

# Children's Defense Fund Child Poverty in America 2013: National Analysis

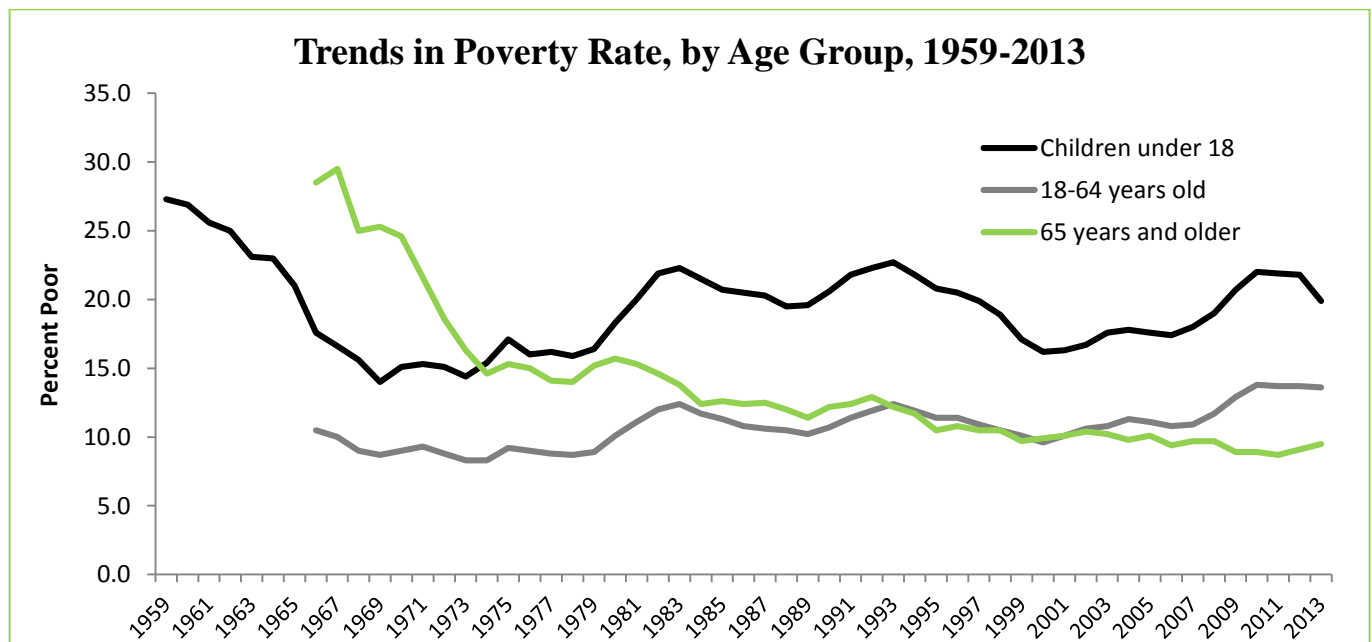


September 17, 2014

Poverty data released by the U.S. Census Bureau on September 16, 2014 reveal that child poverty dropped significantly for the first time since 2000, from 21.8 percent in 2012 to 19.9 percent in 2013. While child poverty decreased for Hispanic, White and Asian children, Black children saw no decrease and continue to have the highest child poverty rate. Despite some decreases child poverty among all children remains at shamefully high levels. Nearly one in five children – 14.7 million – were poor in 2013, and children remain the poorest age group in the country. Although 1.5 million fewer children were poor in 2013, there were still 1.3 million more poor children than in 2007 before the recession began.

## Child Poverty

Nearly 20 percent of children were poor in 2013, compared to 13.6 percent of people ages 18-64 and 9.5 percent of people ages 65 and older.



- There were **14,659,000** children living in poverty in 2013, 1.3 million more than in 2007.
- The percent of children living in poverty was **19.9 percent** in 2013, a 9 percent decrease from 21.8 percent in 2012. The child poverty rate has increased by 22.8 percent since 2000 and remained 10.6 percent higher than in 2007.
- The decrease in child poverty since 2012 was due largely to increases in employment and earnings among families with children:
  - The number of children in families with no working adults decreased 9 percent, from 5.7 million to 5.2 million.
  - Poverty among children in families with at least one worker dropped 8 percent, from 15.8 to 14.6 percent, likely due to higher earnings.

- Poverty among children in families with at least one *full-time year-round* worker decreased 11 percent, from 8.5 to 7.7 percent.
- Poverty is defined as an **annual income below \$23,834** for an average family of four, meaning less than \$1,986 a month, \$458 a week, or \$65 a day.

## Extreme Child Poverty

In 2013, nearly 6.5 million children – nearly one in 11 – lived in extreme poverty, defined as an annual income of less than half the poverty level, or **\$11,917** for a family of four, which amounts to less than \$993 a month, \$229 a week, or \$33 a day.

- The number of children living in extreme poverty: **6,484,000**
- The percent of children living in extreme poverty: **8.8 percent**, a 10 percent decrease from 9.7 percent in 2012.

## Young Children

The youngest children have the highest poverty rates. In 2013, more than one in five infants, toddlers and preschoolers were poor, at the time of greatest brain development.

- The number of children under 5 living in poverty: **4,435,000**
  - Over one-fifth of all children under 5 were poor (**22.5 percent**), a 10 percent decrease from 25.1 percent in 2012.
- The number of children under 5 living in extreme poverty: **2,167,000**, or nearly half of all poor children (48.9 percent).
  - One in nine children under 5 were living in extreme poverty (**11 percent**)

## Family Characteristics<sup>1</sup>

Approximately 9.4 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: **58.7 percent**; in single-father families: **8.0 percent**; and in married-couple families: **33.2 percent**
- Poverty among the 23.1 million children in single-parent families: **40.8 percent**, a 4 percent decrease from 42.5 percent in 2012.
- Poverty among the 49.4 million children in married-couple families: **9.5 percent**, a 14 percent decrease from 11.1 percent in 2012.

## Work Status of Family Members<sup>1</sup>

- More than two-thirds of poor children (**69.7 percent**) had at least one family member who worked, and nearly one-third (**30 percent**) had at least one family member who worked full-time year-round.

## Children of Color

Black and Hispanic children continue to suffer disproportionately from poverty, with the youngest children most at risk of being poor. Black children were the only children not to experience a decrease in child poverty from 2012 to 2013. They remain the group with the highest poverty rate.

- Nearly two in five Black children and more than three in 10 Hispanic children were poor in 2013, compared to less than one in 10 White children.
- Nearly one in five Black children and one in eight Hispanic children were living in extreme poverty, compared to one in 22 White children.
- More than two out of five Black children under age 5 were poor; more than one in five were extremely poor.

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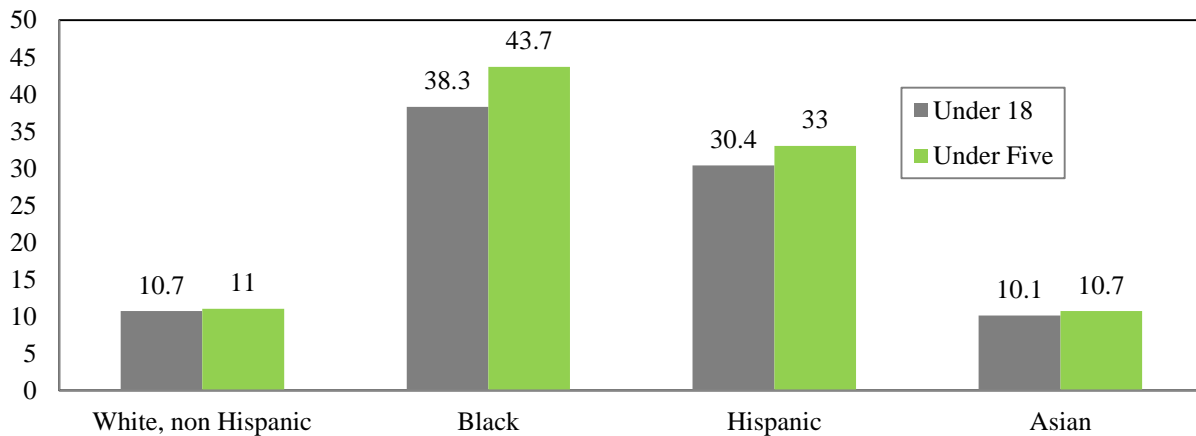
<sup>1</sup> Percentages of all poor children living in single-mother families, married couple families, and single-father families are calculated using the number of related children under 18 (14.1 million) rather than the number of all poor children (14.7 million).

- While Black children had the highest poverty rate, the largest group of poor children was Hispanic children (5,415,000) followed by Black children (4,244,000) and White children (4,094,000).

**Child Poverty, by Age and Race, 2013**

	White, non-Hispanic		Black		Hispanic		Asian	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 18	4,094,000	10.7	4,244,000	38.3	5,415,000	30.4	367,000	10.1
Under Five	1,070,000	11.0	1,305,000	43.7	1,680,000	33.0	110,000	10.7

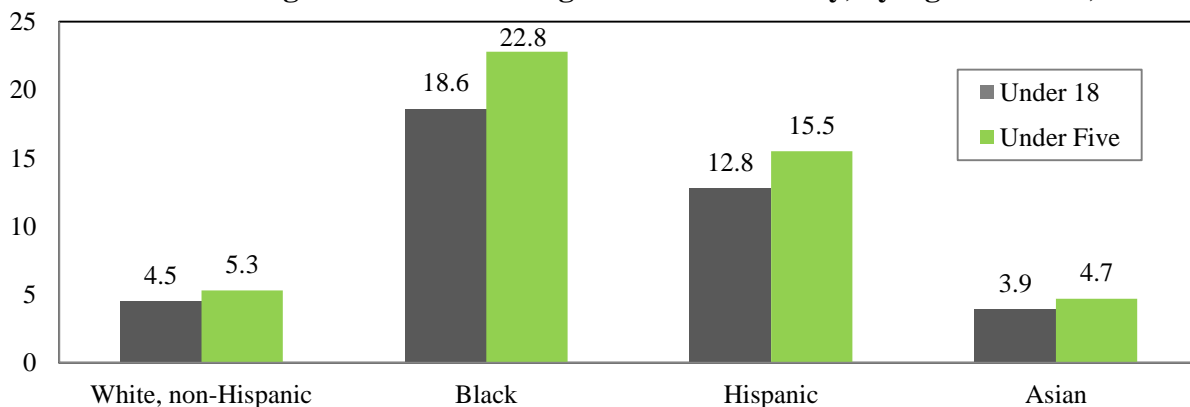
**Percent of Children Living in Poverty, by Age and Race, 2013**



**Children Living in Extreme Poverty, by Age and Race, 2013**

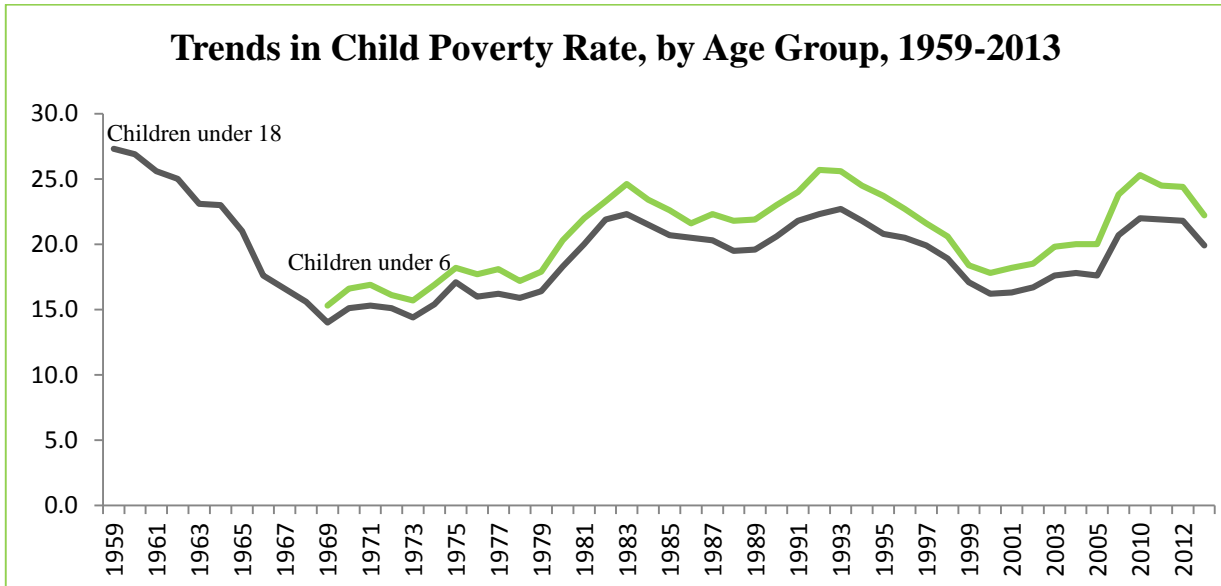
	White, non-Hispanic		Black		Hispanic		Asian	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 18	1,735,000	4.5	2,064,000	18.6	2,287,000	12.8	142,000	3.9
Under Five	518,000	5.3	681,000	22.8	788,000	15.5	49,000	4.7

**Percentage of Children Living in Extreme Poverty, by Age and Race, 2013**

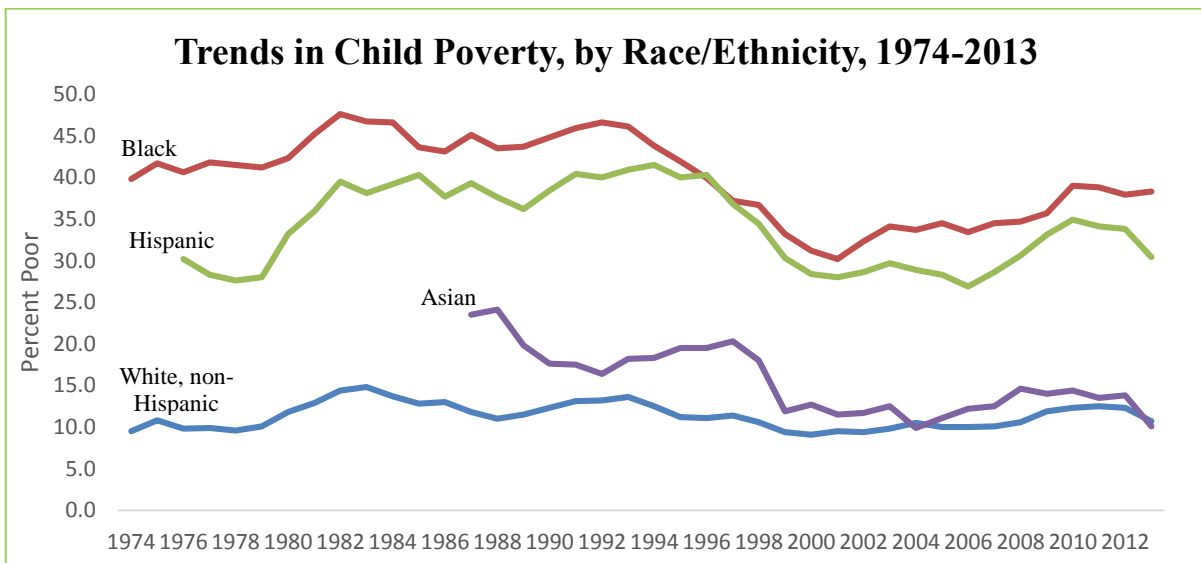


## Trends in Child Poverty

Child poverty was at its lowest recorded level 44 years ago in 1969 (14.0 percent). After dropping 27 percent between 1992 and 2000, the child poverty rate increased by 22.8 percent between 2000 and 2013. Youngest children have consistently been more likely to be poor. The child poverty rate for children under 6 is generally several percentage points higher than the poverty rate for all children under 18, with the gap increasing during recessions.<sup>2</sup>



Black and Hispanic children have experienced significantly higher rates of poverty since data were first collected. The Black child poverty rate has consistently been three to four times greater than the White child poverty rate, and the Hispanic child poverty rate two to three times greater. Black and Hispanic children experienced the largest percentage point increase in child poverty during the Great Recession.



<sup>2</sup> Historical data for poverty among young children is only available for children under 6, not children under 5.

## 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 5), number and percent:** U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2014 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table POV01 (Below 100 percent of poverty, all races).

**Children in Extreme Poverty (under age 18 and under age 5), number and percent:** U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2014 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 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 2013 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:** U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2014 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table POV03 (Below 100 percent of poverty, all races). Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

### WORK STATUS:

**Poor Children by Family Work Status:** U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2014 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table POV13 (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 5), number and percent:** U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2014 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 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 5), number and percent:** U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, 2014 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 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, 2014 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.