



Basic Facts About Low-Income Children

Birth to Age 3

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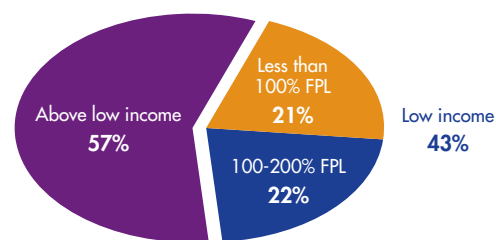
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How many infants and toddlers in the United States live in low-income families?

There are more than 12 million infants and toddlers in the United States.

- ▶ 43% – 5.4 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 21% – 2.7 million – live in poor families.

Infants and toddlers, by family income, 2007



National Center for Children in Poverty

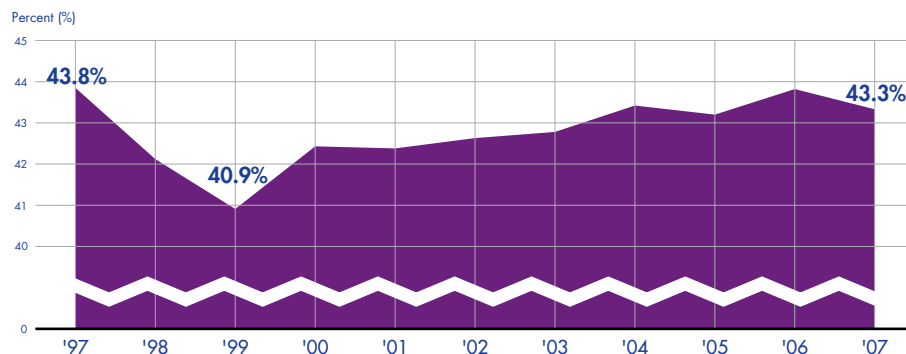
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Have these numbers changed over time?

After a decade of decline, the proportion of children under age 3 living in low-income families is rising again, a trend that began in 2000. Between 2000 and 2007,

the number of children of all ages who were poor increased by 15%. During the same period, the number of infants and toddlers who were poor increased by 22%.

Infants and toddlers living in low-income families, 1997-2007



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What is the federal poverty level (FPL) in 2008?¹

- ▶ \$21,200 for a family of 4.
- ▶ \$17,600 for a family of 3.
- ▶ \$14,000 for a family of 2.

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

Research suggests that, on average, families need an income of at least twice the federal poverty level to meet their most basic needs.² Families with incomes below this level are referred to as low income:

- ▶ \$42,400 for a family of 4.
- ▶ \$35,200 for a family of 3.
- ▶ \$28,000 for a family of 2.

These figures approximate the average minimum income families need to make ends meet, but actual expenses vary greatly by locality. For a family of 4, the cost of basic family expenses is about \$40,000 per year in rural Chelan County, Washington, \$45,000 in Detroit, and \$51,000 in Houston.³

What are the family characteristics of low-income infants and toddlers?

Parents' Employment

- ▶ 49% of infants and toddlers in low-income families – 2.7 million – have at least one parent who works full-time, year-round.
- ▶ 30% of infants and toddlers in low-income families – 1.7 million – have at least one parent who works part-time or full-time, part-year.
- ▶ 20% of infants and toddlers in low-income families – 1.1 million – do not have an employed parent.

Parents' Education

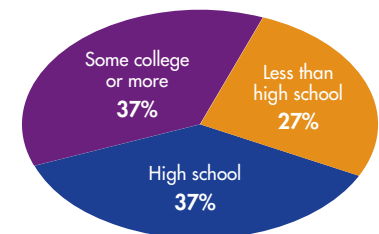
- ▶ 27% of infants and toddlers in low-income families – 1.4 million – live with parents who have less than a high school education.
- ▶ 37% of infants and toddlers in low-income families – 2.0 million – live with parents who have only a high school diploma.

- ▶ 37% of infants and toddlers in low-income families – 2.0 million – live with parents who have some college or more.

Family Structure

- ▶ 54% of infants and toddlers in low-income families – 2.9 million – live with a single parent.
- ▶ 46% of infants and toddlers in low-income families – 2.5 million – live with married parents.

Infants and toddlers living in low-income families, by parent's education level, 2007



Because of rounding, figures may not add up to 100%.

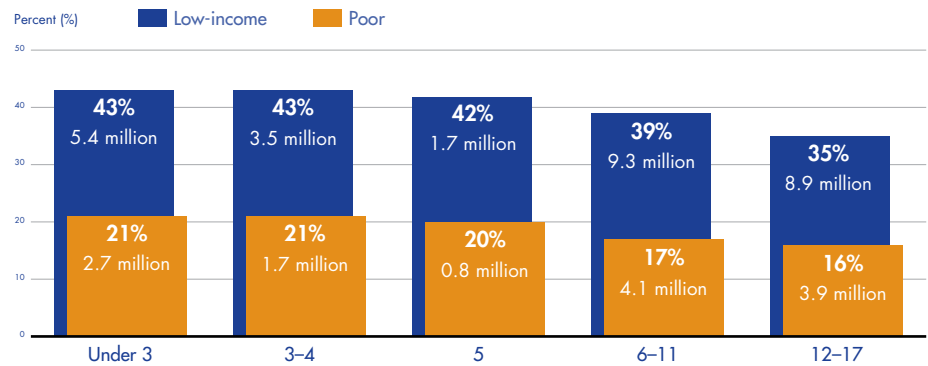
Does the percent of children in low-income families vary by children's age?

Young children are disproportionately low income. 43% of children under age 6 – more than 10 million – live in low-income families.

- ▶ 43% of children under age 3 years – 5.4 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 43% of children ages 3 and 4 years – 3.5 million – live in low-income families.

- ▶ 42% of children age 5 years – 1.7 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 39% of children ages 6 through 11 years – 9.3 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 35% of children ages 12 through 17 years – 8.9 million – live in low-income families.

Children living in low-income and poor families, by age group, 2007

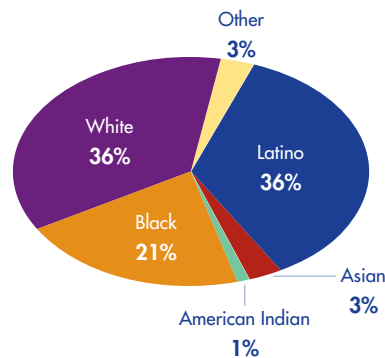


Does the percent of infants and toddlers in low-income families vary by race/ethnicity?

- ▶ 65% of American Indian infants and toddlers – over 52,000 – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 64% of Latino infants and toddlers – 1.9 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 65% of black infants and toddlers – 1.2 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 27% of Asian infants and toddlers – 0.1 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 30% of white infants and toddlers – 2.0 million – live in low-income families.

Although American Indian, Latino, and black children are disproportionately low income, whites comprise the largest group of low-income infants and toddlers.

Infants and toddlers living in low-income families, by race/ethnicity, 2007



Does the percent of infants and toddlers in low-income families vary by parents' country of birth?⁴

- ▶ 61% of infants and toddlers with immigrant parents – 1.4 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 40% of infants and toddlers with native-born parents – 3.8 million – live in low-income families.

Does the percent of infants and toddlers in low-income families vary by where children under age 3 live?

Region

- ▶ 48% of infants and toddlers in the South – 2.3 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 43% of infants and toddlers in the West – 1.3 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 34% of infants and toddlers in the Northeast – 0.7 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 42% of infants and toddlers in the Midwest – 1.2 million – live in low-income families.

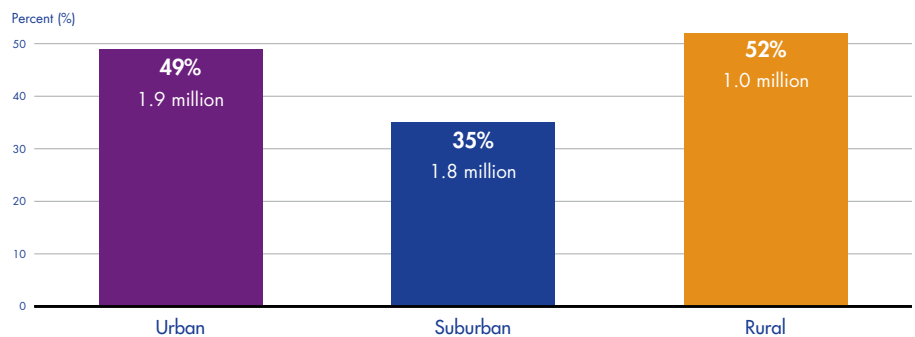
Type of Area

- ▶ 49% of infants and toddlers in urban areas – 1.9 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 35% of infants and toddlers in suburban areas – 1.8 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 52% of infants and toddlers in rural areas – 1.0 million – live in low-income families.

Residential Instability

- ▶ 18% of infants and toddlers in low-income families – 1.0 million – moved in the last year.
- ▶ 9% of infants and toddlers in above low-income families – 0.6 million – moved last year.

Infants and toddlers living in low-income families, in urban, suburban, and rural areas, 2007



Endnotes

Unless otherwise noted, data estimates were prepared by Ayana Douglas-Hall and Michelle Chau of NCCP based on the U.S. Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, March 2008, representing information for calendar year 2007. 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). Among children who do not live with at least one parent, parental characteristics are those of the householder and/or the householder's spouse.

1. 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. For more information on measuring poverty, see NCCP's state profiles and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services <aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/08poverty.shtml>.

2. Cauthen, Nancy K.; Fass, Sarah. 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.

3. NCCP's Basic Needs Budget Calculator <www.nccp.org/tools/budget>.

4. Approximately 0.3 million low-income infants and toddlers live in households with one immigrant parent and one native-born parent. Those children are not counted in this figure.