

CHILDREN IN POVERTY

In 2009, more than 15 million children under 18 years of age lived in households with incomes below 100 percent of the U.S. Census Bureau's poverty threshold (\$21,954 for a family of four in 2009); this represents 20.7 percent of all children in the United States. Poverty affects many aspects of a child's life, including living conditions, nutrition, and access to health care. A number of factors affect poverty status, and significant racial/ethnic disparities exist. In 2009, 35.7 percent of non-Hispanic Black children, 34.0 percent of non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native children, and 33.1 percent of Hispanic children lived in households with incomes below 100

percent of the poverty threshold, compared to 11.9 percent of non-Hispanic White children.

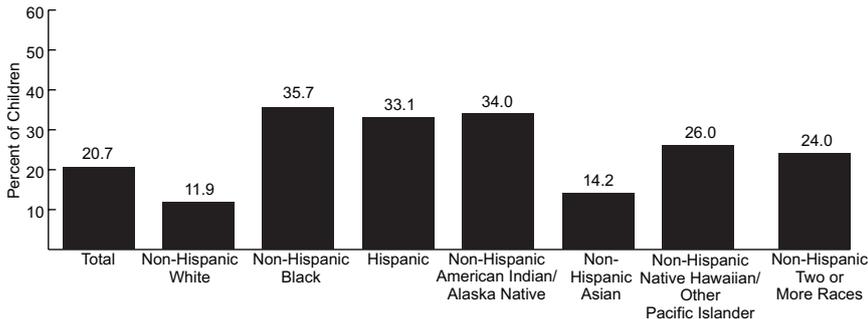
Single-parent families are particularly vulnerable to poverty. In 2009, 44.3 percent of children living in a female-headed household experienced poverty, as did 26.5 percent of children living in a male-headed household. Only 11.1 percent of children living in married-couple families lived in poverty (data not shown). The proportion of children living in poverty varies by age and family type. In 2009, 54.3 percent of children under 5 years of age living in female-headed households lived in poverty, while the same was true of 39.5 percent of children aged 6–17 years.

A number of Federal programs work to protect the health and well-being of children living in low-income families. One of these is the National School Lunch Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service. The program provides nutritionally-balanced low-cost or free lunches to children based on income. In 2009, the program served free lunch to 16.3 million children and reduced-price lunch to another 3.2 million children. This represents 62.5 percent of all lunches served in participating schools.¹

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. *Child nutrition tables: National Level Annual Summary Tables*. Available online: <http://www.mypyramidforkids.gov/pd/cnpmain.htm>. Accessed March 2011.

Children Under Age 18 Living in Households with Incomes Below 100 Percent of the Poverty Threshold,* by Race/Ethnicity, 2009

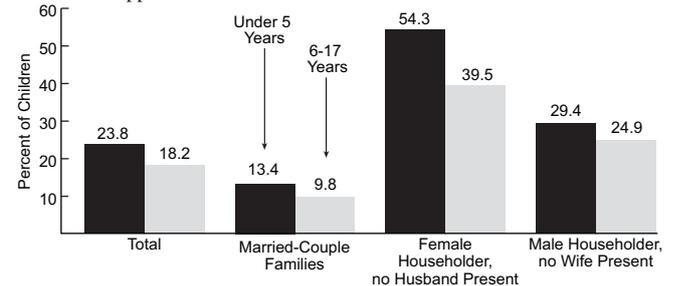
Source (I.2): U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement



*The U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds to determine who is in poverty; the poverty threshold for a family of four was \$21,954 in 2009.

Children Under Age 18 Living in Families* with Incomes Below 100 Percent of the Poverty Threshold,** by Age and Family Type, 2009

Source (I.2): U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement



*Includes only children who are related to the head of household by birth, marriage, or adoption.

**The U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds to determine who is in poverty; the poverty threshold for a family of four was \$21,954 in 2009.