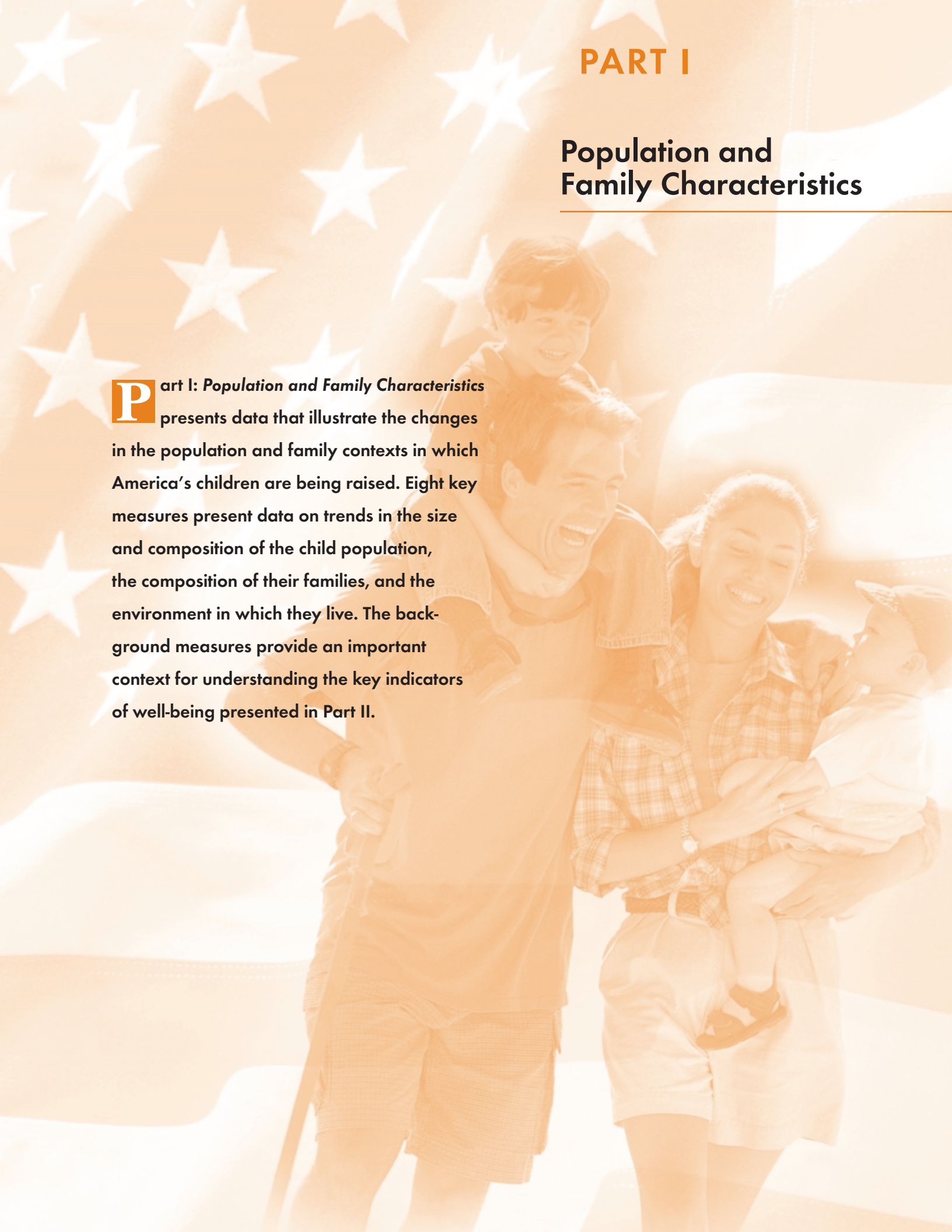
PART I

Population and Family Characteristics

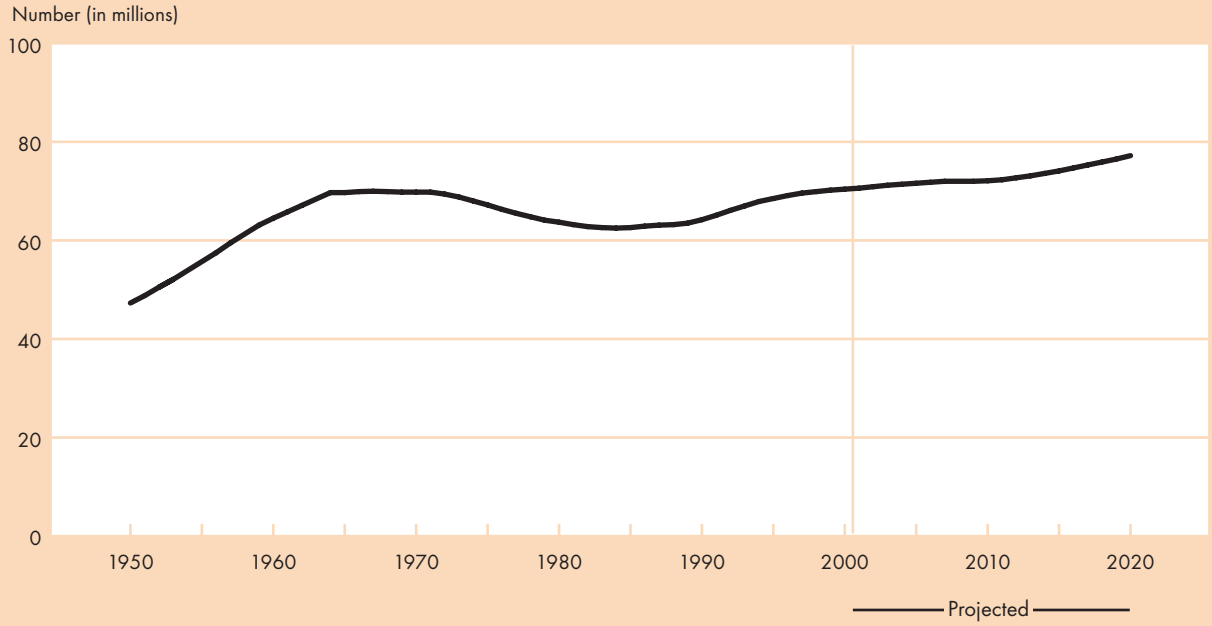


Part I: *Population and Family Characteristics* presents data that illustrate the changes in the population and family contexts in which America's children are being raised. Eight key measures present data on trends in the size and composition of the child population, the composition of their families, and the environment in which they live. The background measures provide an important context for understanding the key indicators of well-being presented in Part II.

Child Population

The number of children determines the demand for schools, health care, and other services and facilities that serve children and their families.

Figure POP1 **Number of children under age 18 in the United States, 1950-2000 and projected 2001-20**



NOTE: All population figures for the year 2000 shown here are estimates based on the 1990 Census; they do not reflect Census 2000 counts. Population figures for 2001–20 are projections.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates and Projections.

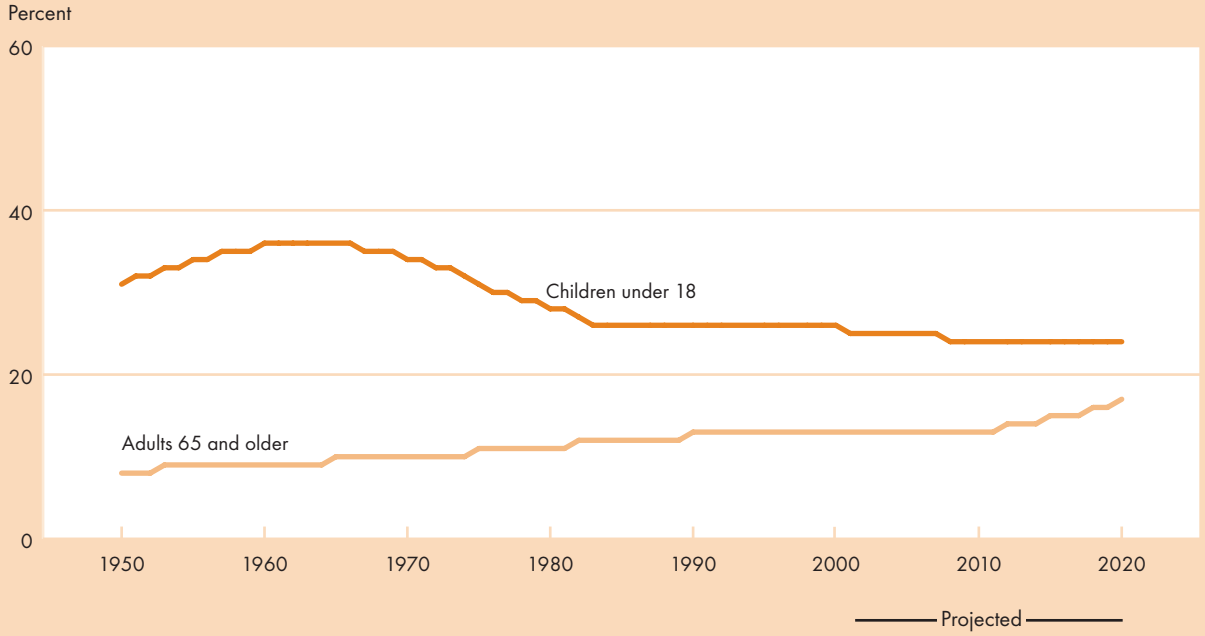
- In 2000, there were 70.4 million children in the United States, 200,000 more than in 1999. This number is projected to increase to 77.2 million in 2020.
- The number of children under 18 has grown during the last half-century, increasing about half again since 1950.
- During the "baby boom" (1946 to 1964), the number of children grew rapidly.
- During the 1970s and 1980s, the number of children declined and then grew slowly.
- Beginning in 1990, the rate of growth in the number of children increased, although not as rapidly as during the baby boom.
- In 2000, there were approximately equal numbers of children—between 23 and 24 million—in each age group 0 to 5, 6 to 11, and 12 to 17 years of age.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table POP1 on page 70.

Children as a Proportion of the Population

Though children represent a smaller percentage of the population today than in 1960, they are nevertheless a stable and substantial portion of the population.

Figure POP2 **Children under age 18 and adults ages 65 and older as a percentage of the U.S. population, 1950-2000 and projected 2001-20**



NOTE: All population figures for the year 2000 shown here are estimates based on the 1990 Census; they do not reflect Census 2000 counts. Population figures for 2001–20 are projections.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates and Projections.

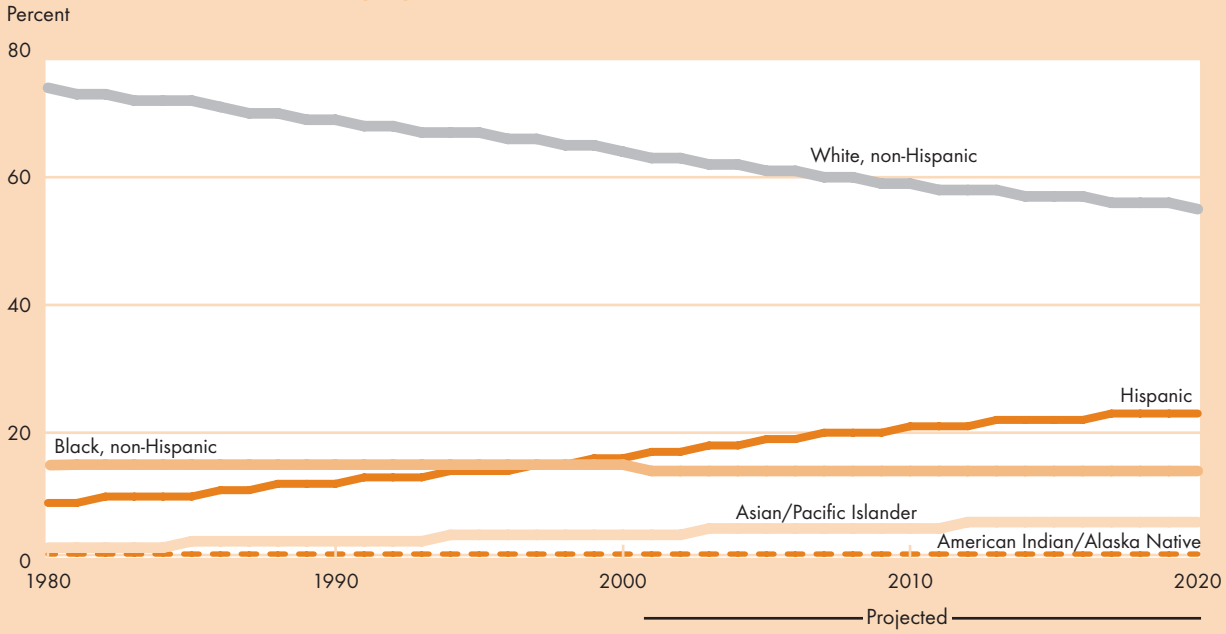
- In 2000, children made up 26 percent of the population, down from a peak of 36 percent at the end of the "baby boom."
- Since the mid-1960s, children have been decreasing as a proportion of the total U.S. population.
- Children are projected to remain a fairly stable percentage of the total population. They are projected to comprise 24 percent of the population in 2020.
- In contrast, senior citizens (adults ages 65 and older) have increased as a percentage of the total population since 1950, from 8 to 13 percent in 2000. By 2020, they are projected to make up 17 percent of the population.
- Together, children and senior citizens make up the "dependent population" (those persons who, because of their age, are less likely to be employed than others). In 1950, children made up 79 percent of the dependent population; by 2000, they made up 67 percent. This percentage is expected to continue to decrease, to 59 percent in 2020.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table POP2 on page 70.

Racial and Ethnic Composition

Racial and ethnic diversity has grown dramatically in the United States in the last three decades. This increased diversity manifested itself first among children, and later in the older population. Diversity is projected to increase even more in the decades to come.

Figure POP3 **Percentage of children under age 18 by race and Hispanic origin, 1980-2000 and projected 2001-20**



NOTE: All population figures for the year 2000 shown here are estimates based on the 1990 Census; they do not reflect Census 2000 counts. Population figures for 2001–20 are projections.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates and Projections.

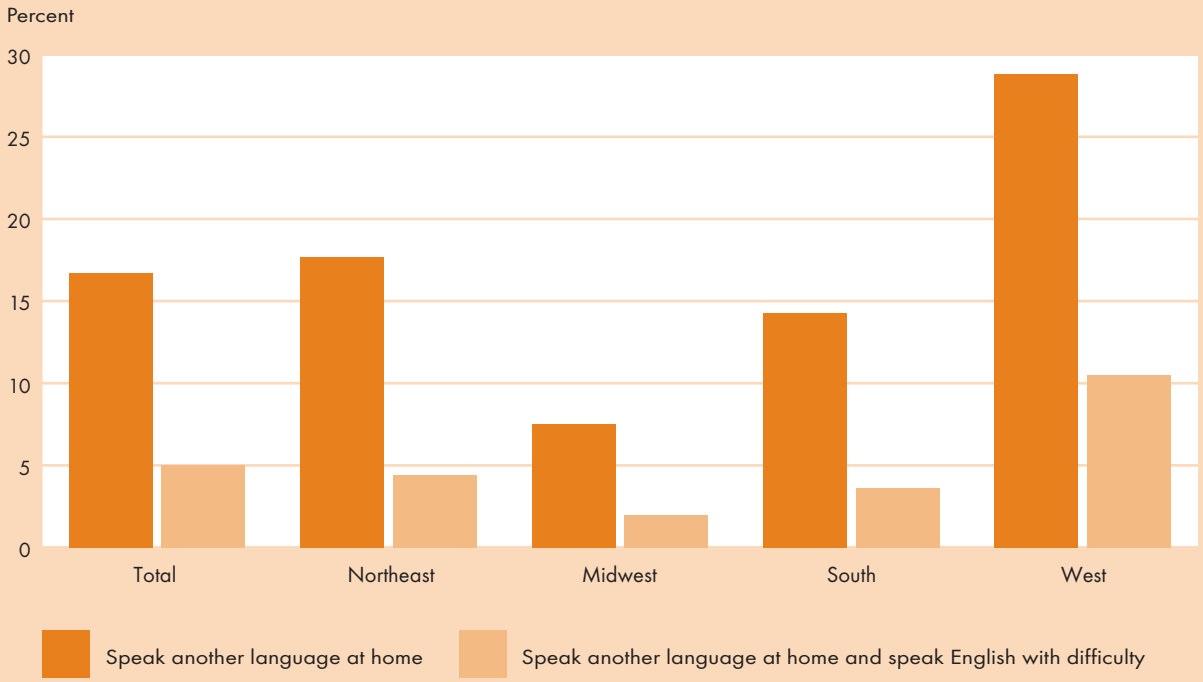
- In 2000, 64 percent of U.S. children were white, non-Hispanic; 16 percent were Hispanic; 15 percent were black, non-Hispanic; 4 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander; and 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native.
- The percentage of children who are white, non-Hispanic has decreased from 74 percent in 1980 to 64 percent in 2000.
- The percentages of black, non-Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native children have been fairly stable during the period from 1980 to 2000.
- The number of Hispanic children has increased faster than that of any other racial and ethnic group, growing from 9 percent of the child population in 1980 to 16 percent in 2000. By 2020, it is projected that more than 1 in 5 children in the United States will be of Hispanic origin.
- The percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander children doubled from 2 to 4 percent of all U.S. children between 1980 and 2000. Their percentage is projected to continue to increase to 6 percent in 2020.
- Increases in the percentages among Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander children reflect higher fertility and immigration rates than those of other groups. Much of the growth in the percentage of Hispanic children is due to the relatively high fertility of Hispanic women.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table POP3 on page 71.

Difficulty Speaking English

Children who speak languages other than English at home and who also have difficulty speaking English[1] may face greater challenges progressing in school and, once they become adults, in the labor market. Once it is determined that a student speaks another language, school officials must, by law, evaluate the child's English ability to determine whether the student needs services (such as special instruction to improve his or her English) and provide these services if needed.

Figure POP4 **Percentage of children ages 5 to 17 who speak a language other than English at home and who have difficulty speaking English by region, 1999**



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, October Current Population Survey. Tabulated by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

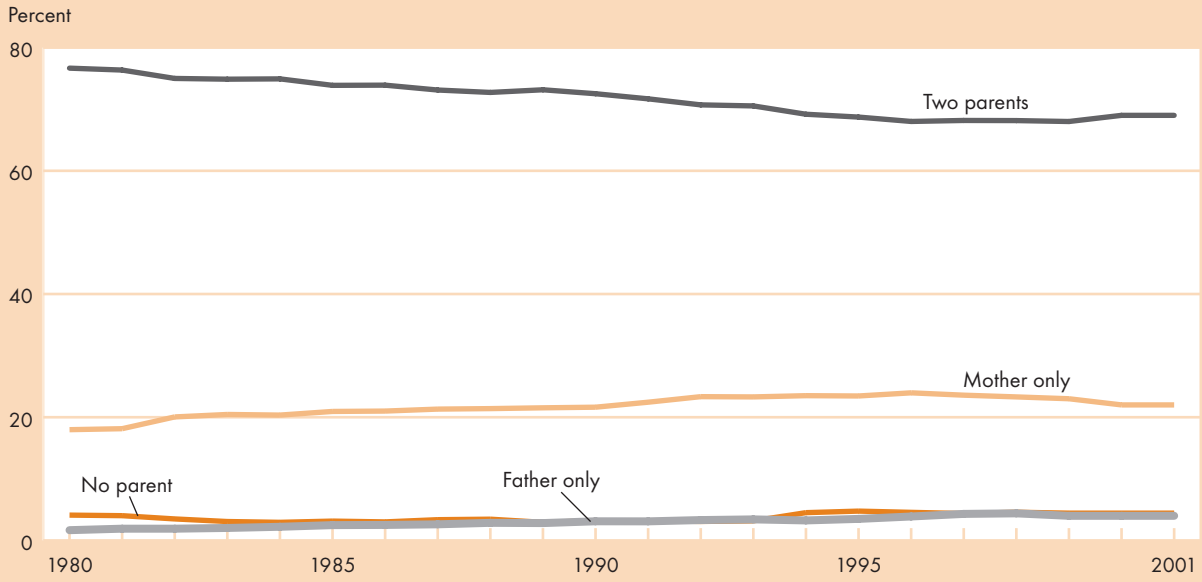
- The number of school-age children (ages 5 to 17) who spoke a language other than English at home and who had difficulty speaking English was 2.6 million in 1999, double the number (1.3 million) in 1979. This represented 5 percent of all school-age children in the United States in 1999.
- The percentage of children who have difficulty speaking English varies by region of the country, from 2 percent of children in the Midwest to 11 percent of children in the West.
- Likewise, the percentage of children who speak another language at home (with or without difficulty speaking English) varies by region of the country, from 8 percent of children in the Midwest to 29 percent of children in the West. This difference is due largely to differing concentrations of immigrants and their descendants in the regions.
- White, non-Hispanic and black, non-Hispanic children are less likely than children of Hispanic origin or other races to have difficulty speaking English. One percent of white, non-Hispanic and black, non-Hispanic children had difficulty speaking English in 1999, compared with 23 percent of children of Hispanic origin and 12 percent of children of other races.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table POP4 on page 72. Endnotes begin on page 59.

Family Structure and Children's Living Arrangements

The number of parents a child lives with is strongly linked to the resources available to children and their well-being. Children who live in a household with only one parent are substantially more likely to have family incomes below the poverty line than are children who live in a household with two parents (biological, step, or adoptive).

Figure POP5 Percentage of children under age 18 by presence of parents in household, 1980-2001



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, March Current Population Survey.

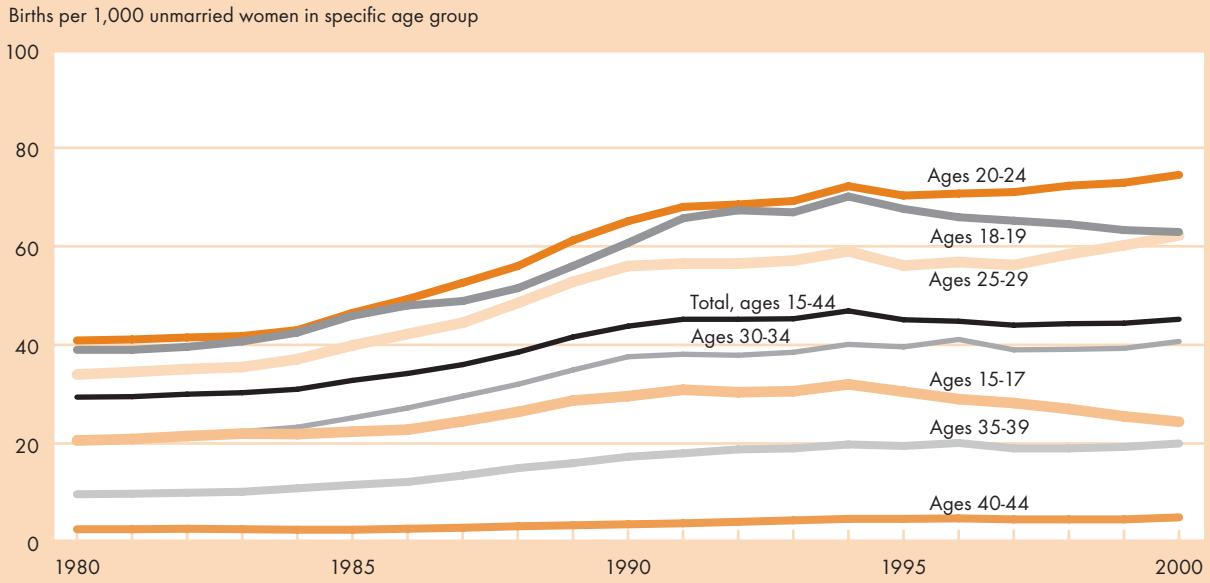
- In 2001, 69 percent of American children lived with two parents, down from 77 percent in 1980.
- In 2001, about one-fifth (22 percent) of children lived with only their mothers, 4 percent lived with only their fathers, and 4 percent lived with neither of their parents.[2]
- Since 1996, the percentage of children living with only one parent has not changed significantly.
- Among the factors associated with the change in the percentage of children living with just one parent between 1980 and 1996 is the percentage of births that were to unmarried mothers.[3]
- White, non-Hispanic children are much more likely than black children and somewhat more likely than Hispanic children to live with two parents. In 2001, 78 percent of white, non-Hispanic children lived with two parents, compared with 38 percent of black children and 65 percent of children of Hispanic origin.
- The measure of detailed living arrangements of children (POP5.B in *America's Children 2001*) has been removed from this year's report because more recent data are not yet available. For information on the detailed living arrangements of children, see last year's *America's Children* report and the following Census Bureau report: P70-74 *Living Arrangements of Children* available at http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/child/la-child.html.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table POP5 on page 73. Endnotes begin on page 59.

Births to Unmarried Women

Increases in births to unmarried women are among the many changes in American society that have affected family structure and the economic security of children.[3] Children of unmarried mothers are at higher risk of having adverse birth outcomes, such as low birthweight and infant mortality, and are more likely to live in poverty than children of married mothers.[4-8]

Figure POP6.A Birth rates for unmarried women by age of mother, 1980-2000

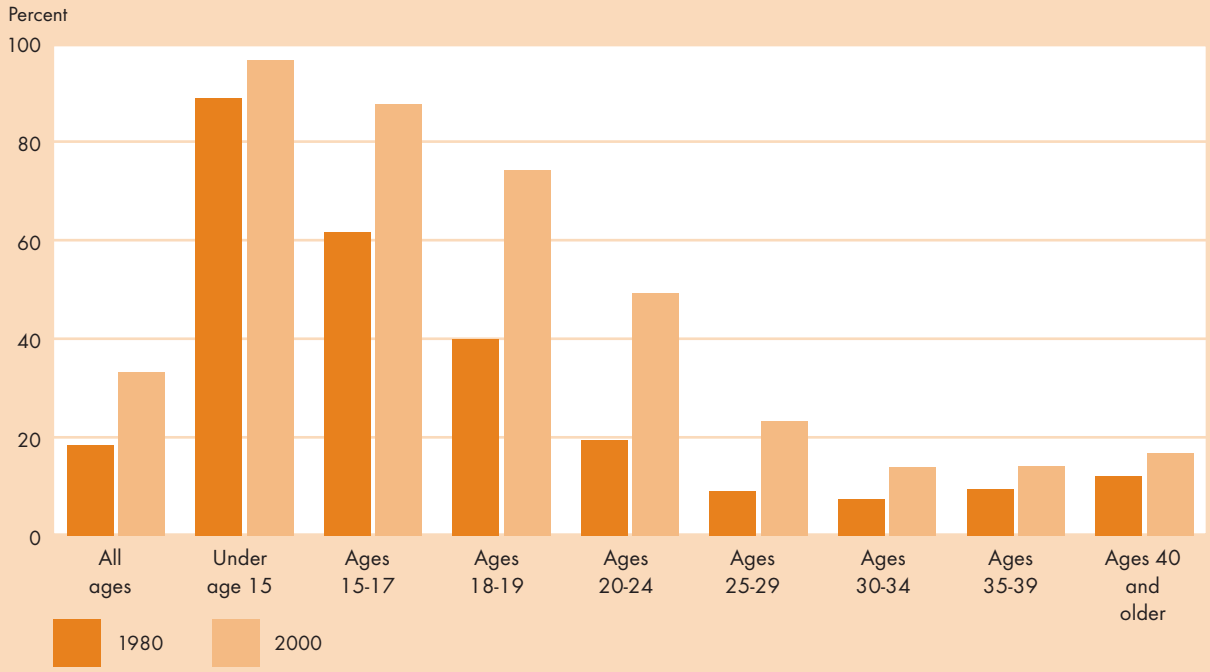


SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System.

- There were 45 births for every 1,000 unmarried women ages 15 to 44 in 2000.
- Between 1980 and 1994, the birth rate for unmarried women ages 15 to 44 increased from 29 to 47 per 1,000. Between 1994 and 1997-99 the rate fell slightly to 44 per 1,000, before rising to 45 in 2000.
- Between 1980 and 1994, birth rates increased sharply for unmarried women in all age groups. The birth rate for unmarried women ages 15 to 17 increased from 21 to 32 per 1,000, and the rate for unmarried women ages 18 to 19 rose from 39 to 70 per 1,000. The birth rate for unmarried women ages 20 to 24 increased from 41 to 72 per 1,000. Between 1994 and 2000, rates by age declined for all women under age 20, rose slightly for women in their twenties, and stabilized for women 30 and older.
- The long-term rise in the nonmarital birth rate between 1960 and 1994 is linked to a number of factors.[7] The proportion of women of childbearing age who are unmarried increased (from 29 percent in 1960 to 46 percent in 1994), concurrent with an increase in nonmarital cohabitation. About one in five unmarried women ages 25 to 34 was in a cohabiting relationship in 2000.[9] The likelihood that an unmarried woman will marry before the child is born declined steeply from the early 1960s to the early 1980s and continued to fall, although more modestly, through the early 1990s.[10] At the same time, childbearing within marriage declined: births to married women declined from 4 million in 1960 to 2.7 million in 1994, and the birth rate for married women fell from 157 per 1,000 in 1960 to 84 per 1,000 in 1994.[5-7] These measures stabilized in the mid-1990s, as the nonmarital birth rate also steadied, and then increased late in the decade.
- The pace of change in nonmarital birth rates slowed considerably beginning after 1994. Increases in nonmarital birth rates among women in their twenties became more modest, while teenage birth rates declined. [5,7]

Children are at greater risk for adverse consequences when born to a single mother because the social, emotional, and financial resources available to the family may be more limited.[4] The proportion of births to unmarried women is useful for understanding the extent to which children born in a given year may be affected by any disadvantage—social, financial, or health—associated with being born outside of marriage. The percentage of births to unmarried women is affected by several factors, including birth rates for married and unmarried women and the number of unmarried women.[11] Significant changes occurred in all these measures between 1980 and 2000.[6,7,12]

Figure POP6.B Percentage of all births that are to unmarried women by age of mother, 1980 and 2000



SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System.

- In 2000, 33 percent of all births were to unmarried women.
- The percentage of all births to unmarried women rose sharply from 18 percent in 1980 to 33 percent in 1994. From 1994 to 1997, the proportion was relatively stable at about 32 percent, and then increased slightly to 33 percent in 1998-2000.[5,7]
- Between 1980 and 2000, the proportions of births to unmarried women rose sharply for women in all age groups. Among teenagers, the proportions were high throughout the period and continued to rise, from 62 to 88 percent for ages 15 to 17 and from 40 to 74 percent for ages 18 to 19. The proportions more than doubled for births to women in their twenties, rising from 19 to 50 percent for ages 20 to 24 and from 9 to 23 percent for ages 25 to 29. The proportion of births to unmarried women ages 30 and older increased from 8 to 14 percent.[5,7]
- One-third of all births, including 4 in 10 first births, were to unmarried women in 2000. Nearly two-thirds of women under age 25 having their first child were not married.[13]
- The increases in the proportions of births to unmarried women, especially during the 1980s, are linked to sharp increases in the birth rates for unmarried women in all age groups during this period, concurrent with declines in birth rates for married women. In addition, the number of unmarried women increased by about one-fourth as more and more women from the baby-boom generation postponed marriage.[7,12]
- During the late 1990s, the pace of increase in the proportions slowed. The comparative stability is linked to a renewed rise in birth rates for married women.[5,7]

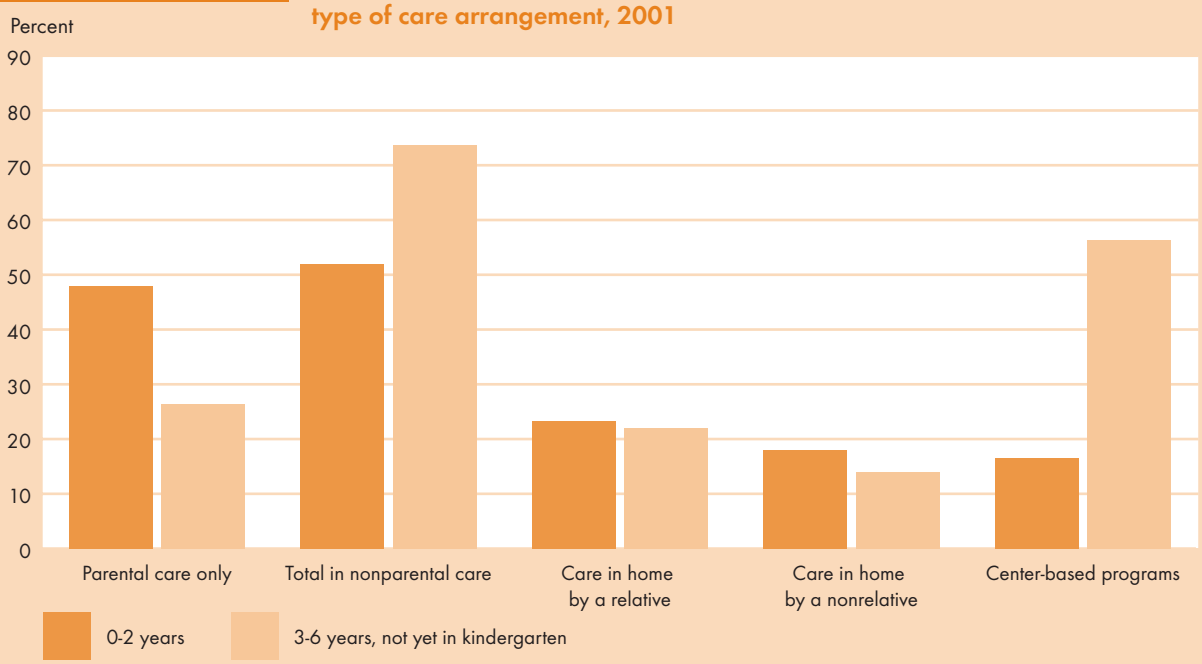
Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Tables POP6.A and POP6.B on page 74. Endnotes begin on page 59.

Child Care

Increasing proportions of children are spending substantial amounts of time in the care of a child care provider other than their parents. While researchers continue to assess the effects of child care on child development, it is important to monitor over time the way many children receive care. This measure presents two important aspects of child care usage for preschoolers: overall use of different provider types regardless of parents' work status (POP7.A) and a historical trend of the primary child care provider used by employed mothers for their preschoolers (POP7.B).[14]

Figure POP7.A

Percentage of children from birth through age six, not yet in kindergarten by type of care arrangement, 2001



NOTE: Some children participate in more than one type of arrangement, so the sum of all arrangement types exceeds the total percentage in nonparental care. Center-based programs include day care centers, prekindergartens, nursery schools, Head Start programs, and other early childhood education programs. Relative and nonrelative care can take place in either the child's own home or another home.

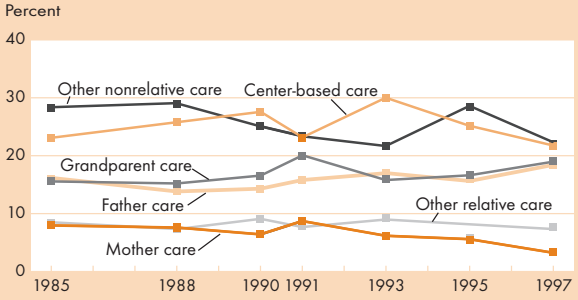
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey.

Figure POP7.A

- In 2001, 61 percent of children from birth through age 6 (not yet in kindergarten) received some form of child care on a regular basis from persons other than their parents. This translates to approximately 12 million children and is about the same proportion of children in child care as in 1995.
- The type of child care received is related to the age of the child. Children from birth through age 2 were more likely to be in home-based care, either with a relative or nonrelative, than to be in center-based care. Children ages 3 to 6 who were not yet in kindergarten were more likely to be in a center-based child care arrangement (including nursery schools and other early childhood education programs) than in home-based care with either a relative or a nonrelative.

Figure POP7.B

Percentage of preschoolers (children under age 5) of employed mothers by primary child care arrangement, selected years 1985-97[15]

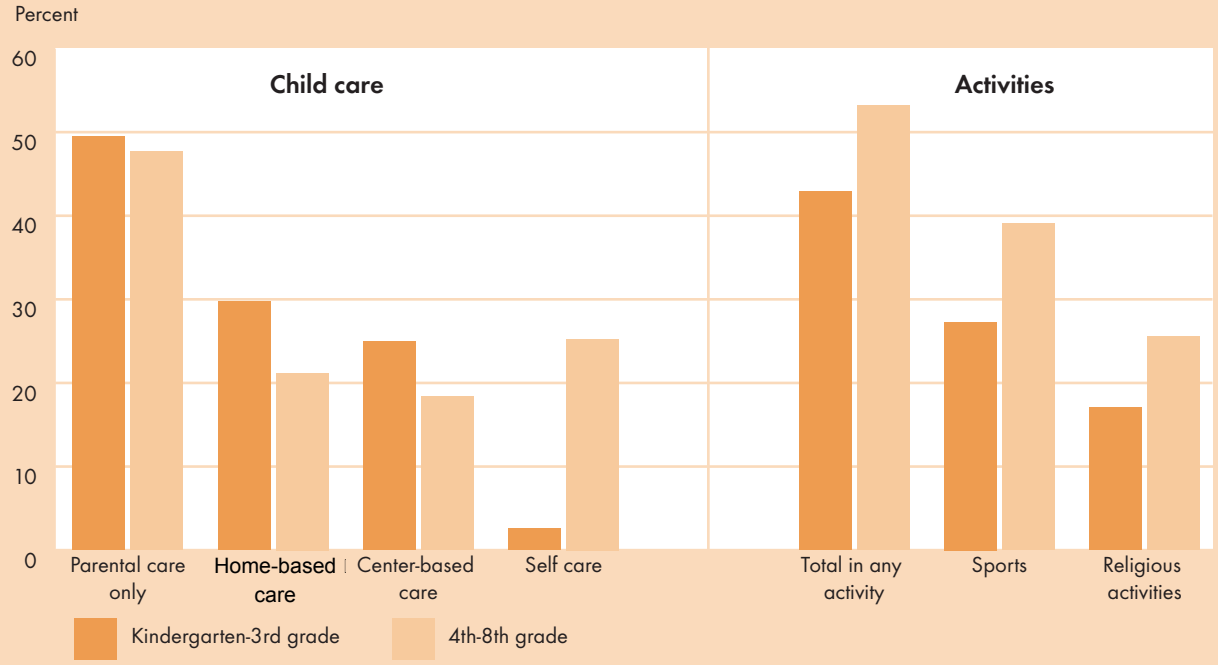


NOTE: The primary arrangement is the arrangement used for the longest number of hours per week while the mother worked.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Concern for the well-being of grade-school-age children has drawn attention to their child care arrangements and out-of-school activities, including time spent unsupervised.[16] School-age children spend their weekday, nonschool time in child care arrangements but also engage in a variety of enrichment activities such as sports, arts, clubs, academic activities, community service, and religious activities. Some of these children also spend time caring for themselves without adult supervision. This measure presents the most recent data on how grade-school-age children spend their out-of-school time.

Figure POP7.C Percentage of children in kindergarten through eighth grade by weekday care and activities, 2001



NOTE: Some children participate in more than one type of care arrangement or activity. For self care, parents reported that their child is responsible for himself/herself before or after school on a regular basis. Parents reported on organized before- or after-school activities that are undertaken by their child on a regular basis. For a full listing of activities, see Table POP7.C.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey.

Figure POP7.B

- In 1997, nearly half of preschoolers (children under age 5) with working mothers were primarily cared for by a relative while their mother worked, while 22 percent were primarily cared for by nonrelatives in a home-based environment and another 22 percent were cared for in a center-based arrangement.
- For preschoolers with working mothers, primary care by home-based nonrelatives declined from 28 percent in 1985 to 22 percent in 1997, while center-based care has fluctuated between 22 and 30 percent.
- In 1997, 19 percent of preschoolers were primarily cared for by their fathers, up from 15 percent in 1988. In contrast, the percentage of preschoolers primarily cared for by a working mother while she was at work declined from 8 percent in 1985 to only 3 percent in 1997.
- In 1997, grandparents and other relatives were the primary child care provider for 18 percent and 7 percent of preschoolers of working mothers, respectively.

Figure POP7.C

- About half (51 percent) of children in kindergarten through third grade and those in grades four to eight (52 percent) received some nonparental child care in 2001.
- Older children were more likely to care for themselves before or after school than younger children. Three percent of children in kindergarten through third grade and 25 percent of children in fourth through eighth grade cared for themselves regularly either before or after school.
- Children in the higher grades were more likely to engage in some kind of organized before- or after-school activity than were children in the lower grades. Children from families in poverty were less likely to participate in activities than children whose families were at or above poverty. Children in kindergarten through eighth grade were more likely to participate in sports than in any other activity.

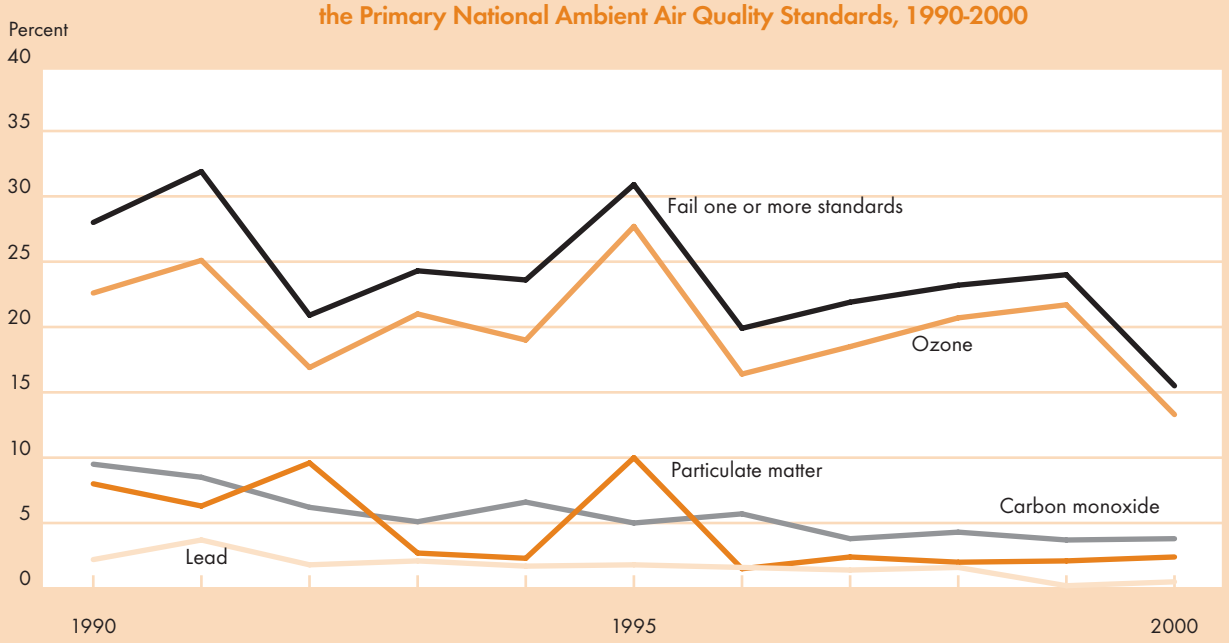
Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Tables POP7.A, POP7.B, and POP7.C on pages 75-77. Endnotes begin on page 59.

Children's Environments

The environment in which children live plays an important role in their health and development. Children need a clean, safe place in which they can grow and play. Children may be more vulnerable to environmental contaminants because of their increased potential for exposure to pollutants, since they eat, drink, and breathe more per body weight than adults. In addition, environmental contaminants in air, food, drinking water, and other sources are associated with a number of different ailments, and these contaminants may disproportionately affect children because they are still developing.[17-21] One important measure of environmental quality is the percentage of children living in areas that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Polluted air is associated with increased asthma episodes and other respiratory illnesses. While air pollution is one important measure of children's environments, further research is needed to develop a more complete measure of overall environmental quality for children.

Figure POP8

Percentage of children under age 18 living in areas that do not meet one or more of the Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standards, 1990-2000



NOTE: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has set national air quality standards for six principal pollutants: carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), ozone (O_3), particulate matter (PM), and sulfur dioxide (SO_2). Nitrogen dioxide and sulfur dioxide are not included in the graph because essentially all areas met the Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standards for these pollutants after 1991.

SOURCE: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Air and Radiation, Aerometric Information Retrieval System.

- In 2000, 16 percent of children lived in areas that did not meet one or more of the Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standards, an improvement from 28 percent in 1990. The Clean Air Act established Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standards which are designed to establish limits to protect public health, including the health of sensitive populations such as children and individuals with asthma.
- In 2000, less than 1 percent of children lived in areas that did not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for lead. High levels of lead are dangerous to children because they can lead to neurological and developmental problems.
- Figure POP8 does not reflect the new standards for particulate matter and ozone being implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency to better protect public health, including children's health.
- Ozone accounts for most of the areas that do not meet the Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Both particulate matter and ozone can cause respiratory problems and aggravate respiratory diseases, such as asthma, in children. These problems can lead to increased emergency room visits and hospitalizations.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table POP8 on page 78. Endnotes begin on page 59.

Data Needed

Population and Family Characteristics

Current data collection systems at the national level do not provide extensive detailed information on children's lives, their families and their caregivers. Certain topical databases provide some of this information, but data need to be collected across domains of child well-being regularly enough to discern trends in where, how, and with whom children spend their time. More data are also needed on:

- *Family interactions.* Information is needed about children's interactions with nonresident parents, particularly fathers. A subcommittee of the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics is currently working to improve data on family formation and fatherhood.
- *Time use.* A regular source of data is needed to track how and where children spend their time and how these patterns change over time. For example, valuable insights would be provided by data on how much time children spend in school, in day care, in after-school activities, using a computer, and interacting with one or both parents and how much time youth spend at work. Currently, Federal surveys collect information on the amount of time children spend on certain activities, such as watching television and on participation rates in specific activities or care arrangements, but no regular Federal data source examines time spent on the whole spectrum of children's activities. The inclusion in surveys of additional questions on time use by children and adults is currently being investigated by several member agencies of the Forum. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has plans to conduct a continuous time use survey, beginning in 2003, that will cover time invested in the care of children, as well as time spent in other labor market and non-labor market activities.
- *Children's environments.* Further data are needed to monitor the environments of children and their potential exposure to environmental contaminants. In particular, data are needed to describe children's potential exposure to contaminants in drinking water and food.