Children Left Behind: How US Metropolitan Areas are Failing America’s Children

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Child poverty for blacks and Hispanics in metros much higher than U.S. average

- U.S. Average: 16%
- White: 7%
- Asian: 14%
- Hispanic: 27%
- Black: 31%
Influences on Child Health and Development

Neighborhood

Family • School • Child

Adult Health, education, productivity, earnings
Low-Birthweight Rates: Distributions by Race/Ethnicity
100 Largest Metro Areas: 2001-2002

Note: Excludes metro areas with less than 100 births to mothers in the specified subgroup over the 2001-2002 time period. Excludes plural births and births which occurred abroad, in Puerto Rico, or in U.S. Territories.
Source: DiversityData analysis of National Center for Health Statistics Vital Statistics Natality Birth Data
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Percent of Births Less than 2.5 kg.

White
Black
Hispanic

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Homeownership Rates for Families with Children
Distributions by Race/Ethnicity
100 Largest Metro Areas: 2000

Homeownership Rate (Percent)

Source: DiversityData analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 4 data.
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Black and Hispanic children are highly residentially segregated

Average Metropolitan Dissimilarity from Whites,
Largest 100 MSAs, 2000

Weighted by 2000 MSA minority child population (e.g. NH blacks);
Includes MSAs with over 5,000 minority population
Children's Exposure to Neighborhood Poverty Distributions by Race/Ethnicity
100 Largest Metro Areas: 1999

Note: Excludes metro areas with less than 5,000 children of specified racial/ethnic group. Neighborhoods defined as census tracts.
Source: DiversityData analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 3 data.
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Pyramid Graph: Theoretical Equal Neighborhood Environment for 2 Groups: A Mirror Image

Neighborhood Poverty Rate

Over 40%
30.1-40%
20.1-30%
10.1-20%
0-10%

Black
White

Share of Children in Neighborhoods with Specified Poverty Rates
Metro Chicago
Poverty Composition of Neighborhoods of Black v. White Children

Share of Children in Neighborhoods with Specified Poverty Rates

Neighborhood Poverty Rate

0-10% 10.1-20% 20.1-30% 30.1-40% Over 40%

Black White
Metro Chicago
Poverty Composition of Neighborhoods of Poor Black v. Poor White Children

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood Poverty Rate</th>
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<tbody>
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Share of Children in Neighborhoods with Specified Poverty Rates
Black and Hispanic children attend highly segregated schools

Average Metropolitan School Dissimilarity from Whites, Largest 100 MSAs, 2000

Weighted by 2000 MSA minority school enrollment (e.g. NH blacks); Includes MSAs with over 5,000 minority population in CCD data
School Poverty Rates for Public Primary School Students
Distributions by Race/Ethnicity
100 Largest Metro Areas: 2003-2004

Poverty Rate in School Typical Student Attends (Percent)

Note: Poverty defined as being eligible for free or reduced lunch.
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Policy Implications
Children:  
Early childhood development

- Comprehensive early childhood development programs improve educational and social outcomes in childhood and adulthood.

- Include high-quality, active learning preschool (and school) program, and support for at-risk families (parent training and home visits).
Families:  
Child poverty alleviation

• Federal government wields greatest levers, including increased eligibility and benefits under social and health programs.

• U.S. has second highest child poverty rate among developed countries, and makes less use of government transfers to mitigate child poverty than most other countries (<3% of GDP).
Neighborhoods: Housing choice and mobility

• Improve access of children in black and Hispanic families to affordable housing in suburban communities.

• Policies to reduce residential segregation include expanding neighborhood choice.
Schools: Voluntary integration programs

- Sever connection between living in segregated, high poverty neighborhoods and attending segregated, high poverty schools by adopting voluntary school integration plans.
- Voluntary integration tools however, are currently in jeopardy as U.S. Supreme Court deliberates their constitutionality.
Metropolitan wide policies

- Regional equity policies to address the disparities arising from residential segregation by improving access to neighborhoods and schools with resources across the entire metropolitan area.
Conclusion

• Disadvantaged conditions disproportionately hurt black and Hispanic children, and hinder their life chances.

• Protecting children and improving opportunities for all
  – Morally compelling
  – Implications for labor productivity, economic competitiveness, health care costs, and social harmony

• Many policy solutions must be leveraged to ensure America’s children are not left behind.
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Available at diversitydata.org