

FACT SHEET

Basic Facts About Low-income Adolescents

Age 12 to 18

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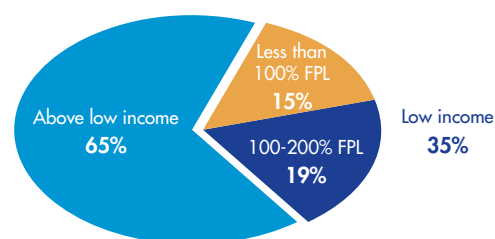
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How many adolescents in the United States live in low-income families?

There are over 29 million adolescents in the United States.

- ▶ 35% – 10.1 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 15% – 4.5 million – live in poor families.

Adolescents, by family income, 2007



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

NCCP

National Center for
Children in Poverty

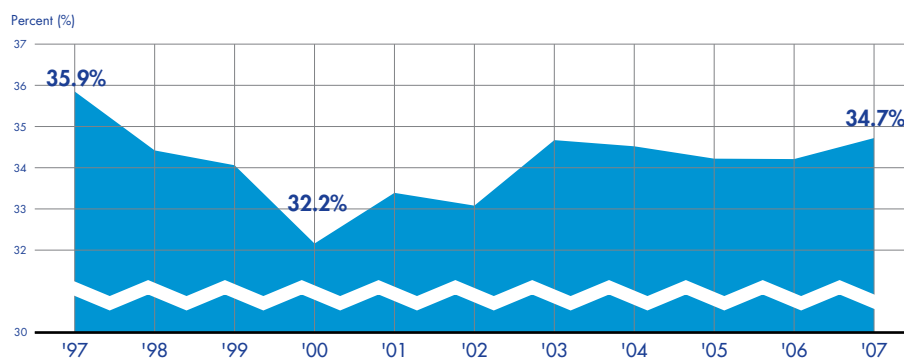
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Have these numbers changed over time?

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

ber of children, birth through 18, who were poor increased by 15%. During the same period, the number of adolescents who were poor increased by 21%.

Adolescents living in low-income families, 1997-2007



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What is the federal poverty level (FPL) in 2009?¹

- ▶ \$22,050 for a family of 4.
- ▶ \$18,310 for a family of 3.
- ▶ \$14,570 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:

- ▶ \$44,100 for a family of 4.
- ▶ \$36,620 for a family of 3.
- ▶ \$29,140 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 four, 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 adolescents?

Parents' Employment

- ▶ 55% of adolescents in low-income families – 5.6 million – have at least one parent who works full-time, year-round.
- ▶ 24% of adolescents in low-income families – 2.4 million – have at least one parent who works part-time or full-time, part-year.
- ▶ 21% of adolescents in low-income families – 2.2 million – do not have an employed parent.

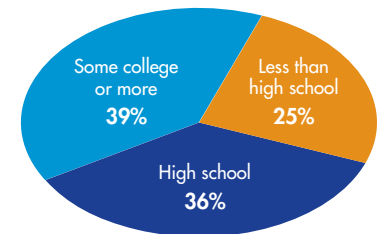
Parents' Education

- ▶ 25% of adolescents in low-income families – 2.5 million – live with parents who have less than a high school education.
- ▶ 36% of adolescents in low-income families – 3.6 million – live with parents who have only a high school diploma.
- ▶ 39% of adolescents in low-income families – 4.0 million – live with parents who have some college or more.

Family Structure

- ▶ 56% of adolescents in low-income families – 5.6 million – live with a single parent.
- ▶ 44% of adolescents in low-income families – 4.4 million – live with married parents.

Adolescents living in low-income families, by parent's education, 2007



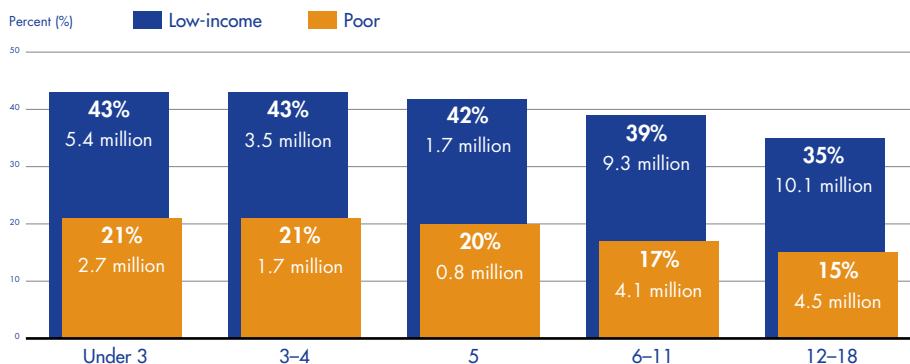
Does the percent of children in low-income families vary by children's age?

Adolescents are less likely to live in low-income families than younger children. 35% – just over 10 million – live in low-income families, compared to 43% among children under age 6.

- ▶ 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 18 years – 10.1 million – live in low-income families.

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

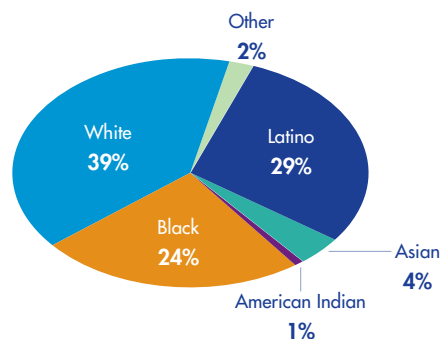


Does the percent of adolescents in low-income families vary by race/ethnicity?

- ▶ 52% of American Indian adolescents – 0.1 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 56% of Latino adolescents – 3.0 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 55% of black adolescents – 2.4 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 33% of Asian adolescents – 0.4 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 23% of white adolescents – 3.9 million – live in low-income families.

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

Adolescents living in low-income families, by race/ethnicity, 2007



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

Does the percent of adolescents in low-income families vary by parents' country of birth?

- ▶ 55% of adolescents of immigrant parents – 2.6 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 31% of adolescents of native-born parents – 7.2 million – live in low-income families.

Does the percent of adolescents in low-income families vary by where adolescents live?

Region

- ▶ 38% of adolescents in the South – 4.0 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 36% of adolescents in the West – 2.5 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 33% of adolescents in the Northeast – 1.7 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 30% of adolescents in the Midwest – 1.9 million – live in low-income families.

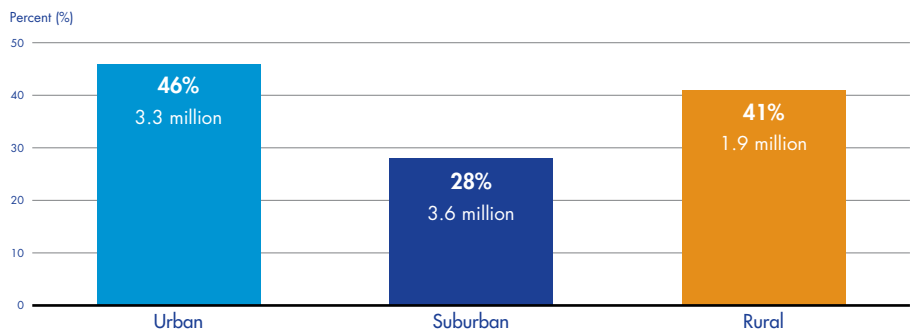
Type of Area

- ▶ 46% of adolescents in urban areas – 3.3 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 28% of adolescents in suburban areas – 3.6 million – live in low-income families.
- ▶ 41% of adolescents in rural areas – 1.9 million – live in low-income families.

Residential Instability

- ▶ 15% of adolescents in low-income families – 1.5 million – moved in the last year.
- ▶ 6% of adolescents in above low-income families – 1.1 million – moved last year.

Adolescents 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. Also, children are defined here, as young people, birth through 18 (inclusive).

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/09poverty.shtml>.

2. Cauthen, Nancy K.; Fass, Sarah. 2008. *Measuring Income and Poverty in the United States*. New York, NY: National Center for Adolescents in Poverty, Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health.

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

4. Approximately 0.3 million low-income adolescents, ages 12 through 18, live in households with one immigrant parent and one native-born parent. Those adolescents are not counted in this figure.