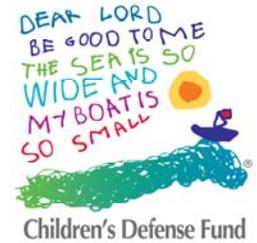


Children's Defense Fund

Child Poverty in America: 2011



September 2012

Poverty data released by the U.S. Census Bureau reveals that child poverty remained at record high levels in 2011. More than one in five children in America – 16.1 million – were poor in 2011. After nearly a million children fell into poverty in 2010, there was a slight decline of 152,000 poor children between 2010 and 2011, and neither the poverty rate nor the number of poor children was statistically different from 2010.

Child Poverty

Children continue to be the poorest age group in the country. Nearly 22 percent of children were poor in 2011, compared to 13.7 percent of people ages 18-64 and 8.7 percent of people ages 65 and older. Overwhelmingly, children have suffered more than any other age group during the Great Recession and slow recovery.



- The number of children living in poverty: **16,134,000**
 - Since 2000 the number of poor children has increased by more than 4.5 million.
- The percent of children living in poverty: **21.9 percent**
 - The child poverty rate has increased by 35 percent since 2000.
- Poverty is defined as an **annual income below \$23,021** for a family of four, meaning the family lives on less than \$1,918 a month, \$443 a week, or \$63 a day.

Extreme Child Poverty

Over seven million children – one in ten – lived in extreme poverty in 2011.

- The number of children living in extreme poverty: **7,252,000**
- The percent of children living in extreme poverty: **9.8 percent**
 - Compared to other age groups, children were four times more likely than people ages 65 and older and one-and-a-half times more likely than people ages 18-64 to live in extreme poverty.
- Extreme poverty is defined as an annual income of less than half of the poverty level, or **\$11,511** for a family of four. This means a family of four living in extreme poverty lives on less than \$959 a month, \$221 a week, or \$32 a day.

Young Children

Our youngest children are most at risk of being poor. In 2011, one in four infants, toddlers and preschoolers were poor, at the very same time that their brains are rapidly developing and attention to their developmental needs is so important.

- The number of children under five living in poverty: **5,006,000**
 - One-quarter of all children under five were poor (25.1%)
- The number of children under five living in extreme poverty: **2,449,000**
 - One in eight children under five were living in extreme poverty (12.3%)
 - Nearly half of poor children under five were extremely poor

Families with Children

Families with children faced higher poverty rates than families without children. Nearly two-thirds of all poor children – approximately 10.3 million – lived in single-parent families, with single-mother families facing some of the greatest challenges. However, married-couple families with children were not immune to poverty.

- The percent of all poor single-mother families: **40.9 percent**
 - The percent of all poor children living in single-mother families: **56.1 percent**
- The percent of poor married-couple families with children: **8.8 percent**
 - The percent of all poor children living in married-couple families: **33.1 percent**
- More than two-thirds of poor families with children (4.6 million or 65.1%) had at least one working family member.

Children of Color

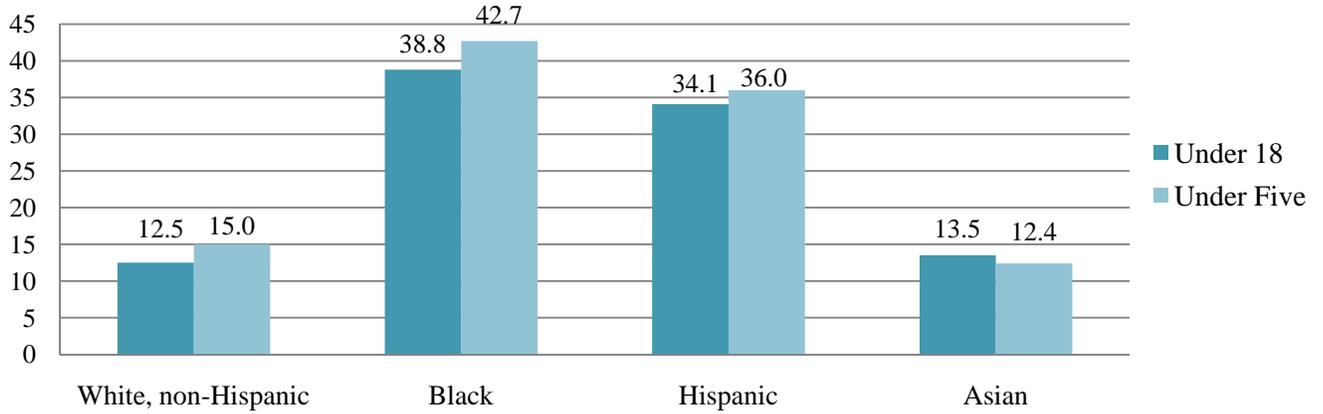
Children of color continue to suffer disproportionately from poverty, with the youngest children of color most at risk of being poor. The same patterns hold true for children of color living in extreme poverty.

- More than one in three Black children and more than one in three Hispanic children were poor in 2011, compared to one in eight White, non-Hispanic children.
- Nearly one in five Black children and one in seven Hispanic children were living in extreme poverty in 2011, compared to one in twenty White, non-Hispanic children.

Child Poverty, by Age and Race, 2011

	White, non-Hispanic		Black		Hispanic		Asian	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 18	4,850,000	12.5	4,320,000	38.8	6,008,000	34.1	494,000	13.5
Under Five	1,492,000	15.0	1,289,000	42.7	1,862,000	36.0	127,000	12.4

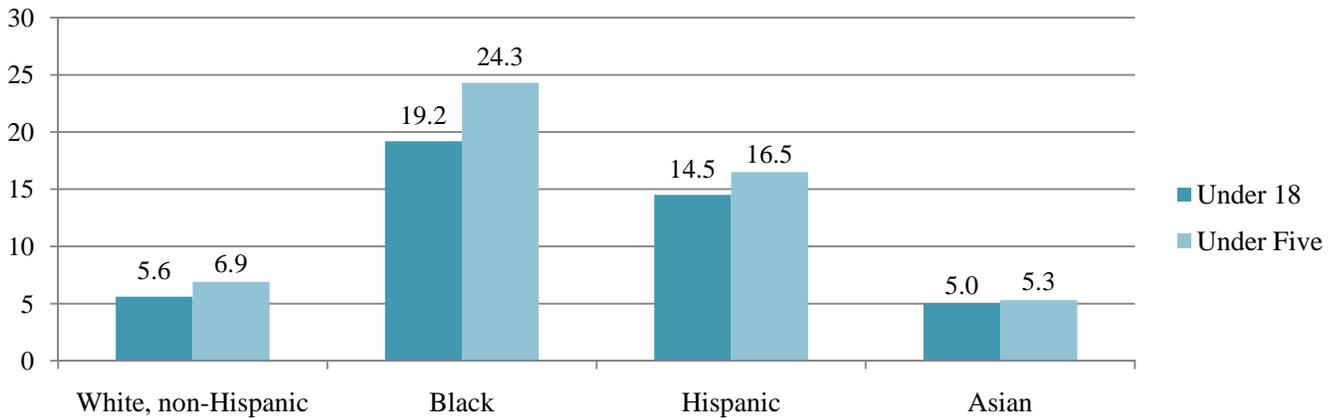
Percent of Children Living in Poverty, by Age and Race, 2011



Children Living in Extreme Poverty, by Age and Race, 2011

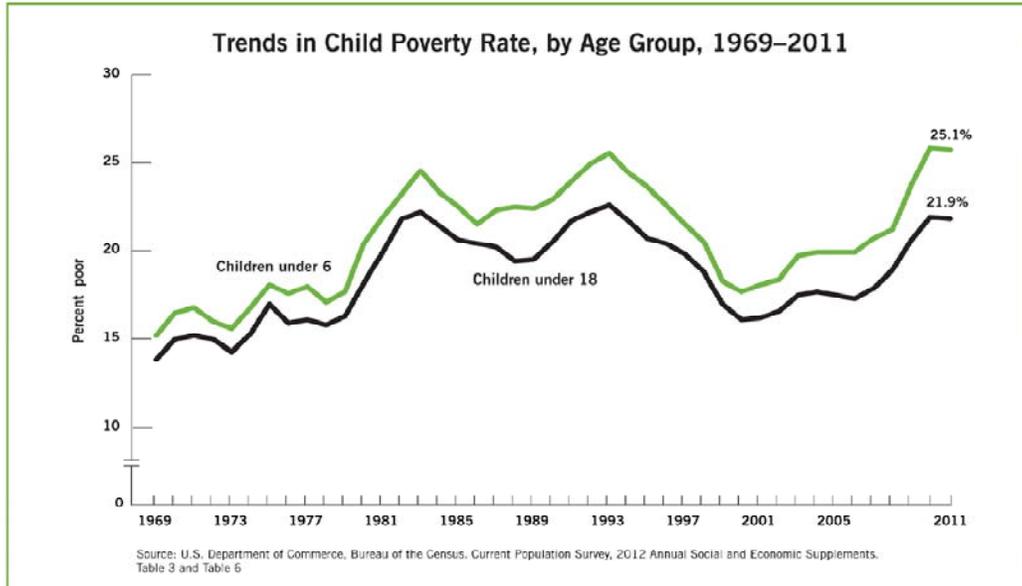
	White, non-Hispanic		Black		Hispanic		Asian	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 18	2,192,000	5.6	2,135,000	19.2	2,545,000	14.5	184,000	5.0
Under Five	690,000	6.9	733,000	24.3	853,000	16.5	54,000	5.3

Percent Children Living in Extreme Poverty, by Age and Race, 2011



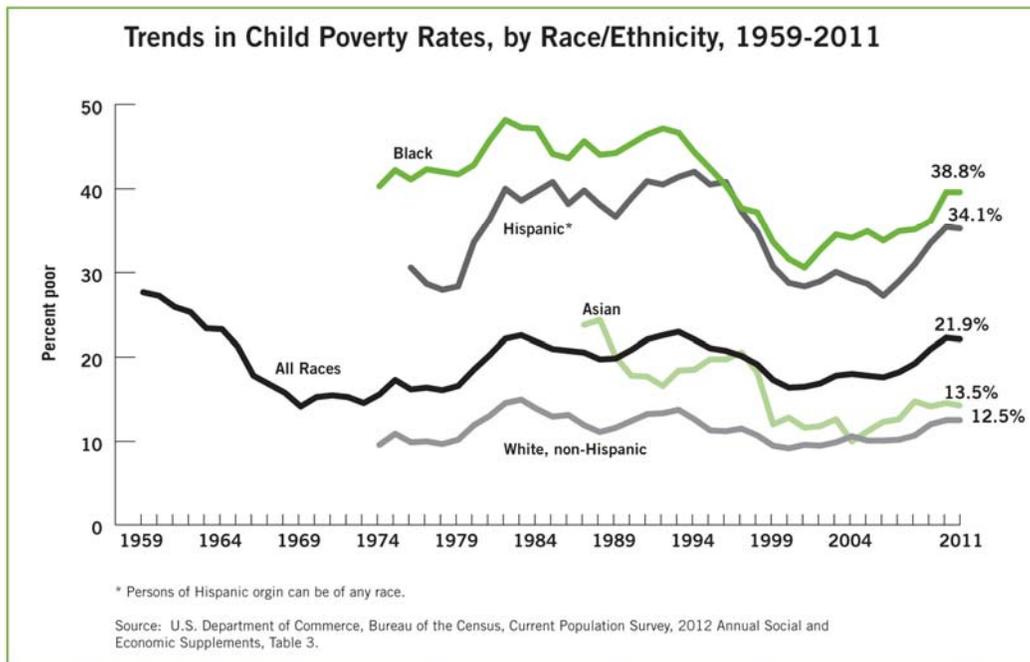
Trends in Child Poverty

Child poverty was at its lowest level 40 years ago (14.0%). Although the child poverty rate has fluctuated between 1969 and the present, child poverty has risen nearly every year over the last decade. After dropping 27 percent between 1992 and 2000, the child poverty rate increased by 35 percent between 2000 and 2011. Our youngest children continue to be most at-risk of being poor: the child poverty rate for children under six* increased by 38 percent between 2000 and 2011.



**Note: This graph refers to young children under six, however, the rest of this fact sheet refers to young children under five.*

Black and Hispanic children have experienced significantly higher rates of poverty since data were first collected.



Notes and Citations:

CHILD POVERTY:

Poor Children (under age 18 and under age five), number and percent: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2011 Current Population Survey, Table POV01 (Below 100 percent of poverty).

Poor Children (under age six): U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Table 6. People with Income Below Specified Ratios of Their Poverty Thresholds by Selected Characteristics: 2011.

Children in Extreme Poverty (under age 18 and under age five), number and percent: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2011 Current Population Survey, Table POV01 (Below 50 percent of poverty)

Poverty Thresholds (dollar amounts used to determine poverty status): U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Poverty Thresholds for 2011 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years."

FAMILIES WITH RELATED CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY:

Poor Families, number and percent: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2011 Current Population Survey, Table POV07.

Children in Poor Families, by Family Type, number and percent: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2011 Current Population Survey, Table POV03.

Poor Families with at least one working member, number and percent: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2011 Current Population Survey, Table POV07.

CHILD POVERTY BY RACE AND ETHNICITY:

Poor Children (under age 18 and under age five), number and percent: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2011 Current Population Survey, Table POV01 (Below 100 percent of poverty; All Races; White alone, not Hispanic; Black alone; Asian alone; Hispanic).

Children in Extreme Poverty (under age 18 and under age five), number and percent: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2011 Current Population Survey, Table POV01 (Below 50 percent of poverty; All Races; White alone, not Hispanic; Black alone; Asian alone; Hispanic).

For further information on poverty, visit the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2012 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.