

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Socio-demographic characteristics provide a comprehensive picture of the country's diverse maternal and child population. The population of children ages 21 and below comprises roughly one-third of the U.S. population.

At the national, state, and local levels, policy-makers use population information to systematically address health-related issues of mothers and children. By carefully analyzing and comparing data, health workers can often isolate high-risk populations that require specific interventions. Policy-makers can then tailor programs to meet the needs of those populations. The following section presents data on several population characteristics that have an impact on maternal and child health program development and evaluation. These include age, poverty status, race and ethnicity, living arrangements, child care trends, and school dropout rates. Also presented in this section are descriptions of specific target populations, including the foreign-born population and children with special health care needs.



















