

U.S. CHILDREN BY THE NUMBERS

HIGHLIGHTS FROM GAO-18-41SP

Assessing the well-being of U.S. children

The **success of the nation** depends in large part on how well families and society care for children so that they become **healthy and productive adults**.



WHAT DID WE EXAMINE?

We collected and analyzed federal data in three categories:



Family, physical, and social environment



Physical and mental health



Early care and education

WHAT DID WE FIND?

1 In recent years, the well-being of U.S. children has:

- worsened in some areas
- remained constant in some areas
- improved in others

2 Well-being continues to be generally worse for children who are:

- minority
- poor
- from families headed by single mothers

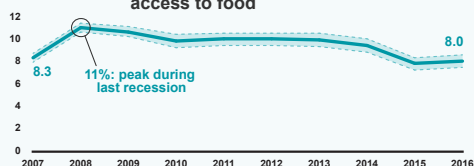
BELOW ARE SOME OF OUR SPECIFIC FINDINGS.

How precise are these results? Data ranges represented by or indicate 95% confidence intervals. These mean that if agencies were to survey the entire population, there is a 95% chance that the result would be within the interval.

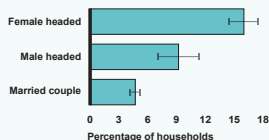
Family, physical, and social environment

ACCESS TO FOOD*

TREND No major change in the percentage of households with children who lack access to food



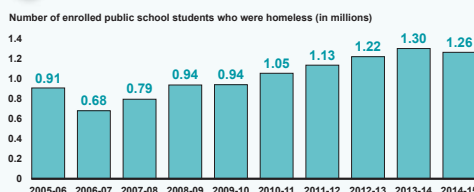
2016 SNAPSHOT: Children in female-headed households were more likely to lack access to food.



*We are referring to food insecurity, which is a lack of access to adequate food for a healthy lifestyle for all household members. Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Dept. of Commerce's Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

STUDENT HOMELESSNESS

TREND Increase in number of students schools identify as homeless



2014-15 SNAPSHOT:

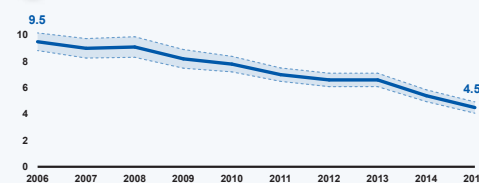
- >950,000 homeless students:** "doubled-up" (living with others)
- ~95,000 homeless students:** unaccompanied (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian)

Source: U.S. Department of Education's Consolidated State Performance Report data from the National Center for Homeless Education.

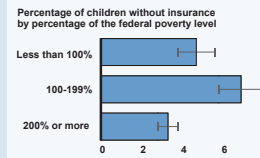
Physical and mental health

ACCESS TO INSURANCE

TREND Percentage of children uninsured declined by about half



2015 SNAPSHOT: Among those considered "near poor," a higher percentage lacked insurance.

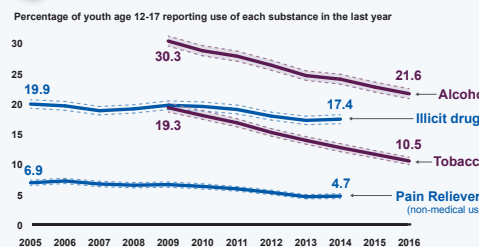


Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Health Interview Survey.

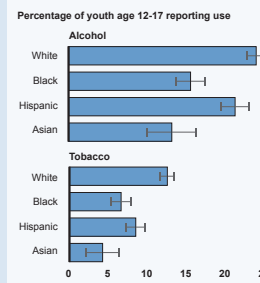
ALCOHOL, SMOKING, AND DRUG USE

TREND Alcohol and Tobacco: Decrease in use

TREND Illicit drugs and use of pain relievers: Slight decrease



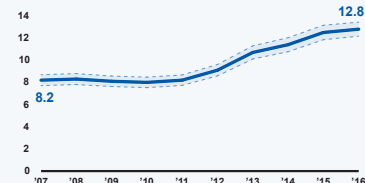
2016 SNAPSHOT: There were variations in substance use by race.



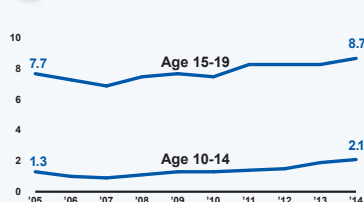
Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

TREND Rise in major depressive episodes among youth age 12-17



TREND Slight rise in suicide rates (per 100,000 youths)



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Survey on Drug Use and Health and National Vital Statistics System.

Early care and education

SCHOOL CRIME AND SAFETY

TREND Decrease in rate of theft and violent crimes at school per 1,000 students age 12-18



Source: U.S. Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey.

For notes on data definitions and methodology, see full report.