

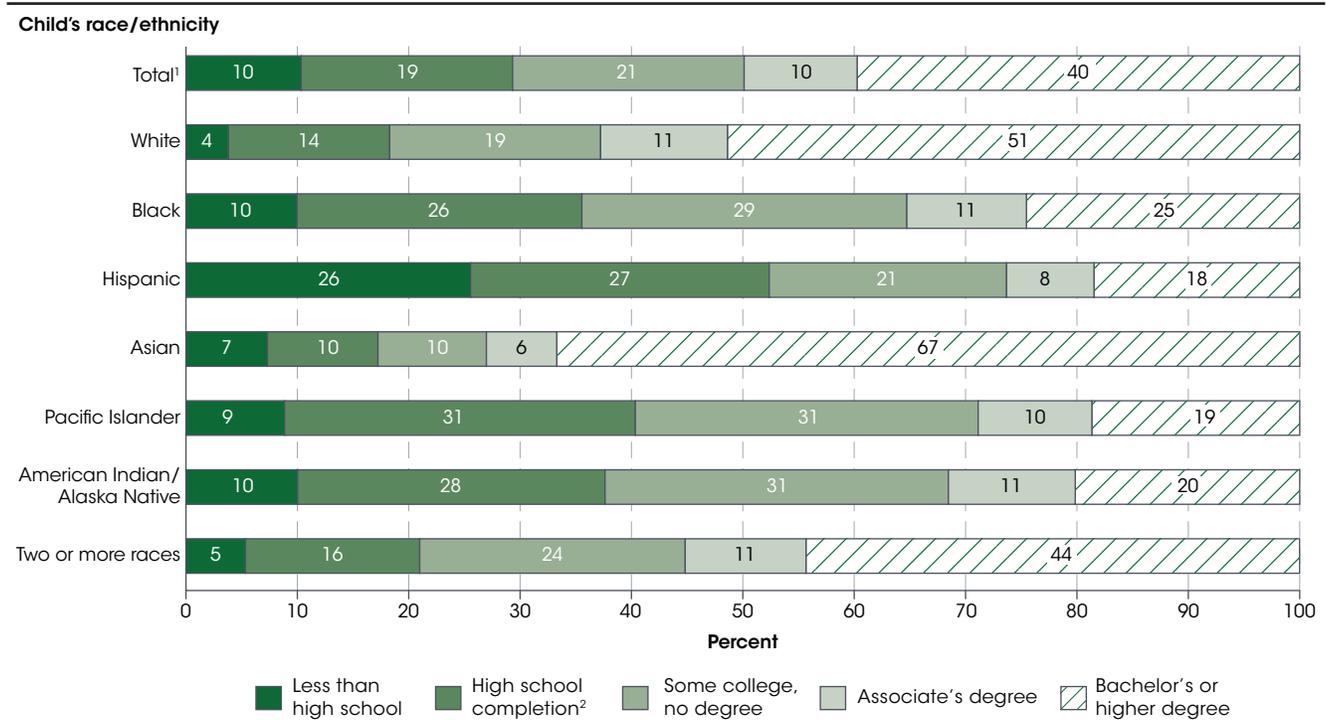
Characteristics of Children’s Families

In 2016, some 10 percent of children under the age of 18 lived in households without a parent who had completed high school, 27 percent lived in mother-only households, 8 percent lived in father-only households, and 19 percent lived in poverty.

Characteristics of children’s families are associated with children’s educational experiences and their academic achievement. Prior research found that the risk factors of living in a household without a parent who has completed high school, living in a single-parent household, and living in poverty are associated with poor educational outcomes, including low achievement scores, having to repeat a grade, and dropping out of high school.^{1,2} In 2016, some 10 percent of children under the age of 18 lived in households without a parent who had completed

high school,³ 27 percent lived in mother-only households, 8 percent lived in father-only households, and 19 percent were in families living in poverty. This indicator examines the prevalence of these risk factors among racial/ethnic groups and, for poverty status, among states. For more information on associations of risk factors with early learning, please see *The Condition of Education 2017* Spotlight indicator [Risk Factors and Academic Outcomes in Kindergarten Through Third Grade](#).

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of children under age 18, by child’s race/ethnicity and parents’ highest level of educational attainment: 2016



¹ Total includes races/ethnicities not reported separately.

² Includes parents who completed high school through equivalency programs, such as a GED program.

NOTE: Includes only children under age 18 who resided with at least one of their parents (including an adoptive or stepparent). Parents’ highest level of educational attainment is the highest level of education attained by any parent residing in the same household as the child. Parents include adoptive and stepparents but exclude parents not residing in the same household as their child. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 104.70.

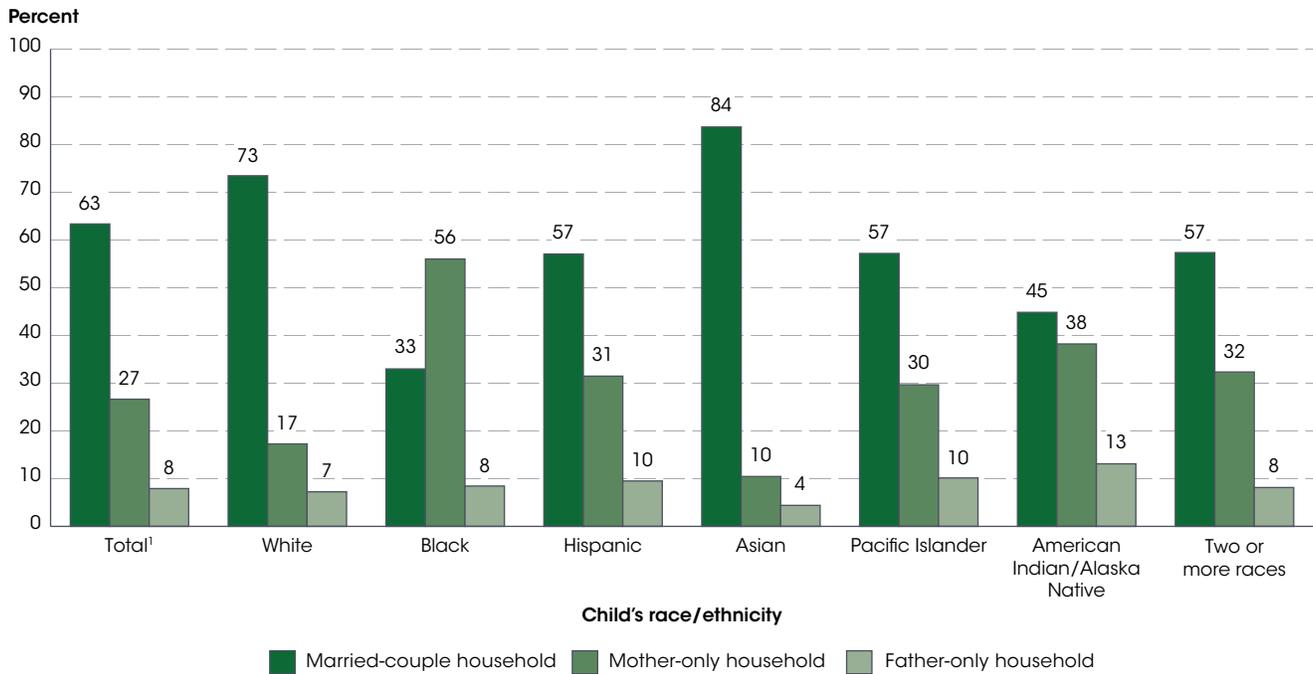
In 2016, some 40 percent of children under age 18 lived in households where at least one parent's highest level of educational attainment was a bachelor's or higher degree: 22 percent lived in households where the highest level of education attained by either parent was a bachelor's degree, 13 percent lived in households where the highest level of education attained by either parent was a master's degree, and 5 percent had at least one parent whose highest level of educational attainment was a doctor's degree.⁴ In addition, 10 percent of children lived in households without a parent who had completed high school, 19 percent lived in households where the highest level of education attained by either parent was high school completion,⁵ 21 percent lived in households where the highest level of education attained by either parent was attending some college but not receiving a degree, and 10 percent lived in households where the highest level of education attained by either parent was an associate's degree. The percentages of children with at least one parent who completed an associate's degree or a bachelor's or higher degree were greater in 2016 than in 2010. In contrast, the percentages of children in households without a parent who had completed high school, where the highest level of education attained by either parent

was high school completion, and where the highest level of education attained by either parent was attending some college but not receiving a degree were lower in 2016 than in 2010.

The percentage distribution of children under age 18 by the highest level of education either parent in their household achieved varied across racial/ethnic groups in 2016. For example, the percentage of children with at least one parent who completed a bachelor's or higher degree was highest for Asian children (67 percent), followed by children who were White (51 percent), of Two or more races (44 percent), and Black (25 percent), and lowest for those who were American Indian/Alaska Native (20 percent), Pacific Islander (19 percent), and Hispanic (18 percent).

In contrast, in 2016 the percentage of children who lived in households without a parent who had completed high school was higher for Hispanic children (26 percent), than for those who were Black or American Indian/Alaska Native (10 percent each), Pacific Islander (9 percent), Asian (7 percent), of Two or more races (5 percent), or White (4 percent).

Figure 2. Percentage of children under age 18, by child’s race/ethnicity and family structure: 2016



¹Total includes races/ethnicities not reported separately.

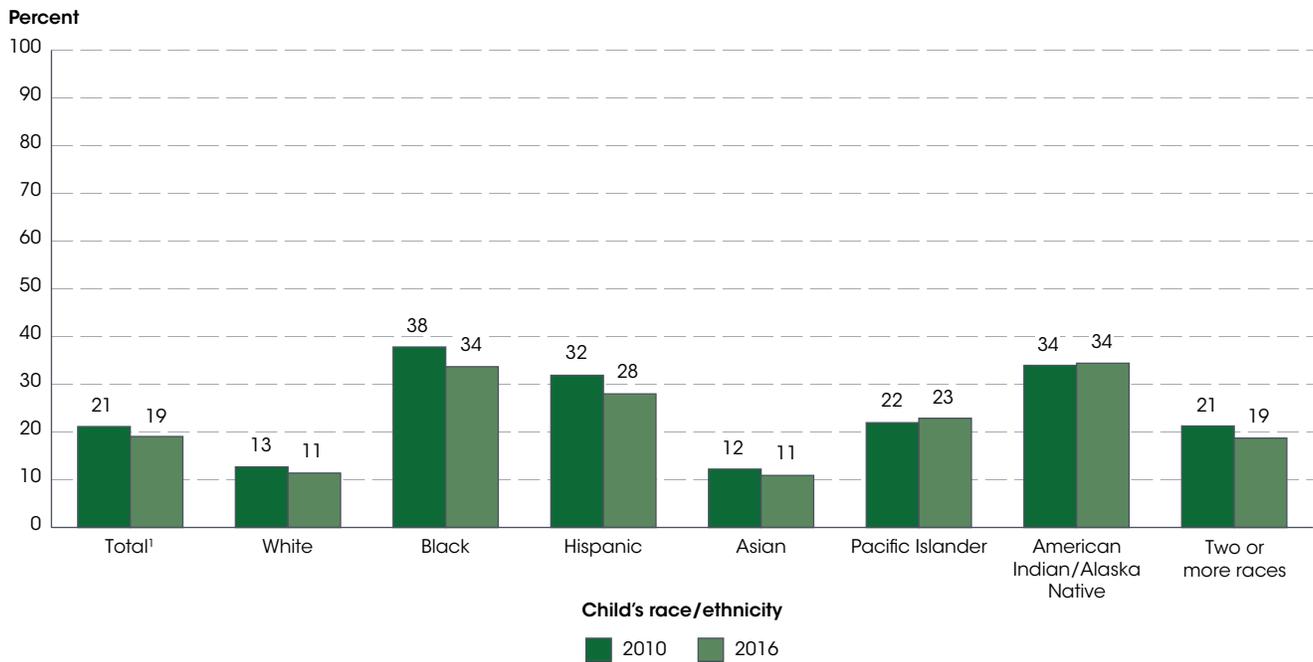
NOTE: Data do not include foster children, children in unrelated subfamilies, children living in group quarters, and children who were reported as the householder or spouse of the householder. A "mother-only household" has a female householder, with no spouse present (i.e., the householder is unmarried or their spouse is not in the household), while a "father-only household" has a male householder, with no spouse present. Includes all children who live either with their parent(s) or with a householder to whom they are related by birth, marriage, or adoption (except a child who is the spouse of the householder). Children are classified by their parents' marital status or, if no parents are present in the household, by the marital status of the householder who is related to the children. The householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded estimates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 102.20.

In 2016, some 63 percent of children under age 18 lived in married-couple households, 27 percent lived in mother-only households, and 8 percent lived in father-only households.⁶ This pattern of a higher percentage of children living in married-couple households than in mother- and father-only households was seen for children

across all racial/ethnic groups, except for Black children. Some 56 percent of Black children lived in mother-only households, compared with 33 percent who lived in married-couple households and 8 percent who lived in father-only households.

Figure 3. Percentage of children under age 18 in families living in poverty, by child’s race/ethnicity: 2010 and 2016



¹ Total includes races/ethnicities not reported separately.

NOTE: The measure of child poverty includes all children who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption (except a child who is the spouse of the householder). The householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. For additional information about poverty status, see <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded estimates.

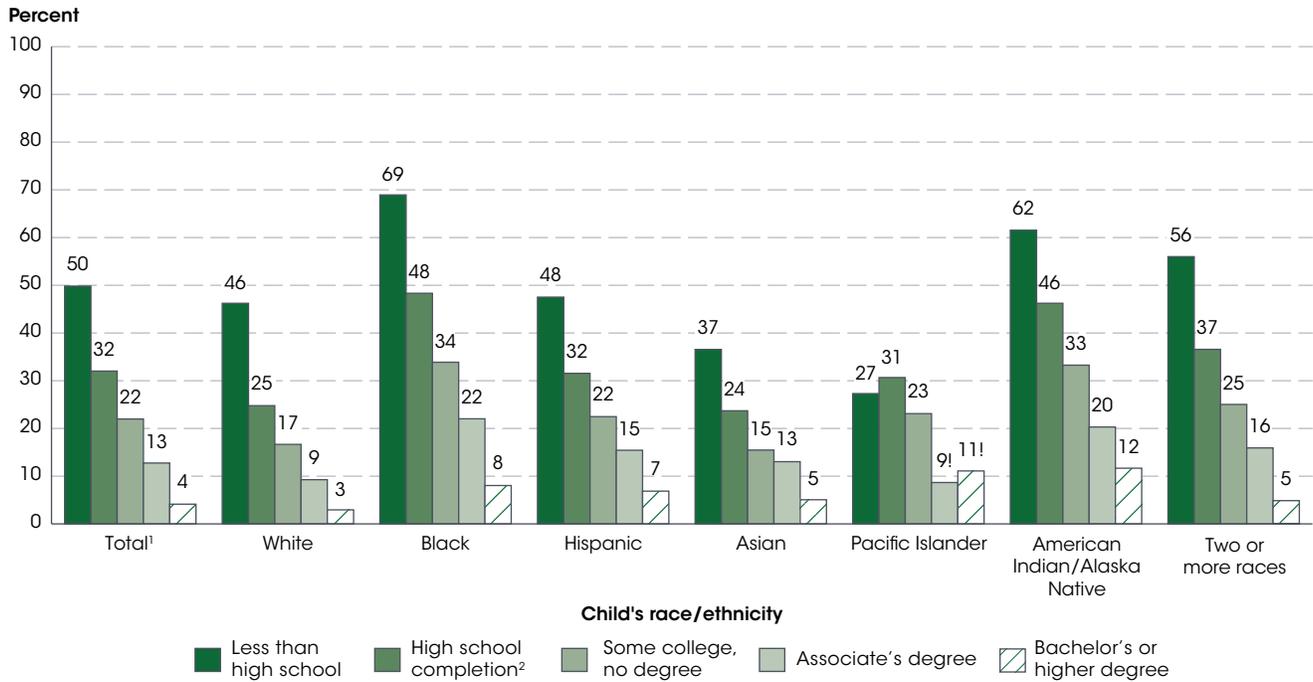
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2010 and 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 102.60.

In 2016, approximately 13.7 million children under age 18 were in families living in poverty.⁷ The poverty rate for children in 2016 (19 percent) was lower than in 2010 (21 percent). This pattern was observed for children who were White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and of Two or more races. For example, 28 percent of Hispanic children lived in poverty in 2016, compared with 32 percent in 2010. The 2016 poverty rates for American Indian/Alaska Native and Pacific Islander children were not measurably different than the rates in 2010.

The poverty rate for children under age 18 varied across racial/ethnic groups. In 2016, the poverty rate was highest among Black and American Indian/Alaska

Native children (34 percent each), followed by Hispanic (28 percent) and Pacific Islander children (23 percent). Additionally, the rate for children of Two or more races (19 percent) was higher than the rates for White and Asian children (11 percent each). Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic children had higher poverty rates than the national average (19 percent), and White and Asian children had lower rates than the national average. The poverty rates for Pacific Islander children and children of Two or more races were not measurably different from the national average. For additional information about poverty rates and racial/ethnic subgroups, please refer to the *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups* report.

Figure 4. Percentage of children under age 18 in families living in poverty, by child’s race/ethnicity and parents’ highest level of educational attainment: 2016



¹ Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

² Total includes races/ethnicities not reported separately.

³ Includes parents who completed high school through equivalency programs, such as a GED program.

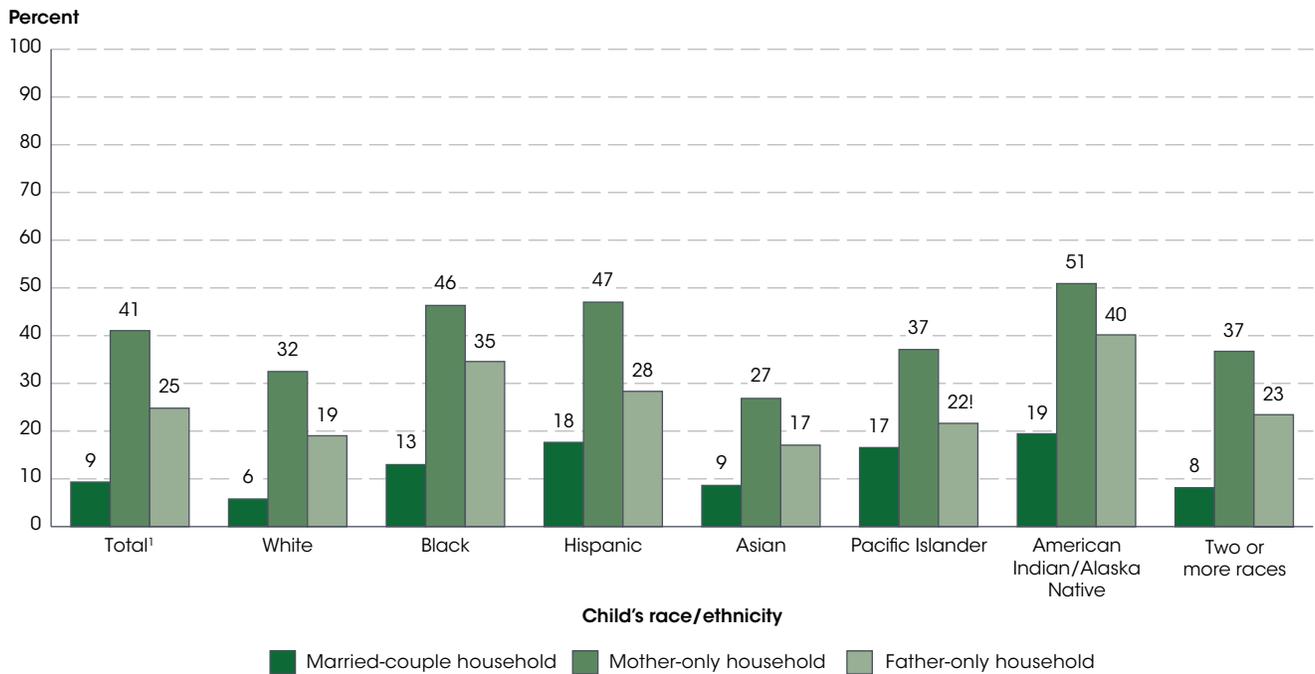
NOTE: Parents’ highest level of educational attainment is the highest level of education attained by any parent residing in the same household as the child. Parents include adoptive and stepparents but exclude parents not residing in the same household as their child. The measure of child poverty includes all children who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption (except a child who is the spouse of the householder). The householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. For additional information about poverty status, see <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded estimates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 102.62.

In 2016, the poverty rate for children under age 18 was highest for those in households without a parent who had completed high school and lowest for those in households where at least one parent attained a bachelor’s or higher degree, both overall (50 vs. 4 percent) and within most racial/ethnic groups. For example, the poverty rate

among American Indian/Alaska Native children was highest for those in households without a parent who had completed high school (62 percent) and lowest for those in households where at least one parent attained a bachelor’s or higher degree (12 percent).

Figure 5. Percentage of children under age 18 in families living in poverty, by child’s race/ethnicity and family structure: 2016



¹ Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

¹ Total includes races/ethnicities not reported separately.

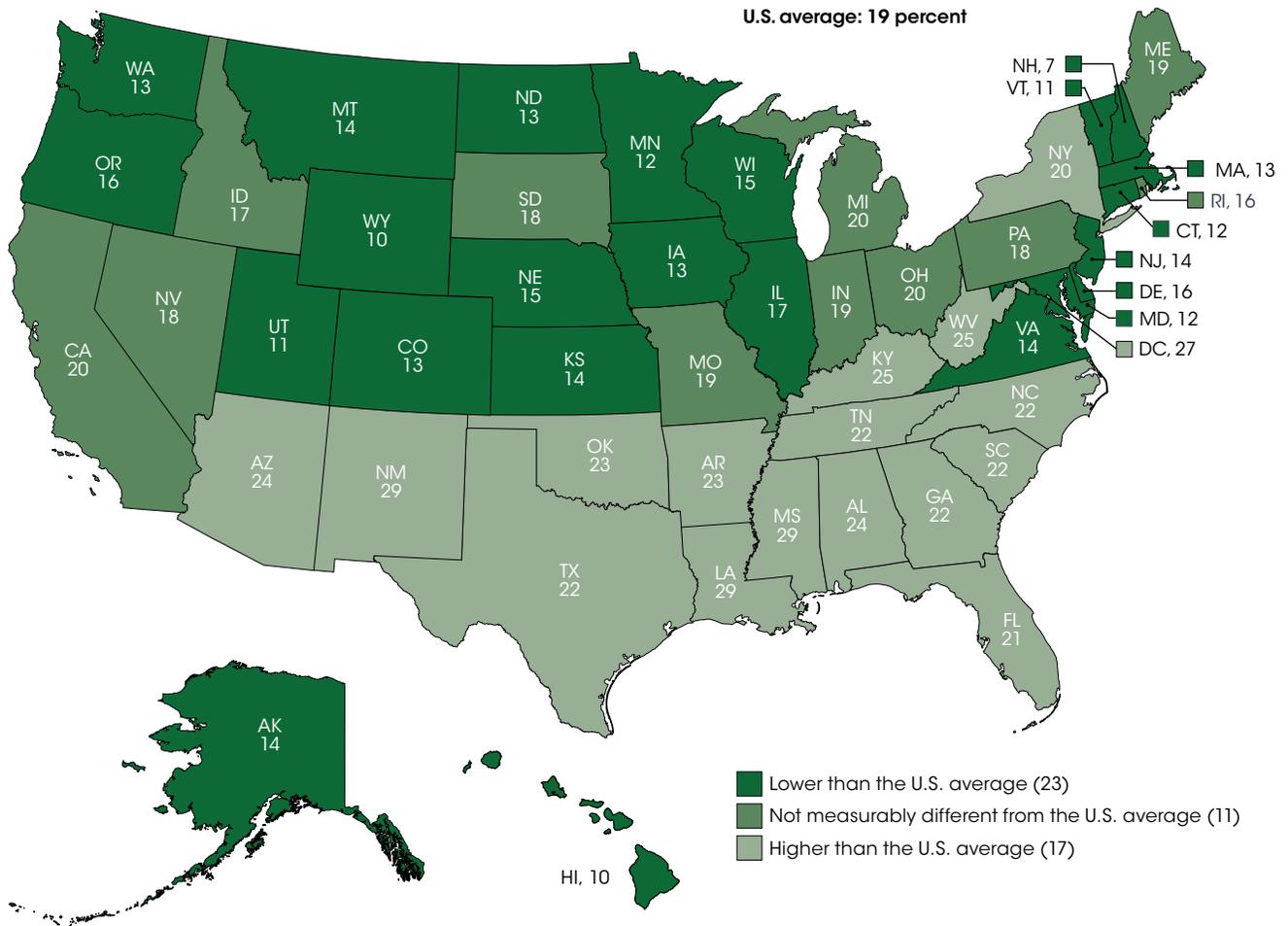
NOTE: A “mother-only household” has a female householder, with no spouse present (i.e., the householder is unmarried or their spouse is not in the household), while a “father-only household” has a male householder, with no spouse present. Includes all children who live either with their parent(s) or with a householder to whom they are related by birth, marriage, or adoption (except a child who is the spouse of the householder). Children are classified by their parents’ marital status or, if no parents are present in the household, by the marital status of the householder who is related to the children. The householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. For additional information about poverty status, see <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded estimates.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 102.60.

Among children under age 18, those living in mother-only households had the highest poverty rate (41 percent) and those living in father-only households had the next-highest rate (25 percent) in 2016. Children living in married-couple households had the lowest poverty rate, at 9 percent. This pattern of children living in

married-couple households having the lowest poverty rate was generally observed across racial/ethnic groups. For example, among Black children the poverty rates were 46 percent for those living in mother-only households, 35 percent for those living in father-only households, and 13 percent for those living in married-couple households.

Figure 6. Percentage of children under age 18 in families living in poverty, by state: 2016



NOTE: The measure of child poverty includes all children who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption (except a child who is the spouse of the householder). The householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. For additional information about poverty status, see <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2016. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, table 102.40.

While the national average poverty rate for children under age 18 was 19 percent in 2016, the poverty rates among states ranged from 7 percent in New Hampshire to 29 percent in Louisiana, Mississippi, and New Mexico. Twenty-three states had poverty rates for children that were lower than the national average, 16 states and the District of Columbia had rates that were higher than the national average, and 11 states had rates that were not

measurably different from the national average. Of the 17 jurisdictions (16 states and the District of Columbia) that had poverty rates higher than the national average, the majority (14) were located in the South. In 28 states, the poverty rates were lower in 2016 than in 2010. In the remaining 22 states and the District of Columbia, there was no measurable difference between the poverty rates in 2010 and 2016.

Endnotes:

¹ Pungello, E., Kainz, K., Burchinal, M., Wasik, B., Sparling, J.J., Ramey, C.T., and Campbell, F.A. (2010, January). Early Educational Intervention, Early Cumulative Risk, and the Early Home Environment as Predictors of Young Adult Outcomes Within a High-Risk Sample. *Child Development*, 81(1): 410–426. Retrieved March 25, 2018, from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2009.01403.x/full>.

² Ross, T., Kena, G., Rathbun, A., KewalRamani, A., Zhang, J., Kristapovich, P., and Manning, E. (2012). *Higher Education: Gaps in Access and Persistence Study* (NCES 2012-046). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved March 25, 2018, from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2012046>.

³ In this indicator, “parents’ highest level of educational attainment” is the highest level of education attained by either parent residing in the same household as the child.

⁴ Includes parents who had completed professional degrees.

⁵ Includes parents who completed high school through equivalency programs, such as a GED program.

⁶ A “mother-only household” has a female householder, with no spouse present (i.e., the householder is unmarried or their spouse is not in the household) while a “father-only household” has a

male householder, with no spouse present. Includes all children who live either with their parent(s) or with a householder to whom they are related by birth, marriage, or adoption (except a child who is the spouse of the householder). Children are classified by their parents’ marital status or, if no parents are present in the household, by the marital status of the householder who is related to the children. The householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. Foster children, children in unrelated subfamilies, children living in group quarters, and children who were reported as the householder or spouse of the householder are not included in this analysis.

⁷ 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. A household includes all families in which children are related to the householder by birth or adoption, or through marriage. The householder is the person (or one of the people) who owns or rents (maintains) the housing unit. In 2016, the poverty threshold for a family of four with two related children under 18 years old was \$24,339. For a more detailed breakdown of the 2016 poverty rate, refer to [this table](#).

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2017*, tables 102.20, 102.40, 102.60, 102.62, and 104.70

Related indicators and resources: [Children Living in Poverty](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Children's Living Arrangements](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]; [Concentration of Public School Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch](#); [Disparities in Educational Outcomes Among Male Youth](#) [*The Condition of Education 2015 Spotlight*]; [Risk Factors and Academic Outcomes in Kindergarten Through Third Grade](#) [*The Condition of Education 2017 Spotlight*]; [Snapshot: Children Living in Poverty for Racial/Ethnic Subgroups](#) [*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*]

Glossary: Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, College, Doctor's degree, Educational attainment, High school completer, Household, Master's degree, Poverty (official measure), Racial/ethnic group