth?⁶

- ◆ 62 percent of children in middle childhood with immigrant parents – 2.8 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 41 percent of children in middle childhood with native-born parents – 7.5 million – live in low-income families.

What are the family characteristics of low-income and poor children in middle childhood?

Parents' Education⁷

Higher levels of parents' education decrease the likelihood that a child will live in a low-income or poor family. Yet, 47 percent of low-income and 39 percent of poor children in middle childhood have a parent with at least some college.

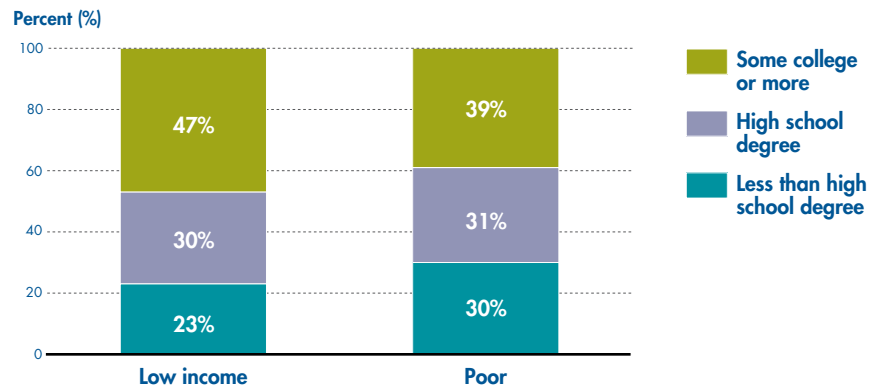
- ◆ 86 percent of children in middle childhood with parents who have less than a high school degree – 2.4 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 66 percent of children in middle childhood with parents who have no more than a high school degree – 3.2 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 30 percent of children in middle childhood with at least one parent who has some college or more education – 5.0 million – live in low-income families.

Parents' Employment⁸

Although children in middle childhood with a full-time, year-round employed parent comprise about one-half (49 percent) of the low-income population, they are less likely to be living in a low-income family compared to children in middle childhood with parents who work part-time/part-year or who are not employed.

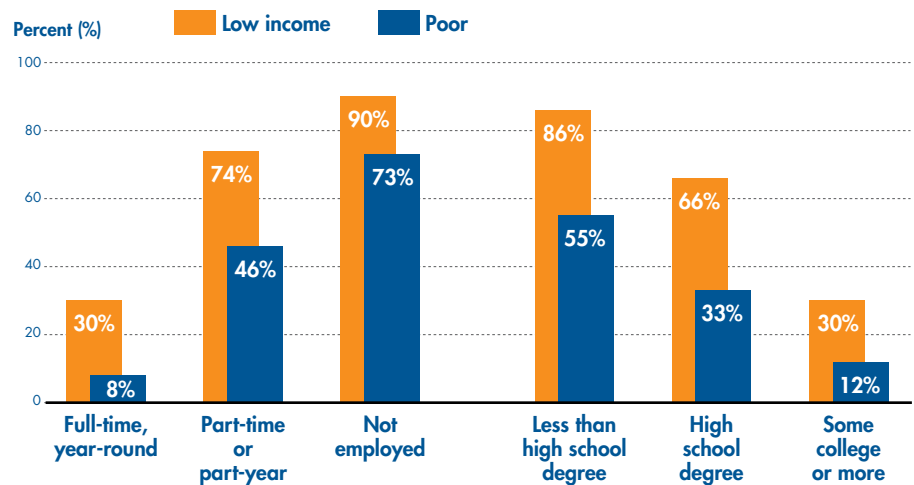
- ◆ 30 percent of children in middle childhood with at least one parent who works full-time, year-round – 5.2 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 74 percent of children in middle childhood with at least

Parents' education among children ages 6 through 11 by family income, 2010



Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Percentage of children in middle childhood in low-income and poor families by parents' employment and education, 2010



one parent who works part-time or part-year – 3.5 million – live in low-income families

- ◆ 90 percent of children in middle childhood with no employed parents – 2.0 million – live in low-income families.

Family Structure

Fifty percent of children in middle childhood in low-income families – 5.3 million – and 39

percent in poor families – 2.0 million – live with married parents.

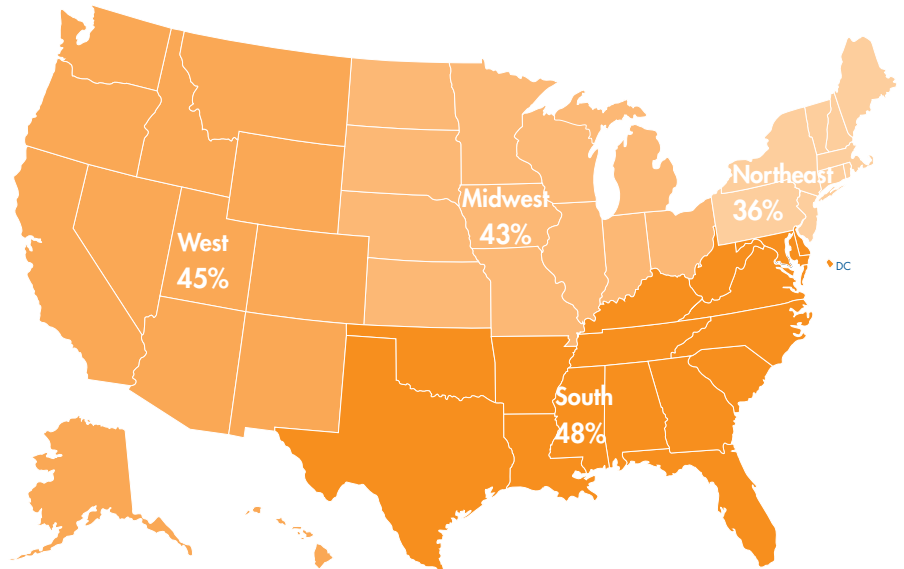
- ◆ 32 percent of children in middle childhood with married parents – 5.3 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 70 percent of children in middle childhood with a single parent – 5.3 million – live in low-income families.

Does the percentage of children in middle childhood in low-income families vary by where they live?

Region

- ◆ 36 percent of children in middle childhood in the Northeast – 1.4 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 43 percent of children in middle childhood in the Midwest – 2.2 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 48 percent of children in middle childhood in the South – 4.4 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 45 percent of children in middle childhood in the West – 2.6 million – live in low-income families.

Percentage of children ages 6 through 11 in low-income families by region, 2010



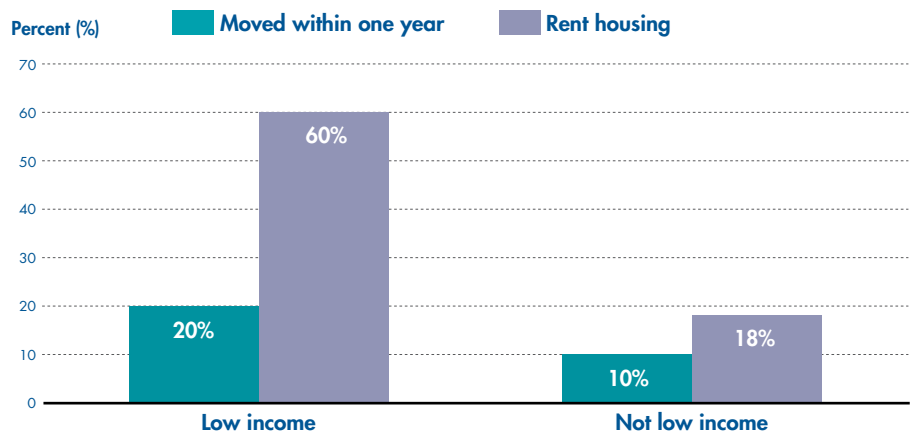
Type of Area

- ◆ 43 percent of children in middle childhood in urban areas – 8.0 million – live in low-income families.
- ◆ 52 percent of children in middle childhood in rural areas – 1.9 million – live in low-income families.

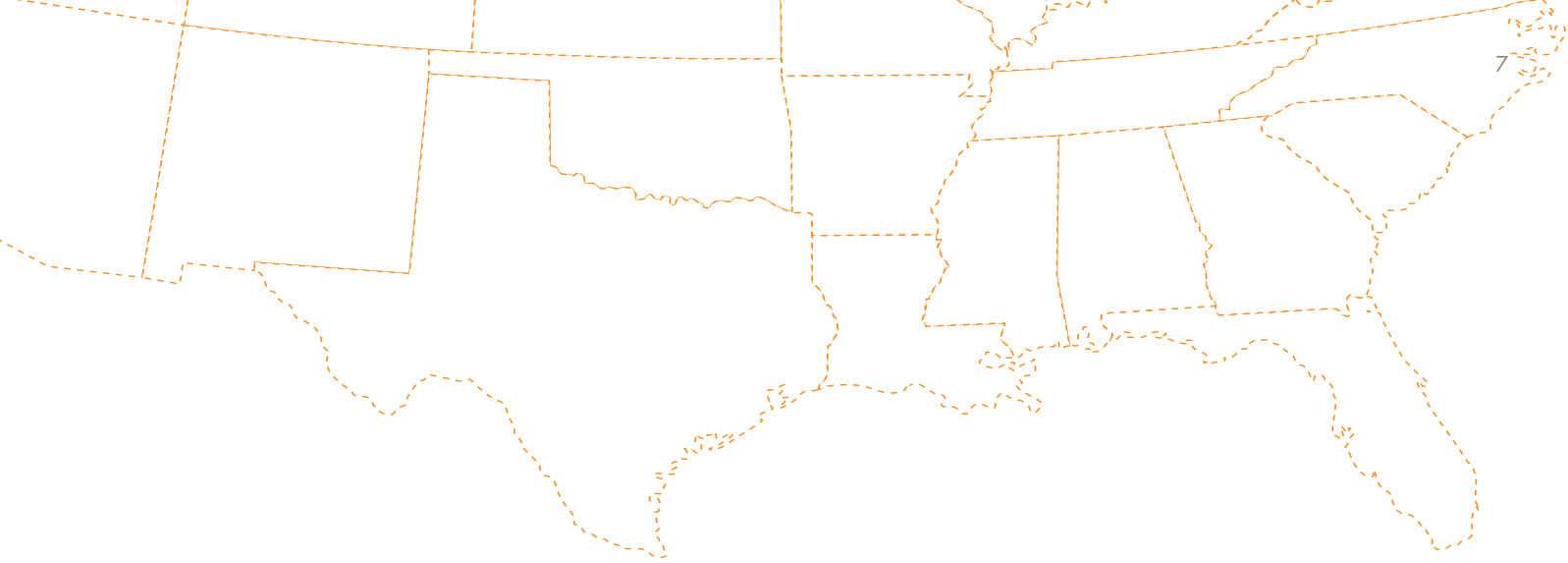
Residential Instability and Home Ownership

Research suggests that stable housing is important for healthy child development.⁹ Yet, relative to children ages 6 through 11 living in families that are not low income, children in middle childhood living in low-income families are more than twice as likely to have moved in the past year and about three times as likely to live in families that rent a home.

Residential instability and home ownership among children ages 6 through 11 by family income, 2010



- ◆ 20 percent of children in middle childhood in low-income families – 2.1 million – moved in the last year.
- ◆ 60 percent of children in middle childhood in low-income families – 6.4 million – live with a family that rents a home.
- ◆ 10 percent of children in middle childhood in above low-income families – 1.3 million – moved in the last year.
- ◆ 18 percent of children in middle childhood in above low-income families – 2.5 million – live with a family that rents a home.

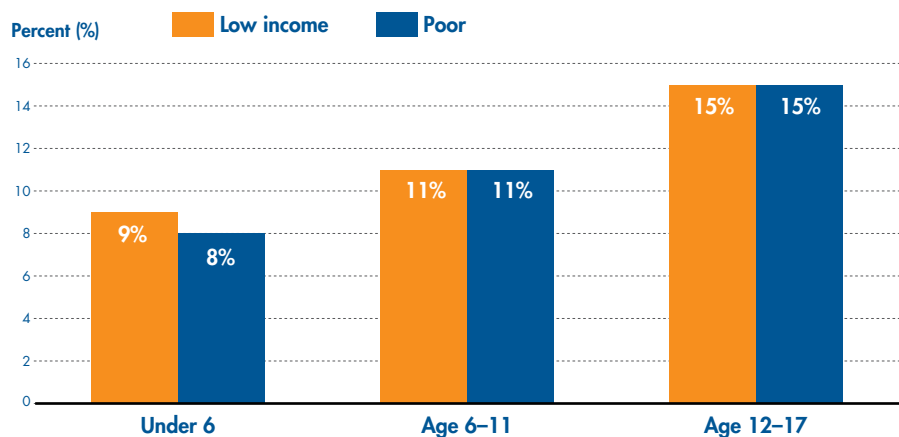


Are children in middle childhood in low-income families covered by health insurance?

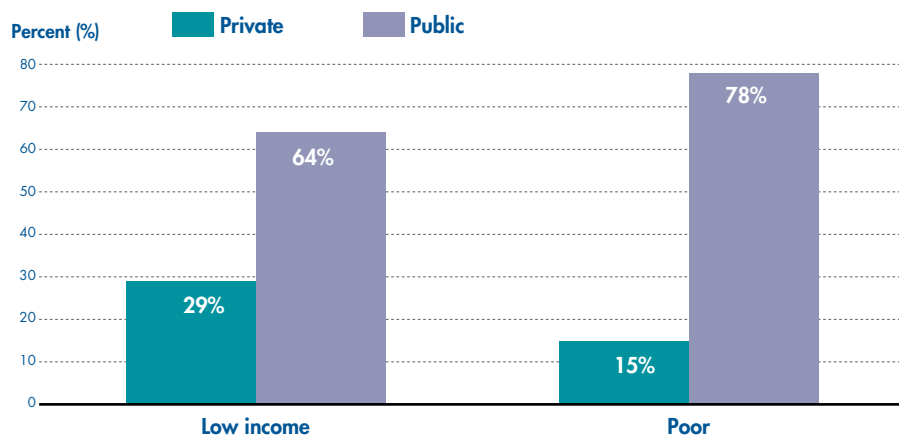
Among all children in middle childhood, approximately 11 percent in low-income families and 11 percent in poor families are uninsured. Consistent with research suggesting older children in general are particularly at risk of being uninsured, low-income and poor children in middle childhood are less likely than their older counterparts but more likely than their younger counterparts to be without health insurance coverage.¹⁰ Although 29 percent of low-income children in middle childhood are covered by private health insurance, public insurance reaches more than one-half (64 percent) of these low-income children and 78 percent of these poor children.

- ◆ 11 percent of children in middle childhood living in low-income families – 1.2 million – are uninsured.
- ◆ 29 percent of children in middle childhood living in low-income families – 3.1 million – are covered by private insurance.¹¹
- ◆ 64 percent of children in middle childhood living in low-income families – 6.9 million – are covered by public insurance.¹¹

Percentage of children uninsured in low-income and poor families by age, 2010



Type of health insurance coverage among children in middle childhood by family income, 2010



For comparable information about all children, see *Basic Facts About Low-income Children, 2010: Children Under Age 18*, or about infants and toddlers, see *Basic Facts About Low-income Children, 2010: Children Under Age 3*, or about young children, see *Basic Facts About Low-income Children, 2010: Children Under Age 6*, or about adolescent children, see *Basic Facts About Low-income Children, 2010: Children Aged 12 through 17*.

Endnotes

This fact sheet is part of the National Center for Children in Poverty's demographic fact sheet series and is updated annually. However, estimates published in this year's fact sheet are not directly comparable with earlier years, as the data analyzed have changed from the Current Population Survey (used in previous years) to the American Community Survey (ACS). Unless otherwise noted, analysis of the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) was conducted by Sophia Addy and Vanessa R. Wight of NCCP. Yumiko Aratani provided feedback that contributed to the analysis. Estimates include children living in households with at least one parent and most children living apart from both parents (for example, children being raised by grandparents). Children living independently, living with a spouse, or in group quarters are excluded from these data. Children ages 14 and under living with only unrelated adults were not included because data on their income status were not available. Among children who do not live with at least one parent, parental characteristics are those of the householder and/or the householder's spouse. Special thanks to Morris Ardoin, Amy Palmisano, and Telly Valdellon.

1. In this fact sheet, poverty is defined using the U.S. Census Bureau's official measure. Children in families with income less than 100 percent of the poverty threshold are considered poor. Children in families with income less than 200 percent of the poverty threshold are considered low income.

2. These numbers are from the federal poverty guidelines issued annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The demographic findings in this fact sheet were calculated using more complex versions of the federal poverty measure – the thresholds issued by the U.S. Census Bureau. Please see <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/11poverty.shtml> for the 2011 poverty thresholds. For more information on measuring poverty and the differences between the federal poverty guidelines and the thresholds, see the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website.

3. Cauthen, N. K., & Fass, S. (2008). *Measuring income and poverty in the United States*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health.

4. These figures were derived from NCCP's Basic Needs Budget Calculator.

5. In the most recent ACS, parents could report children's race as one or more of the following: "White," "Black," "American Indian or Alaska Native," or "Asian and/or Hawaiian/Pacific Islander." In a separate question, parents could report whether their children were of Hispanic origin. For the data reported, children whose parent reported their race as White, Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, or Asian and/or Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and their ethnicity as non-Hispanic are assigned their respective race. Children who were reported to be of more than one race were assigned as Other. Children whose

parent identified them as Hispanic were categorized as Hispanic, regardless of their reported race.

6. Children aged 6 through 11 living in households with one immigrant parent and one native-born parent (approximately 1.3 million) are not included in these estimates.

7. Parent's education is the education level of the most highly educated parent living in the household. Parents can either have no high school degree; a high school degree, but no college; or some college or more.

8. Parent's employment is the employment level of the parent in the household who maintained the highest level of employment in the previous year. Parents can either have no employment in the previous year, part-year or part-time employment, or full-time, year-round employment. Part-year or part-time employment is defined as either working less than 50 weeks in the previous year or less than 35 hours per week. Full-time, year-round employment is defined as working at least 50 weeks in the previous year and 35 hours or more per week for more than half the year.

9. Aratani, Y. (2009). *Homeless children and youth*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health.

10. Schwarz, S. W. (2009). *Adolescent mental health in the United States*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health.

11. People can report more than one type of insurance coverage. Children not covered by private or public health insurance at the time of the survey are considered uninsured.