



Each August, the Census Bureau releases information regarding poverty and income in the United States for the previous year. This year's release included disturbing news for American families and their children.

From 2006 to 2007, the number of America's children that live in poverty grew by nearly half a million. Indeed in 2007, the child poverty rate reached a level, 18%, not seen in this country for more than a decade. Furthermore, the number of children who live just above the poverty line (between 100% and 125% of the Federal Poverty Level) also grew by about 100,000 children from 2006 to 2007. All told, last year more than 13.3 million children in America were living in poverty with an additional 4.3 million living just above the poverty line.

For decades, children in America have suffered higher rates of poverty than any other age group. Since 1974, no age group has had a higher percentage of people living in poverty than children. Last year was no different. Of all the people living in poverty in this country in 2007, 35.7% of them were children (while children are about 25% of the total population). This is up from 35.2% in 2006. In both years, and indeed for more than 30 years, children have been overrepresented among the ranks of the very poor.

This national trend can be seen in many states across the country. 26 states saw an increase in the percentage of their children living in poverty, and an additional three states saw increases in the number of their children living in poverty though the percentage remained steady. A few states, however, bucked the national trend, and enjoyed decreases in the child poverty rate.

REGIONAL TRENDS

States in the South tend to have higher rates of child poverty than in the rest of the country. Mississippi tops the list with 32.8%, followed by Texas with 25%. Indeed, among the ten states with the highest rates of child poverty, all but one is south of the Ohio River (the exception being Missouri). Furthermore, only Florida and Virginia have the distinction of being Southern states with child poverty rates lower than the national rate. On the other hand, the states with the lowest child poverty rates are much less clustered. New Hampshire and Vermont both enjoy child poverty rates below 11%, but so do Alaska and New Jersey.

HIGHLIGHTS OF STATE-BY-STATE TRENDS

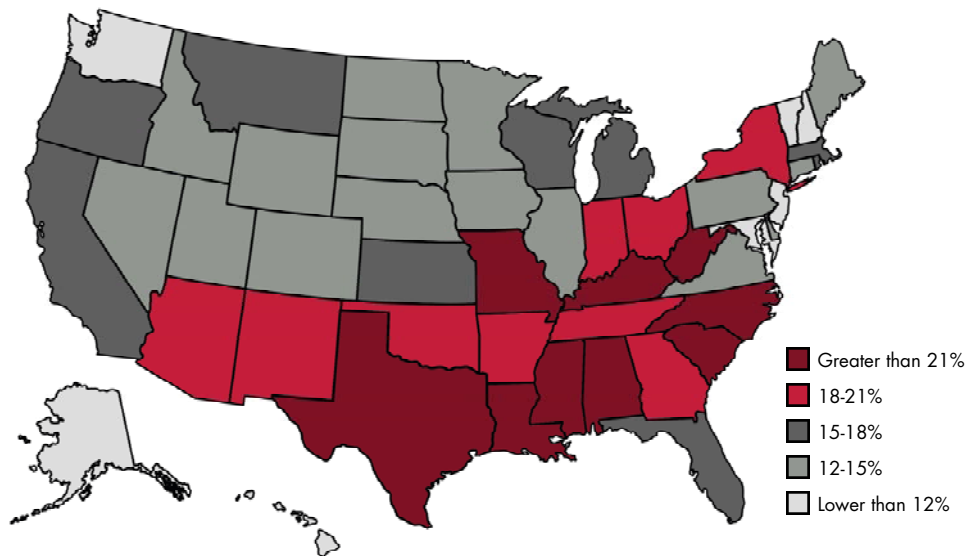
- 26 states saw increases in the percentage of children living in poverty from 2006 to 2007. An additional three states, though the child poverty rate remained the same, experienced increases in the numbers of children living in poverty
- 9 states have seen their child poverty rate rise in both of the last two years
- The biggest rise in child poverty occurred in South Carolina with its rate of children in poverty going from 15.6% to 21%. The biggest drop was in Arkansas, with its child poverty rate falling from 26.6% in 2006 to 19.1% in 2007 (nevertheless, Arkansas' child poverty rate is still higher than the national average)
- In 2007, 19 states had child poverty rates higher than the national average, including some of the largest states like New York, Texas and Ohio.
- The state with the highest child poverty rate in 2007 was Mississippi with 32.8% of its children living in poverty. Even though this rate is up by 4 percentage points from last year, Mississippi was also the state with the highest child poverty rate in 2006 (not including the District of Columbia).
- The state with the lowest children poverty rate in 2007 was New Hampshire, as it was in 2006. However, even New Hampshire's rate is up over the previous year, by about 1 percentage point.

When looking at the change in the state child poverty rates from 2006 to 2007, the pattern is somewhat more muddled. Most, but not all, states that suffered increases in child poverty rates can be found east of the Mississippi River, with almost all of the states in the Rocky Mountain West and the Pacific enjoying a decrease in child poverty rates from 2006 (the exceptions being Nevada and Washington).

LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

The numbers used in this report come from the US Census Bureau's Current Population Survey Social and Economic Supplement from 2005 to 2007. These numbers are generated from sampling, and as such, there is the potential for error. When using subsets of data (like children in specific states), the margin of error grows. Because of this unavoidable sampling error, for many of the differences between rates from one year to the next, we cannot say with a high degree of certainty, that the difference is "real." That is to say some of the differences may not reach the level of statistically significance at the generally accepted threshold.

MAP 1: CHILD POVERTY RATES, 2007



MAP 2: CHANGE IN CHILD POVERTY RATES, 2006 TO 2007

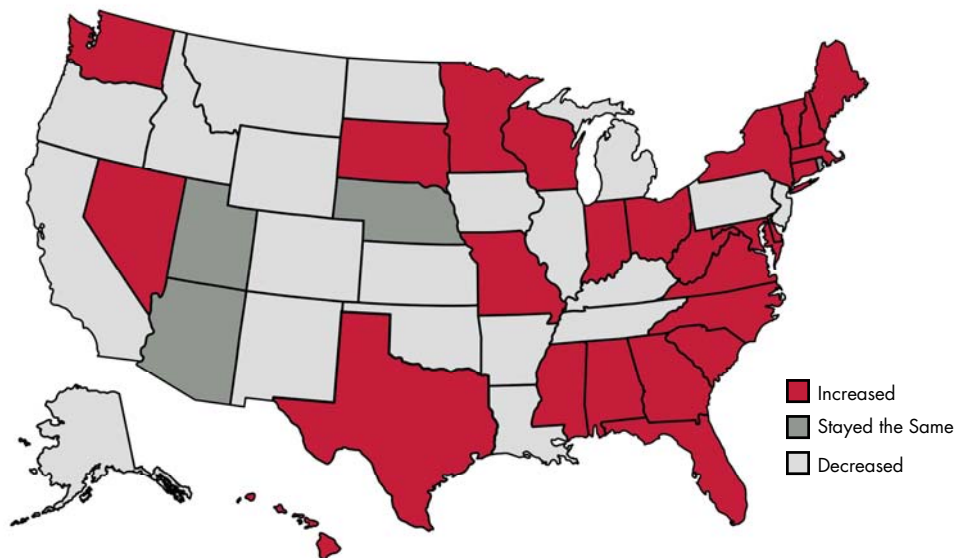


TABLE 1: CHILDREN BELOW 100% FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL

	2005	2006	2007
Alabama	24.7%	18.8%	22.5%
Alaska	12.1%	11.6%	8.5%
Arizona	21.6%	20.0%	20.0%
Arkansas	18.6%	26.6%	19.1%
California	18.5%	18.1%	17.9%
Colorado	14.7%	13.4%	12.6%
Connecticut	12.4%	10.3%	13.8%
Delaware	14.2%	12.4%	13.1%
District of Columbia	38.6%	31.8%	29.2%
Florida	15.8%	14.6%	17.9%
Georgia	21.2%	20.4%	20.6%
Hawaii	10.0%	10.5%	11.6%
Idaho	12.4%	13.2%	12.6%
Illinois	15.6%	14.9%	14.3%
Indiana	18.6%	14.3%	18.8%
Iowa	14.5%	14.4%	13.5%
Kansas	17.8%	19.7%	17.4%
Kentucky	21.2%	23.5%	21.0%
Louisiana	24.7%	23.8%	22.7%
Maine	15.8%	13.2%	14.4%
Maryland	13.3%	10.9%	11.6%
Massachusetts	11.6%	13.6%	17.1%
Michigan	16.3%	19.3%	15.8%
Minnesota	10.0%	11.1%	13.7%
Mississippi	30.7%	28.8%	32.8%
Missouri	17.7%	17.7%	22.1%
Montana	19.8%	17.2%	15.7%
Nebraska	12.3%	13.1%	13.1%
Nevada	13.4%	12.6%	14.1%
New Hampshire	5.5%	5.6%	6.5%
New Jersey	8.8%	12.5%	10.7%
New Mexico	24.7%	23.2%	18.1%
New York	20.5%	19.0%	20.4%
North Carolina	18.3%	20.5%	21.0%
North Dakota	13.3%	16.3%	12.5%
Ohio	17.4%	18.6%	19.1%
Oklahoma	20.8%	20.7%	19.0%
Oregon	17.7%	16.7%	15.3%
Pennsylvania	16.9%	17.0%	14.8%
Rhode island	18.1%	15.7%	15.7%
South Carolina	19.4%	15.6%	21.0%
South Dakota	16.0%	13.4%	14.5%
Tennessee	19.5%	20.9%	20.2%
Texas	22.0%	22.0%	25.0%
Utah	11.8%	12.6%	12.6%
Vermont	7.4%	8.9%	10.9%
Virginia	12.5%	13.2%	13.3%
Washington	14.9%	10.5%	11.6%
West Virginia	21.4%	21.2%	24.0%
Wisconsin	13.6%	15.5%	15.7%
Wyoming	13.7%	14.0%	12.7%

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