

Children's Defense Fund Child Poverty in America 2012: National Analysis



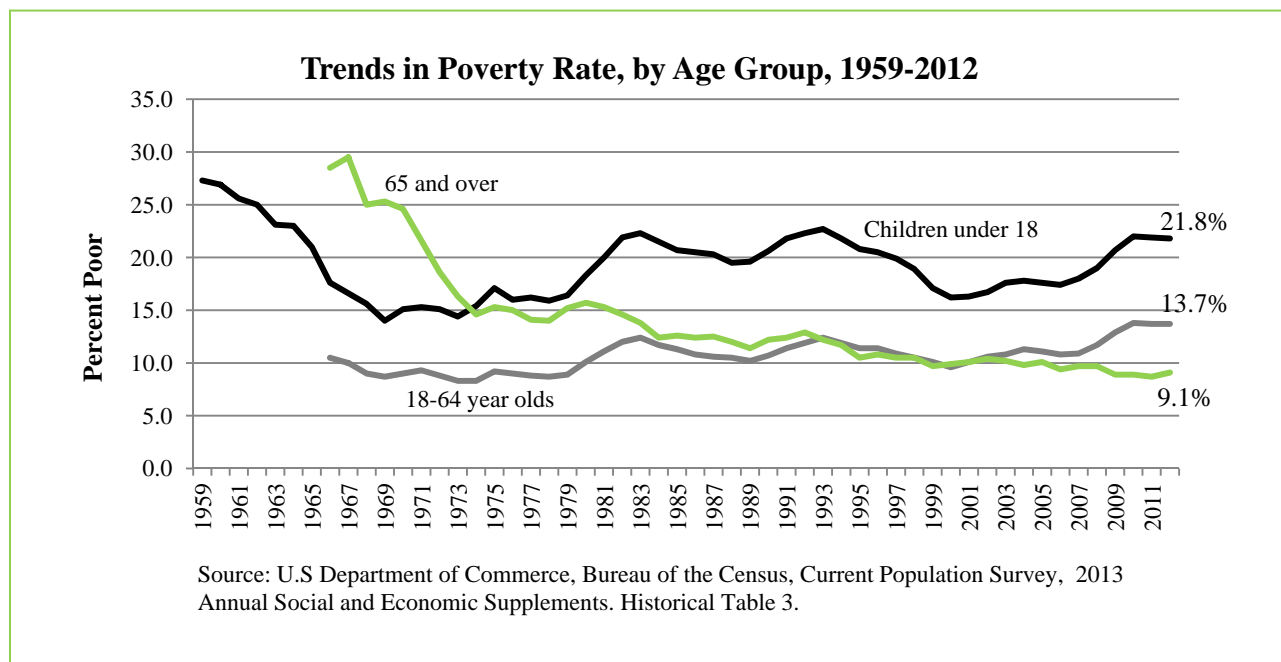
September 17, 2013

Poverty at the National Level

Poverty data released by the U.S. Census Bureau reveal that child poverty remained at record high levels in 2012. More than one in five children in America – 16.1 million – were poor in 2012, essentially unchanged from 2011. Children remain the poorest age group in the country and their poverty rate is 21 percent higher than before the Great Recession. In 2012 there were 2.75 million more children living in poverty than there were in 2007.

Child Poverty

Children continue to be the poorest age group in the country. Nearly 22 percent of children were poor in 2012, compared to 13.7 percent of people ages 18-64 and 9.1 percent of people ages 65 and older.



- The number of children living in poverty: **16,073,000**
 - Since 2000 the number of poor children has increased by more than 4.5 million, and 2.75 million more children were poor in 2012 than before the Great Recession in 2007.
- The percent of children living in poverty: **21.8 percent**
 - The child poverty rate has increased by 34.6 percent since 2000 and remains 21 percent higher than before the Great Recession in 2007.
- Poverty is defined as an **annual income below \$23,492** for an average family of four, meaning the family lives on less than \$1,958 a month, \$452 a week, or \$64 a day.

Extreme Child Poverty

Over seven million children – nearly one in ten – lived in extreme poverty in 2012.

- The number of children living in extreme poverty: **7,143,000**
- The percent of children living in extreme poverty: **9.7 percent**
 - Compared to other age groups, children were three-and-a-half 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 **\$11,746** for a family of four. This means a family of four living in extreme poverty lives on less than \$979 a month, \$226 a week, or \$32 a day.

Young Children

The youngest children are most at risk of being poor. In 2012, one in four infants, toddlers and preschoolers were poor, at the time of greatest brain development.

- The number of children under five living in poverty: **4,953,000**
 - One-quarter of all children under five were poor (**25.1 percent**)
- The number of children under five living in extreme poverty: **2,406,000**
 - One in eight children under five were living in extreme poverty (**12.2 percent**)
 - Nearly half of poor children under five were extremely poor (**48.6 percent**)

Family Characteristics¹

Nearly two-thirds of poor families with children (4.7 million or 65.9%) had at least one working family member. Approximately 10 million poor children lived in single-parent families, with the majority in single-mother households. Children in single-parent families were more likely to be poor, however, married-couple families with children were not immune to poverty

- The percent of all poor children living in single-mother families: **56.1 percent**
- The percent of all poor children living in married-couple families: **35.3 percent**
- The percent of all poor children living in single-father families: **8.6 percent**
- The percent of children in single-parent families who were poor: **42.5 percent**
- The percent of children in married-couple families who were poor: **11.1 percent**

Children of Color

Children of color continue to suffer disproportionately from poverty, with the youngest children of color most at risk of being poor.

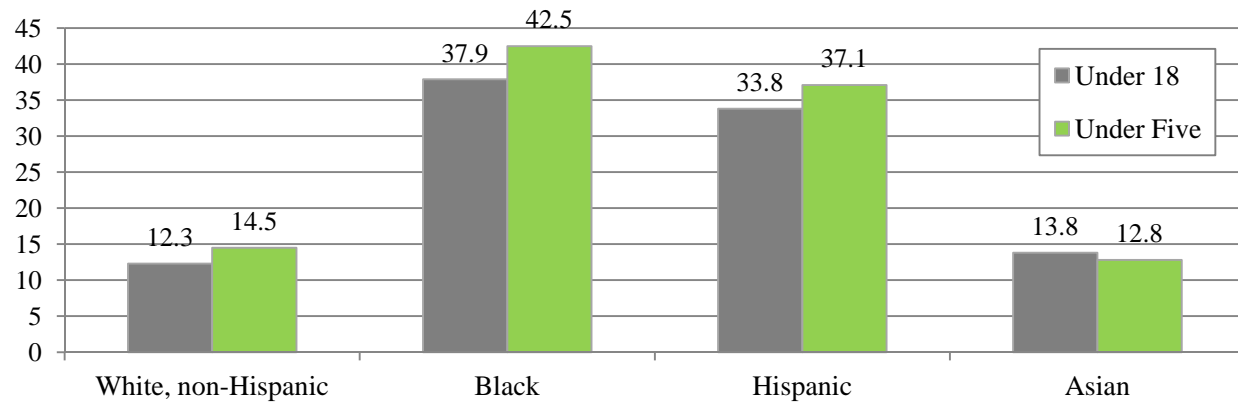
- The largest group of poor children are Hispanic (5,976,000) followed by White, non-Hispanic children (4,782,000).
- More than one in three Black children and more than one in three Hispanic children were poor in 2012, compared to one in eight White, non-Hispanic children.
- Approximately one in five Black children and approximately one in seven Hispanic children were living in extreme poverty in 2012, compared to more than one in eighteen White, non-Hispanic children.
- More than two out of five Black children under age five were poor (42.5 percent); nearly one in four were extremely poor (23 percent).

¹ Percentages of all poor children living in single-mother families, married couple families, and single-father families are calculated using the number of related children under 18 (15.5 million) rather than the number of all poor children (16.1 million).

Child Poverty, by Age and Race, 2012

	White, non-Hispanic		Black		Hispanic		Asian	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 18	4,782,000	12.3	4,201,000	37.9	5,976,000	33.8	497,000	13.8
Under Five	1,425,000	14.5	1,274,000	42.5	1,898,000	37.1	126,000	12.8

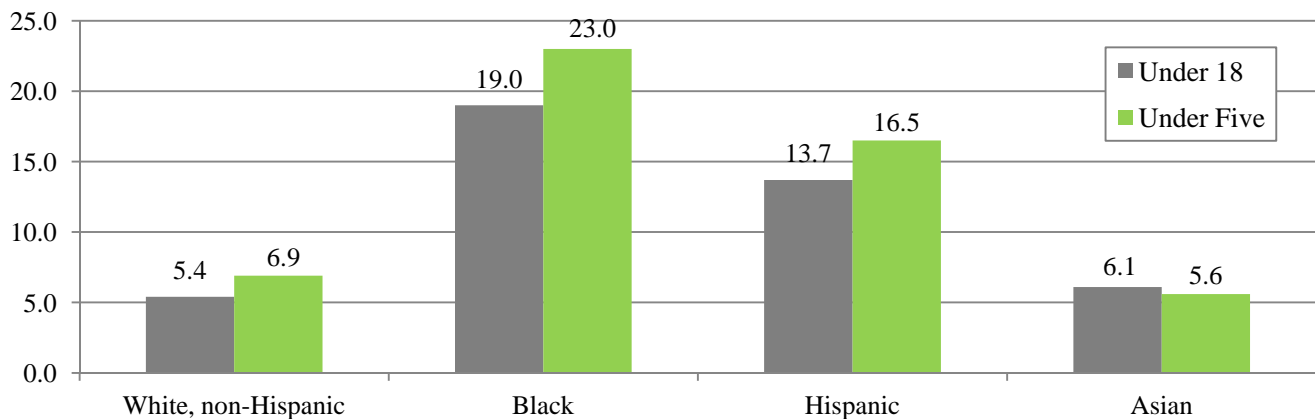
Percent of Children Living in Poverty, by Age and Race, 2012



Children Living in Extreme Poverty, by Age and Race, 2012

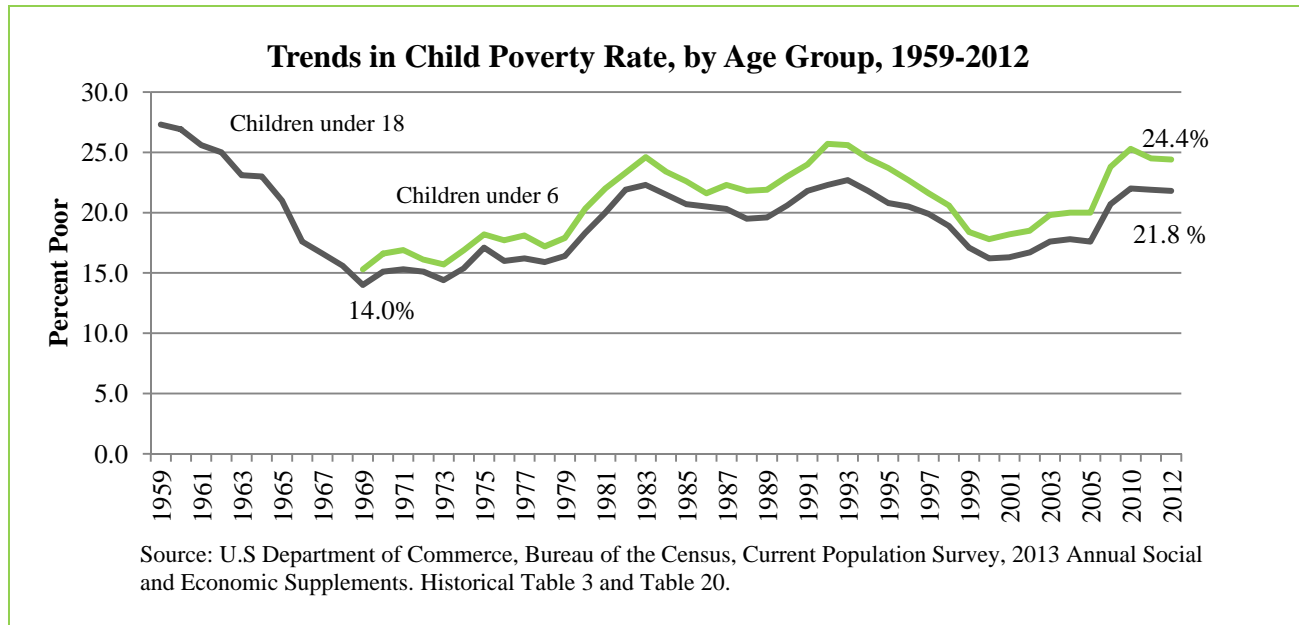
	White, non-Hispanic		Black		Hispanic		Asian	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 18	2,099,000	5.4	2,109,000	19.0	2,414,000	13.7	221,000	6.1
Under Five	677,000	6.9	690,000	23.0	842,000	16.5	55,000	5.6

Percent of Children Living in Extreme Poverty, by Age and Race, 2012



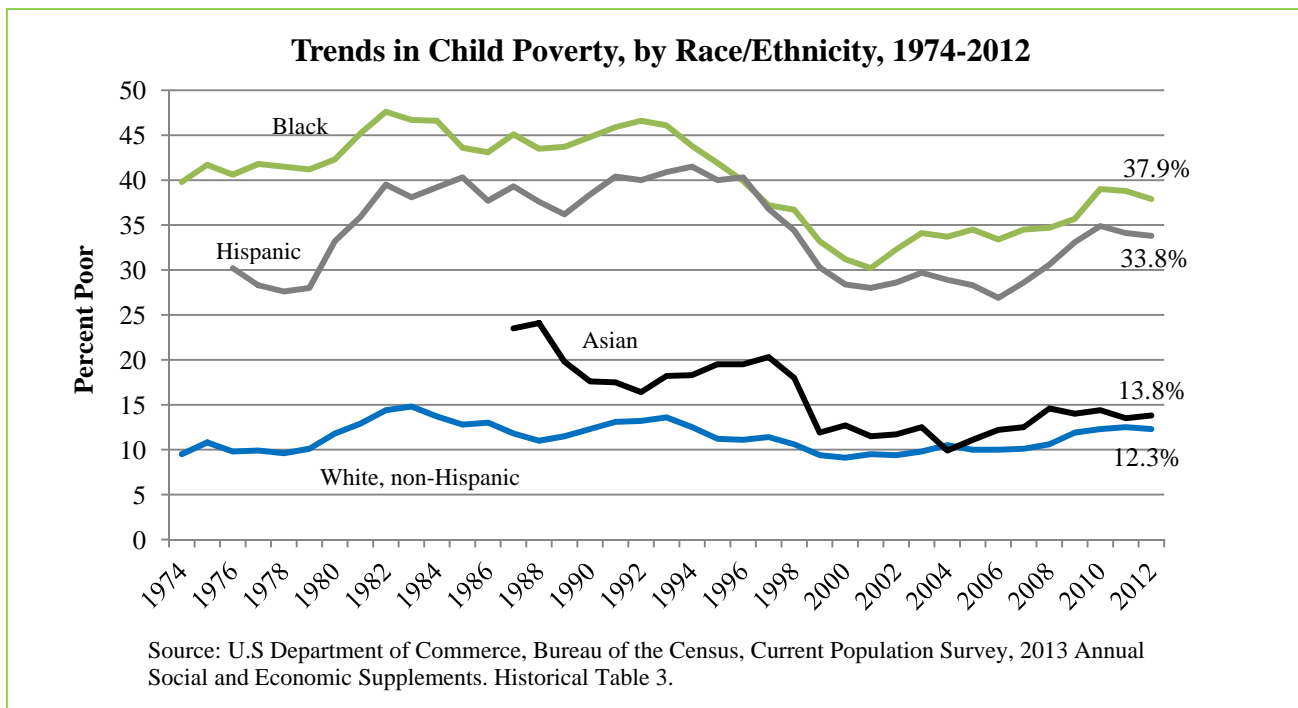
Trends in Child Poverty

Child poverty was at its lowest recorded level 44 years ago in 1969 (14.0%). After dropping 27 percent between 1992 and 2000, the child poverty rate increased by 34.6 percent between 2000 and 2012. Our youngest children have consistently been more likely to be poor. Since poverty data for children under six* was first collected in 1969, and the child poverty rate for children under six has been several percentage points higher than the poverty rate for all children under 18. The child poverty rate for children under six increased by 37 percent between 2000 and 2012.



* Historical child poverty tables include related children under six. 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. The Black child poverty rate has consistently been four to three greater than the White child poverty rate, and the Hispanic child poverty rate three to two times greater than that of White children. Black and Hispanic children experienced the largest percentage point increase in child poverty during the Great Recession.



Notes and Citations:

All data are from the Annual Social and Economic Supplement of the U.S. Census Current Population Survey and reflect poverty for the calendar year.

CHILD POVERTY:

Poor Children (under age 18 and under age five), number and percent: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Social and Economic Survey, Table POV01 (Below 100 percent of poverty, all races).

Children in Extreme Poverty (under age 18 and under age five), number and percent: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Social and Economic Survey, Table POV01 (Below 50 percent of poverty, all races)

Poverty Thresholds (dollar amounts used to determine poverty status): U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, “Poverty Thresholds for 2012 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years.” We use the weighted average for a family of four.

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS:

Poor Children by Family Structure, number and percent: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Social and Economic Survey, Table POV03 (Below 100 percent of poverty, all races). Calculations by Children’s Defense Fund.

Poor Families with children with at least one working member, number and percent: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Social and Economic Survey, Table POV07 (Below 100 percent of poverty, all races). Calculations by Children’s Defense Fund.

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, Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Social and Economic Survey, Table POV01 (Below 100 percent of poverty; White alone, not Hispanic; Black alone; Asian alone; Hispanic of any race).

Children in Extreme Poverty (under age 18 and under age five), number and percent: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Social and Economic Survey, Table POV01 (Below 50 percent of poverty; White alone, not Hispanic; Black alone; Asian alone; Hispanic of any race).

TRENDS OVER TIME

Poverty by Age: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, Historical Table 3. “Poverty Status of People, by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1959 to 2012.”

Poverty by Race: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, Historical Table 3. “Poverty Status of People, by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1959 to 2012.” (All Races; White Alone, Not Hispanic from 2002-2012 and White, Not Hispanic from 1974-2001; Black Alone from 2002-2012 and Black from 1974-2001; Asian Alone from 2002-2012 and Asian and Pacific Islander from 2001-1987; Hispanic)

Children under age six in related families: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, Historical Table 20. “Poverty Status of Related Children Under 6 Years of Age: 1969 to 2012.”

For further information on poverty, visit the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.