

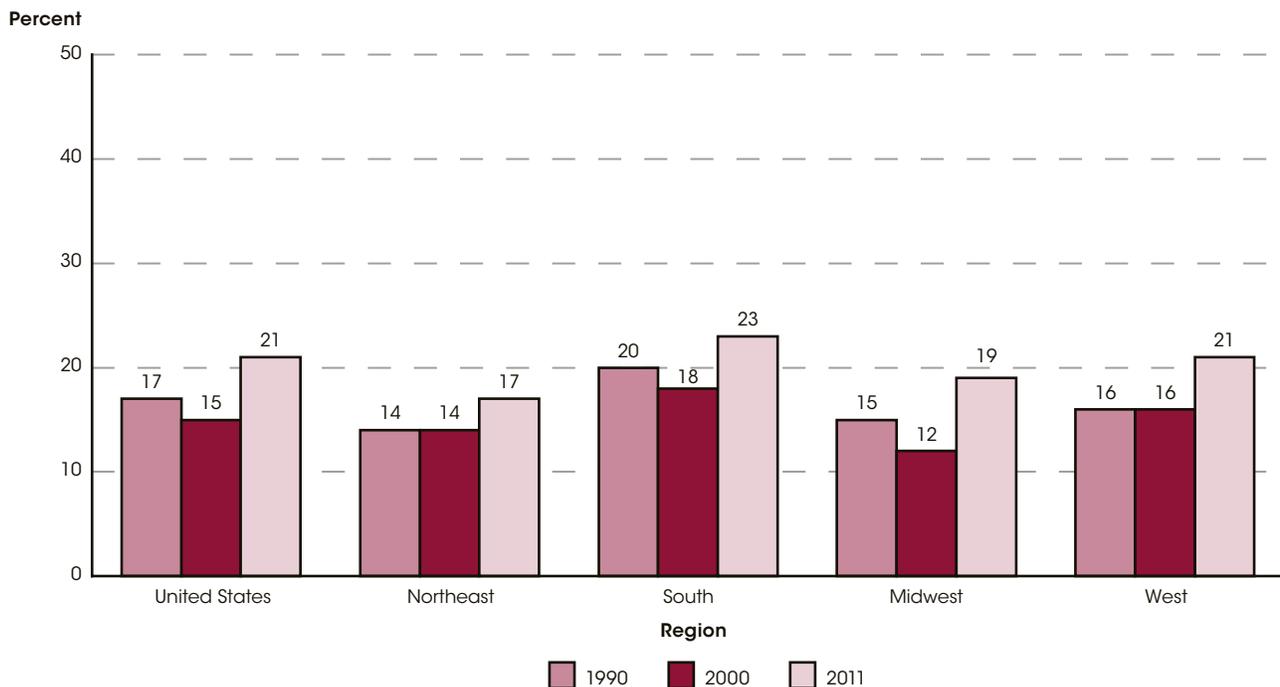
## Children Living in Poverty

*In 2011, approximately 21 percent of school-age children in the United States were in families living in poverty. The percentage of school-age children living in poverty ranged across the United States from 9 percent in North Dakota to 30 percent in the District of Columbia.*

In 2011, approximately 10.9 million school-age children, or children 5 to 17 years old, were in families living in poverty. In this indicator, data on household income and the number of people living in the household are combined with the poverty threshold, published by the Census Bureau, to determine the poverty status of children. It includes all families in which children are related to the householder by birth or adoption, or through marriage. In 2011, the poverty threshold for a family of four was \$22,811. The householder is the person

(or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. Over the past two decades, the percentage of school-age children in the United States living in poverty has increased. Following a decrease from 1990 (17 percent) to 2000 (15 percent), the poverty rate for school-age children increased to 21 percent in 2011. Overall, between 1990 and 2011 the percentage of school-age children living in families in poverty increased by 4 percentage points.

**Figure 1. Percentage of 5- to 17-year-olds in families living in poverty, by region: 1990, 2000, and 2011**



NOTE: The measure of child poverty includes families in which all children are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. The 1990 data are based on 1989 incomes and family sizes collected in the 1990 census, and 2000 data are based on 1999 incomes and family sizes collected in the 2000 census. Both years may differ from Current Population Survey data that are shown in other tables.

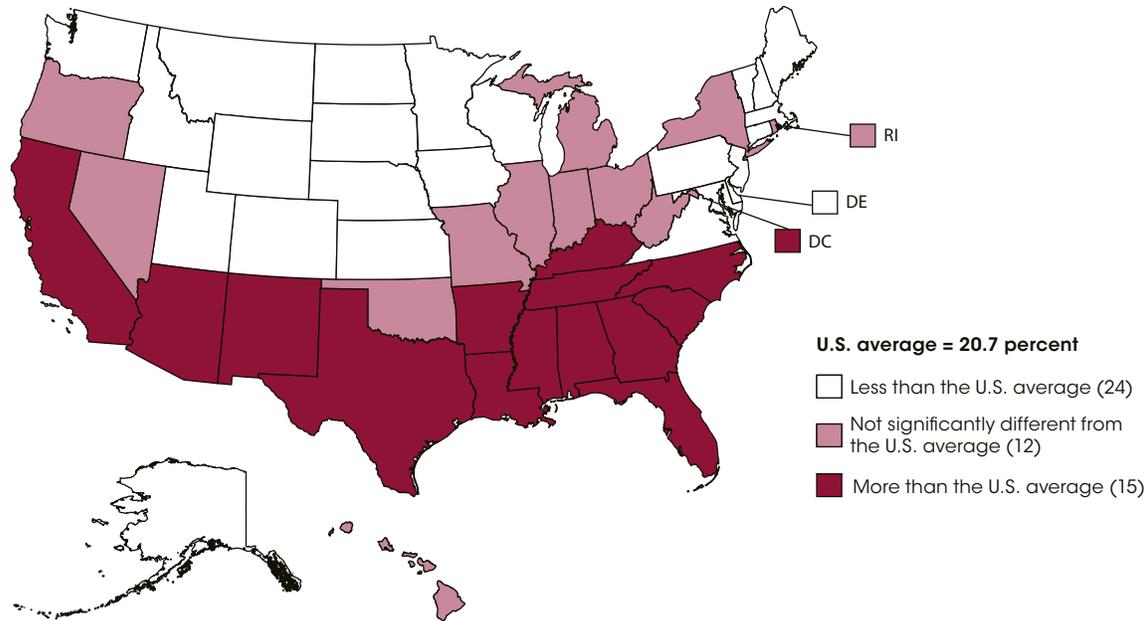
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, 1990 Summary Tape File 3 (STF 3), "Median Household Income in 1989" and "Poverty Status in 1989 by Family Type and Age"; Decennial Census, 1990, Minority Economic Profiles, unpublished data; Decennial Census, 2000, Summary Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics; Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4), "Poverty Status in 1999 of Related Children Under 18 Years by Family Type and Age"; and American Community Survey (ACS), 2011. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 25.

Across the United States, all regions (Northeast, South, Midwest, and West) had higher poverty rates for school-age children in 2011 than in 1990. From 1990 to 2000, both the South and the Midwest experienced a decrease in the poverty rate for school-age children (from 20 to 18 percent and from 15 to 12 percent, respectively), while the Northeast and the West did not

show measurable changes. From 2000 to 2011, all regions experienced an increase in the percentage of school-age children living in poverty. In 2011, the South had the highest rate of poverty for school-age children (23 percent), followed by the West (21 percent), Midwest (19 percent), and Northeast (17 percent).

For more information, see the Reader's Guide and the Guide to Sources.

**Figure 2. Percentage of 5- to 17-year-olds in families living in poverty, by state: 2011**

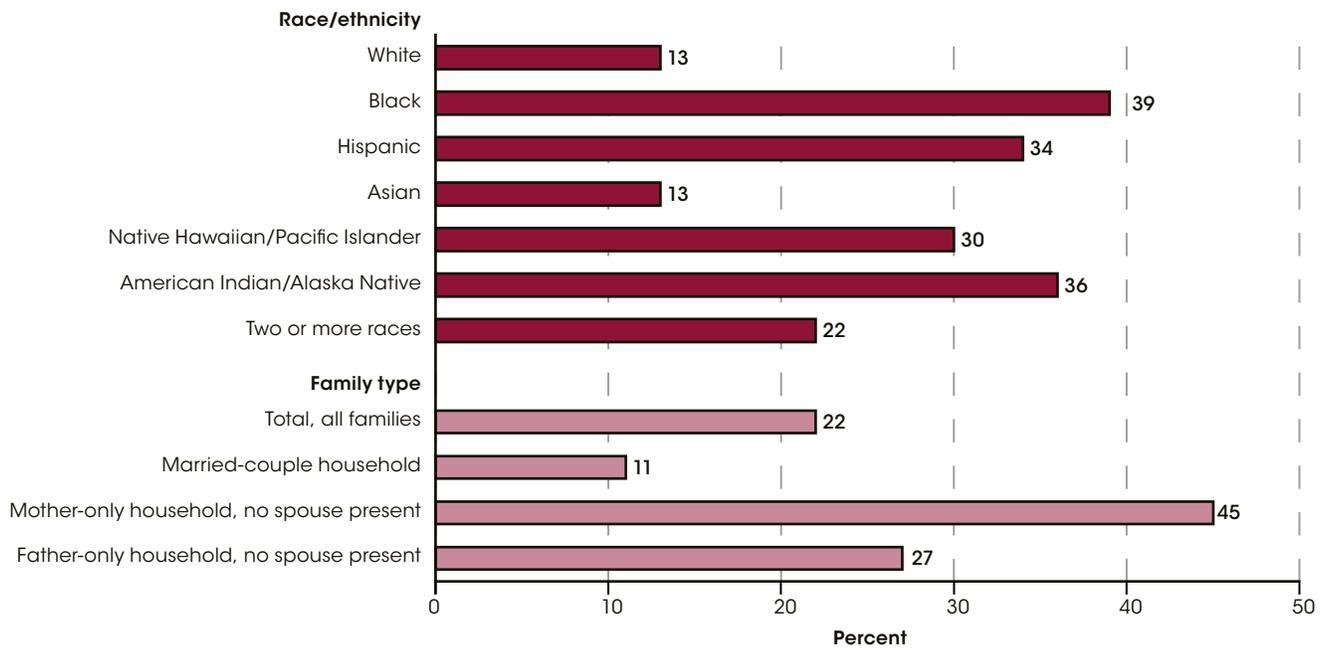


NOTE: The measure of child poverty includes families in which all children are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2011. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 25.

In 2011, some 37 states had higher poverty rates for school-age children than in 1990, while 9 states plus the District of Columbia had poverty rates for school-age children that were not measurably different from those in 1990. In four states, the percentage of school-age children living in poverty was lower in 2011 than in 1990: Louisiana, Mississippi, North Dakota, and South Dakota. From 1990 to 2000, the poverty rate for school-age children decreased in 38 states, while it increased in 6 states plus the District of Columbia. The poverty rate was higher in 2011 than in 2000 for school-age children in 41 states. North Dakota was the only state with a rate that was lower (12 percent in 2000 vs. 9 percent in 2011). The remaining eight states (Alaska, Louisiana, Montana, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia,

and Wyoming) plus the District of Columbia had rates in 2011 that were not measurably different from those in 2000. In 2011, within the United States, the percentage of school-age children living in poverty ranged from 9 percent (North Dakota) to 30 percent (District of Columbia). In that same year, the national average poverty rate for school-age children was 21 percent; some 24 states had poverty rates for school-age children that were below the national average, 14 states plus the District of Columbia had rates that were above the national average, and 12 states had rates that were not measurably different from the national average. Of the 15 jurisdictions (14 states and the District of Columbia) that had poverty rates above the national average, 12 were located in the South.

**Figure 3. Percentage of children under age 18 living in poverty, by race/ethnicity and family type: 2011**



NOTE: The measure of child poverty includes families in which all children are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2011. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, table 27.

In 2011, approximately 15.9 million, or 22 percent, of all children under the age of 18 were in families living in poverty; this population includes the 10.9 million 5- to 17-year-olds living in poverty. The percentage of children living in poverty varied across racial/ethnic groups. In 2011, the percentage was highest for Black children (39 percent), followed by American Indian/Alaska Native children (36 percent) and Hispanic children (34 percent), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander children (30 percent),

and children of two or more races (22 percent). The poverty rate was lowest for White children (13 percent) and Asian children (12 percent). Among children under age 18 living in poverty in 2011, those living in a mother-only household had the highest rate of poverty (45 percent), followed by those living in a father-only household (27 percent). Children living in a married-couple household had the lowest rate of poverty, at 11 percent.

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2012*, tables 25, 27

**Glossary:** Poverty, Racial/ethnic group