



The Child's Family

The environment of the family, which includes home activities as well as the parents' physical and mental health, provide the backdrop and context for children's health and development. Therefore, the survey explored a number of aspects of the family, including shared activities (such as reading, singing, telling stories to young children and sharing meals) as well as risk factors (such as smoking in the household, parenting stress, and the health status of the child's parents). These indicators provide a picture of some factors that can influence a child's health and well-being.



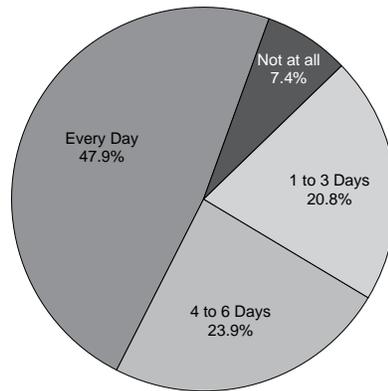
Reading, Singing, and Telling Stories to Young Children

Reading, telling stories, and singing to young children regularly can lay the foundation for future literacy and educational success. Parents of children aged 0-5 were asked how often their children were read to during the previous week. A total of 47.9 percent of children in this age group were read to (by a parent or other family member) every day.

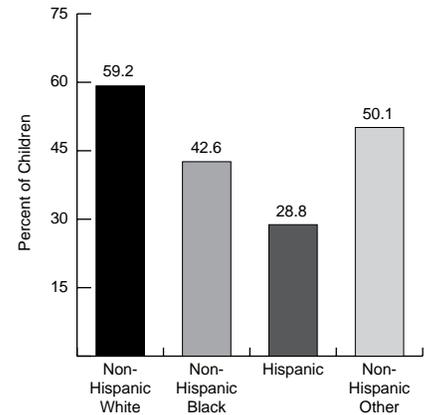
The likelihood of children being read to every day differs by race and ethnicity. More than half of non-Hispanic White (59.2 percent) and non-Hispanic children of other races (50.1 percent) were read to every day, compared to 42.6 percent of non-Hispanic Black children and 28.8 percent of Hispanic children.

Parents were also asked how often they or other family members sang or told stories to their children in the previous week. Overall, 56.8 percent of children aged 0-5 years were sung to or told stories every day. Singing and storytelling also varied by race and ethnicity: More than 60 percent of non-Hispanic White and 58.7 percent of non-Hispanic children of other races were sung to or told stories every day, compared to 54.9 percent of non-Hispanic Black and 41.5 percent of Hispanic children.

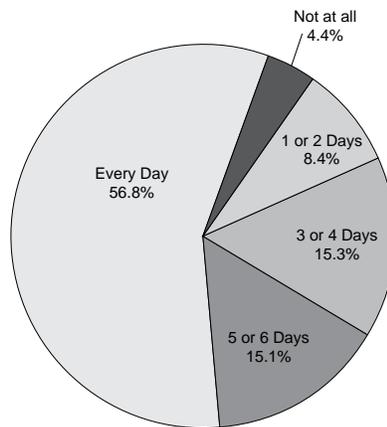
Reading to Children Aged 0-5 Years



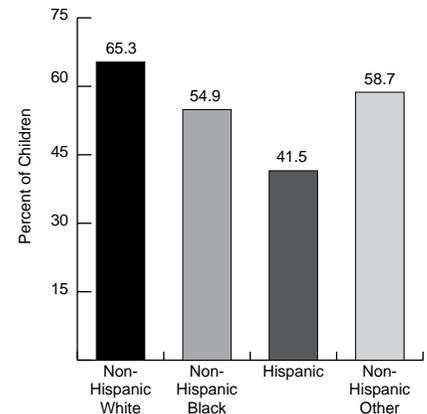
Children Aged 0-5 Years Who Are Read to Every Day, by Race/Ethnicity



Singing or Telling Stories to Children Aged 0-5 Years



Children Aged 0-5 Years Who Are Sung to or Told Stories Every Day, by Race/Ethnicity



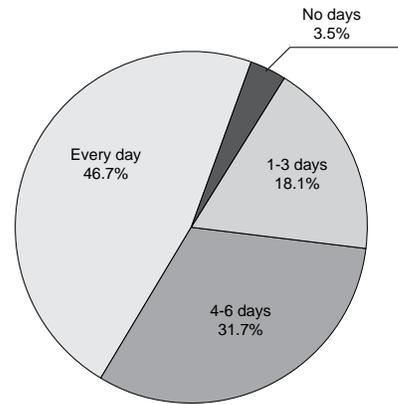


Family Meals

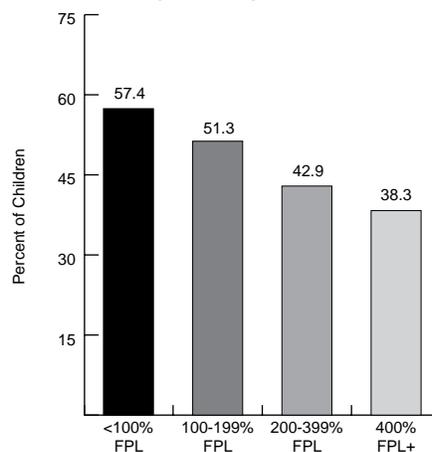
Eating together as a family can promote family bonding and good nutrition and eating habits. Overall, the parents of 46.7 percent of children reported that their families had eaten at least one meal together every day during the previous week. More than 31 percent of children were reported to eat meals with their families on 4-6 days per week, while 18.1 percent ate meals together on only 1-3 days per week and 3.5 percent of families did not eat at least one meal together during the previous week. On average, children and families ate meals together on 5.2 days during the previous week.

Sharing meals together is more common in lower-income households. Among children with household incomes below 100 percent of the Federal poverty level (FPL), 57.4 percent ate at least one meal together with their families every day, while 51.3 percent of children whose household incomes were between 100 and 199 percent of FPL did so. Nearly 43 percent of children with household incomes between 200 and 399 percent of FPL and 38.3 percent of children in households with incomes of 400 percent or more of FPL ate a meal together with their families every day.

Children Sharing Meals with Their Families in the Previous Week

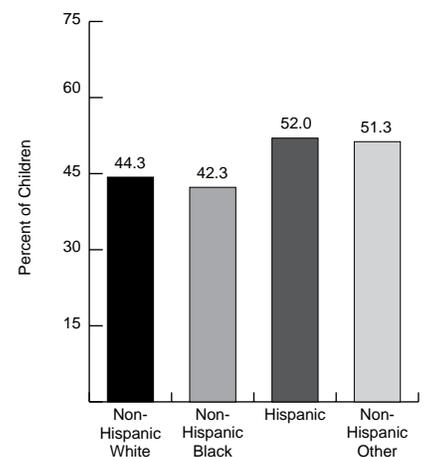


Children Who Share a Meal with Their Families Every Day, by Poverty Level



The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) was \$22,350 for a family of 4 in 2011.

Children Who Share a Meal with Their Families Every Day, by Race/Ethnicity



Eating meals together every day also varies by race and ethnicity. Hispanic children and non-Hispanic children of other races were most likely to eat at least one meal together

as a family every day (52.0 and 51.3 percent, respectively), followed by non-Hispanic White children (44.3 percent) and non-Hispanic Black children (42.3 percent).

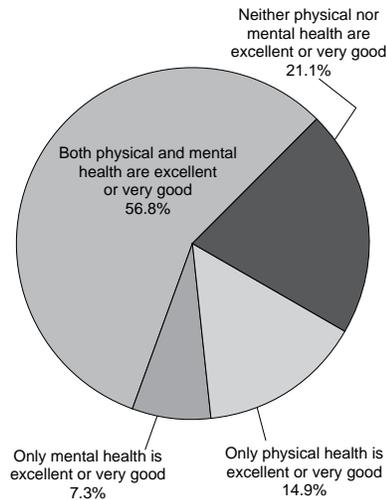


Parental Health Status

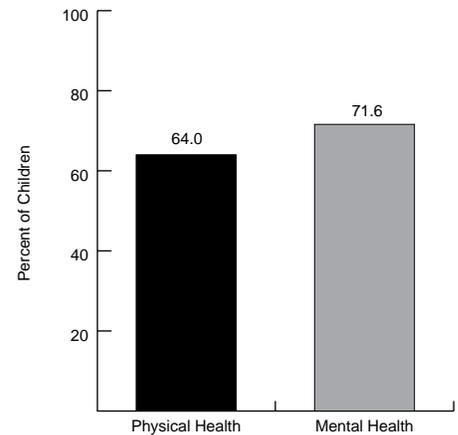
The physical and emotional health of a child's parents can affect their ability to care for their child and can influence the health and well-being of the family as a whole. Among children who live with their mothers, the parents of 56.8 percent rated the mother's physical and emotional health as "excellent" or "very good." Similarly, of children who live with their fathers, 62.0 percent reported that the fathers were in excellent or very good physical and emotional health.

The mothers of 64.0 percent of children and the fathers of 68.4 percent of children reported that their physical health is excellent or very good. The percentage of children whose parents' mental or emotional health was reported to be excellent or very good is slightly higher: mothers of 71.6 percent of children and fathers of 77.4 percent of children reported excellent or very good mental health.

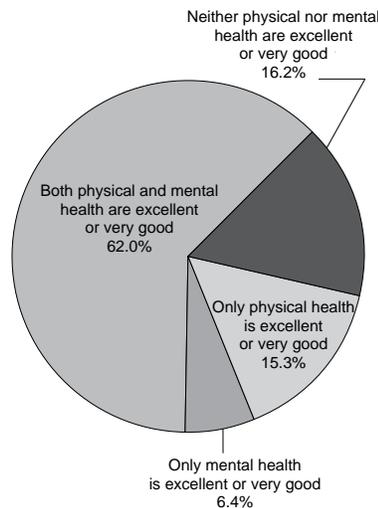
Mother's Health Status



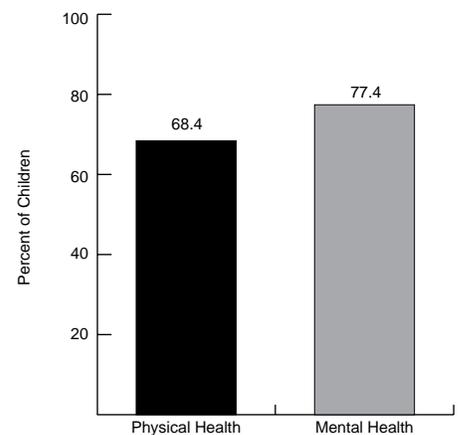
Children Whose Mothers Are in Excellent or Very Good Health, by Type



Father's Health Status



Children Whose Fathers Are in Excellent or Very Good Health, by Type





Smoking in the Household

Exposure to environmental smoke—from cigarettes, cigars, or pipes—can be a serious health hazard for children. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, exposure to secondhand smoke is associated with higher rates of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), more frequent and severe asthma, and acute respiratory infections in young children.⁹ Parents were asked whether anyone in the household used cigarettes, cigars, or pipe tobacco. Overall, 24.1 percent of children were reported to live in households where someone smokes, and 4.9 percent were exposed to secondhand smoke inside their homes (data not shown).

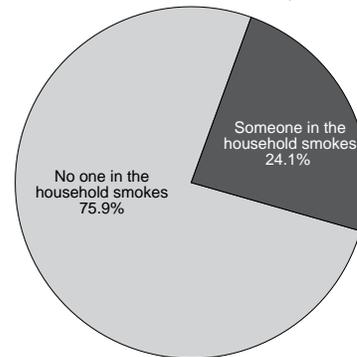
Over 26 percent of non-Hispanic White children and non-Hispanic children of other races lived in households with a smoker, as did 25.0 percent of non-Hispanic Black children. Only 18.3 percent of Hispanic children lived in households with a smoker.

Rates of household smoking decline as income increases. Of children with household incomes below the poverty level, 33.8 percent lived in a household with a smoker, as did 31.3 percent of children with household incomes between 100 and 199 percent of the Federal poverty level (FPL).

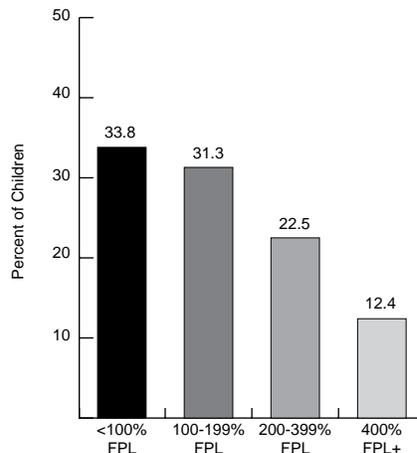
Of children with household incomes between 200 and 399 percent of FPL, 22.5 percent lived with a smoker, and

of children with household incomes of 400 percent or more of FPL, only 12.4 percent had a smoker in the household.

Children Living in Households with a Smoker

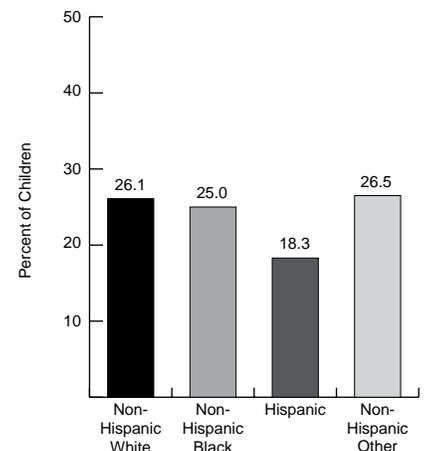


Children Living in Households with a Smoker, by Poverty Level



The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) was \$22,350 for a family of 4 in 2011.

Children Living in Households with a Smoker, by Race/Ethnicity





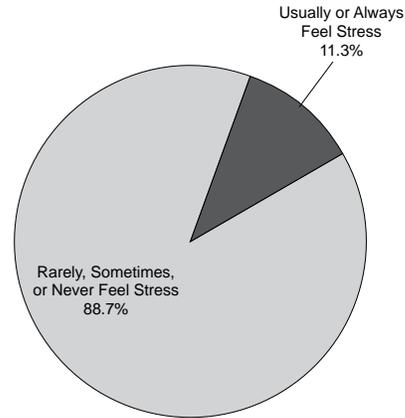
Parental Stress

The demands of parenting can cause considerable stress for families. Parents were asked how often during the previous month they had felt that their child was much harder to care for than others of his or her age; how often the child did things that really bothered them a lot; and how often they had felt angry with the child. Parents were considered to often feel stressed if they answered “usually” or “always” to at least one of these measures: Overall, parents of 11.3 percent of children often felt stressed.

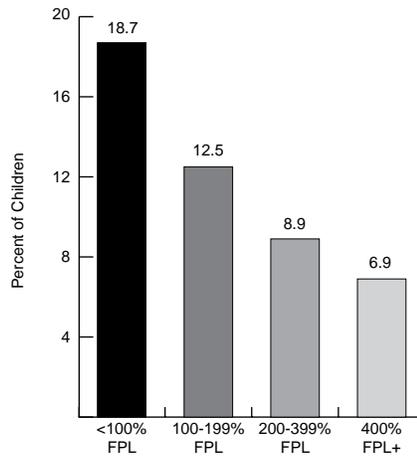
Levels of stress appear to be higher among parents of older children. While the parents of only 9.3 percent of children aged 0-5 years reported usually or always feeling stressed, the parents of 12.9 percent of 12- to 17-year-olds met the standard for parenting stress.

Lower household income is also associated with higher levels of parenting stress. Among children with household incomes below the Federal poverty level (FPL), the parents of 18.7 percent reported usually or always feeling stressed, compared to parents of 12.5 percent of children with household incomes between 100 and 199 percent of poverty. Of children with household incomes between 200 and 399 percent of FPL, the parents of 8.9 percent of children reported feeling stressed, as did parents of 6.9 percent of children with household incomes of 400 percent or more of FPL.

Parental Stress

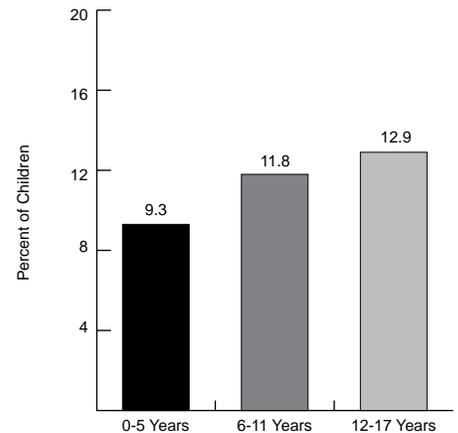


Children Whose Parents Usually or Always Feel Stress, by Poverty Level



The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) was \$22,350 for a family of 4 in 2011.

Children Whose Parents Usually or Always Feel Stress, by Age



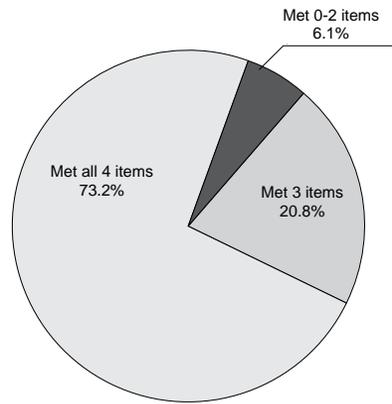


Flourishing

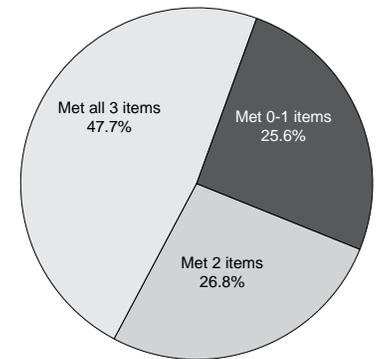
Another approach to measuring children's well-being within their families is to assess their ability to function within the family and community. A series of questions was asked, based on the child's age, to assess the extent to which they were flourishing in these contexts. For young children aged 6 months through 5 years, parents were asked how often during the previous month the child was affectionate or tender; able to bounce back quickly when things didn't go his or her way; showed interest and curiosity in learning new things; and smiled and laughed a lot. For children aged 6 to 17 years, parents were asked how often during the previous month the child finished the tasks he or she started and followed through with what he or she said he or she would do; stayed calm and in control when faced with a challenge; and showed interest and curiosity in learning new things. Overall, 73.2 percent of children aged 6 months-5 years were reported to usually or always meet all four items, and 47.7 percent of children aged 6-17 years were reported to usually or always meet all 3 items for their age group.

For both age groups, the percentage of children meeting all relevant criteria for flourishing varied by household income. More than half of children aged 6 months-5 years were reported to meet all of the criteria in every

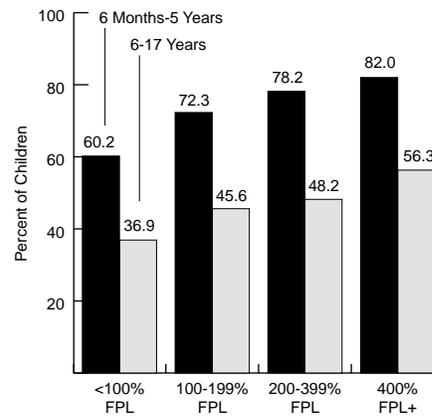
Children Aged 6 Months-5 Years Meeting Criteria for Flourishing



Children Aged 6 -17 Years Meeting Criteria for Flourishing



Children Meeting All Criteria for Flourishing, by Age and Poverty Level



The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) was \$22,350 for a family of 4 in 2011.

income group, ranging from 60.2 percent of children with household incomes below the Federal poverty level (FPL) to 82.0 percent of children with household incomes of 400 percent of the FPL or more. For older children, the percentage meeting all relevant criteria was much lower at

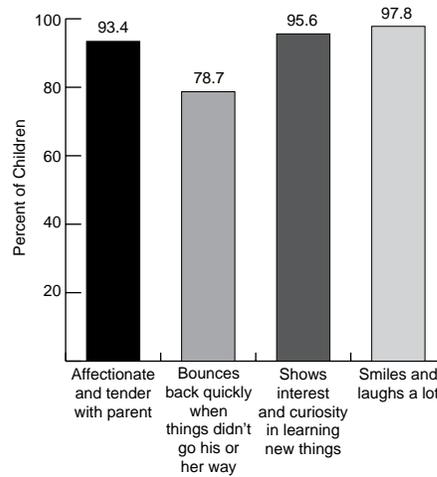
every income level. The percentage of children aged 6-17 years reported to be flourishing ranged from 36.9 percent of children with household incomes below the Federal poverty level (FPL) to 56.3 percent of children with household incomes of 400 percent of the FPL or more.



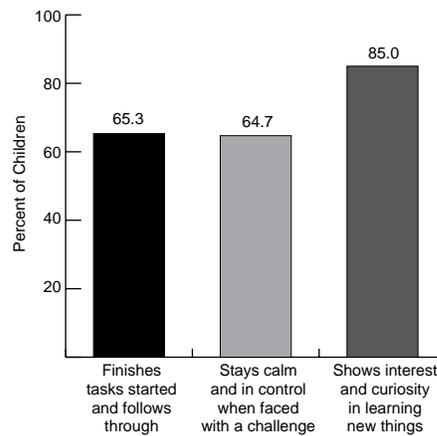
Flourishing (continued)

Among younger children, nearly all were reported to usually or always be affectionate or tender with their parent, smile and laugh a lot, and show interest and curiosity in learning new things. A smaller percentage (78.7 percent) were reported to usually or always bounce back quickly when things didn't go his or her way. Among older children, 85.0 percent usually or always show interest or curiosity in learning new things, but approximately two-thirds were reported to finish tasks they start and follow through (65.3 percent) and stay calm and in control when faced with a challenge (64.7 percent).

Children Aged 6 Months-5 Years
Usually or Always Meeting
Criteria for Flourishing



Children Aged 6-17 Years
Usually or Always Meeting
Criteria for Flourishing



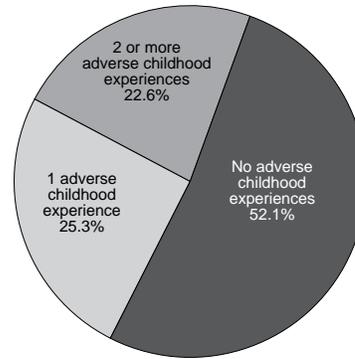


Adverse Childhood Experiences

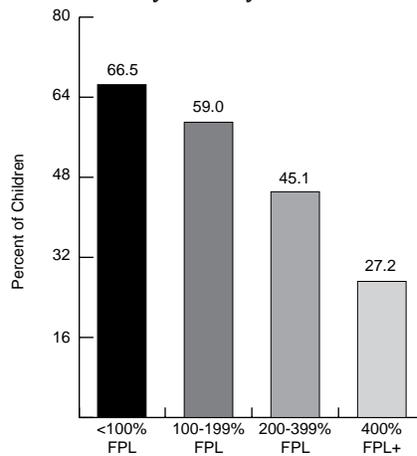
Challenging experiences, such as death, divorce or separation of parents, witnessing violence, and living with someone with mental health or substance abuse problems can undermine a child's emotional health and overall well-being. Parents were asked about 9 specific adverse experiences which the child may have experienced in his or her lifetime: (1) how often it was very hard to get by on the family's income, (2) whether the child experienced the divorce/separation of parents, (3) whether the child experienced the death of a parent, (4) whether a parent served time in jail, (5) whether the child witnessed domestic violence, (6) whether the child was a victim of neighborhood violence, (7) whether the child lived with someone who was mentally ill or suicidal, (8) whether the child lived with someone with alcohol/drug problems, and (9) whether the child was treated or judged unfairly due to their race or ethnicity.

Overall, 52.1 percent of children had experienced none of these adverse experiences, 25.3 percent experienced one, and 22.6 percent had experienced two or more. Because these measures cover the entire life course, the percentage of older children who have had adverse experiences in their lifetimes is greater than the percentage of younger children. Of adolescents aged 12-17 years,

Adverse Childhood Experiences

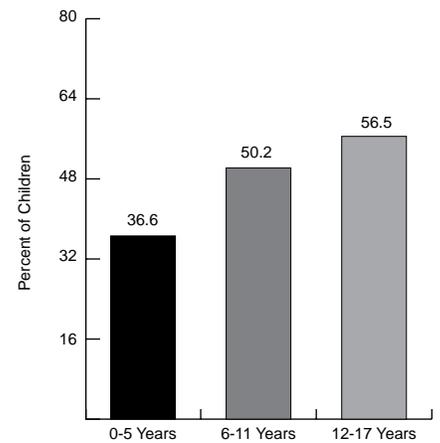


Children with One or More Adverse Childhood Experiences, by Poverty Level



The Federal Poverty Level (FPL) was \$22,350 for a family of 4 in 2011.

Children with One or More Adverse Childhood Experiences, by Age



56.5 percent had faced one of more adverse childhood experiences, compared to 50.2 percent of children aged 6-11 years and 36.6 percent of those aged 0-5 years.

Children in lower-income households were also more likely to confront one or more adverse childhood events. Of children with household incomes below the Federal poverty level (FPL),

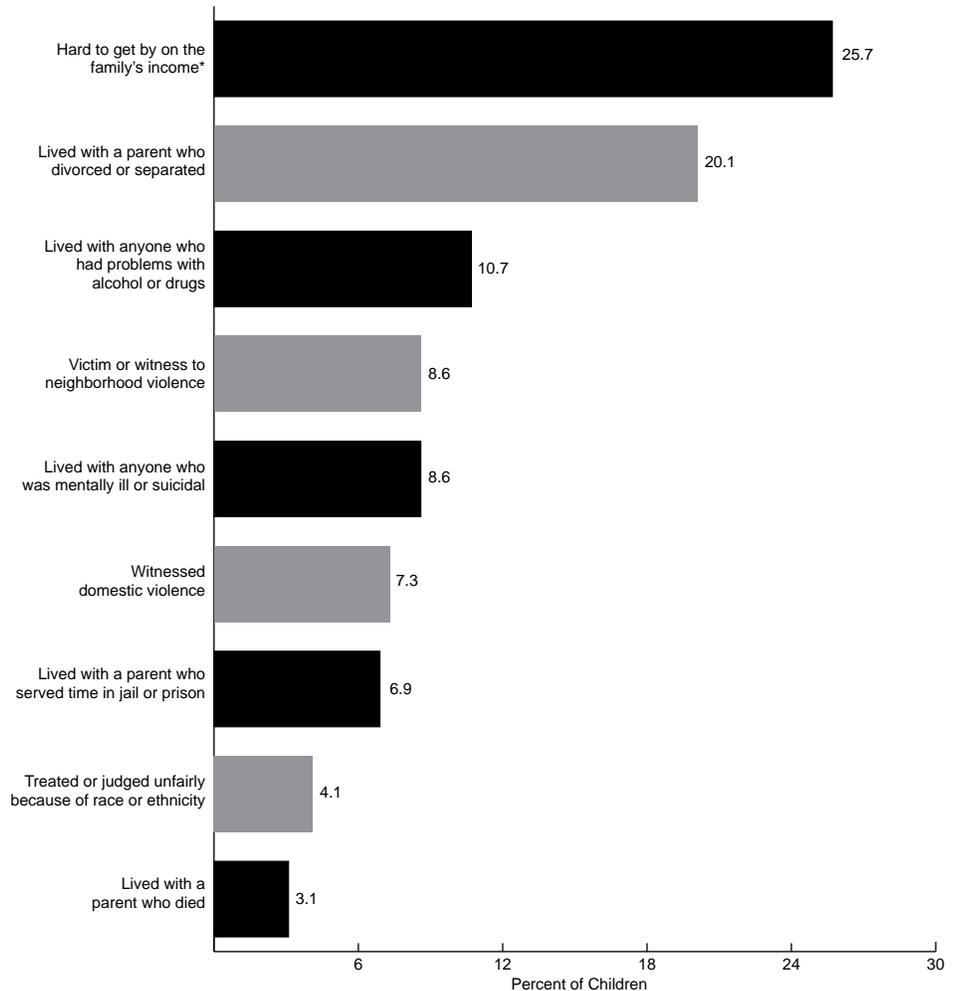
two-thirds were reported to have had one or more adverse childhood event, compared to 59.0 percent of children with household incomes between 100 and 199 percent of the FPL, 45.1 percent of children with household incomes between 200 and 399 percent of the FPL, and 27.2 percent of children with household incomes of 400 percent of the FPL or more.



Adverse Childhood Experiences (continued)

The adverse experience most common among children was economic insecurity; the parents of one-quarter of children reported that it was hard to get by on the family's income very or somewhat often. Divorce was the second most common adverse experience, affecting 20.1 percent of children and 10.7 percent lived with someone with alcohol or drug problems. Fewer than 10 percent of children were reported to have faced each of the other adverse experiences.

Children with Specific Adverse Childhood Experiences



*Very often or somewhat often