# 10,000 More Utah Kids

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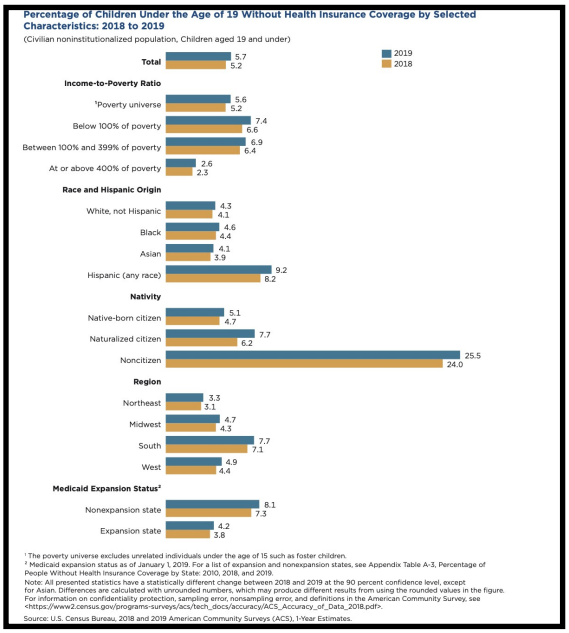
**More Utah Children Lost Health Insurance in 2019, According to Latest National Survey**

Last week, the Census Bureau released its annual health insurance data from the American Community Survey (ACS). The alarming top line news is that children's health insurance rates have continued, **for a third straight year,** to decline. Here in Utah, another 10,000 children lost coverage, making 82,000 kids in total without insurance. The percentage of Utah children without insurance has ticked back up to 8%.

This is grim, but sadly not unexpected news. Since 2016, children have been losing health insurance steadily both in Utah and across the country, reversing a decade of progress. Throughout the fall, we will share more in-depth analysis of Utah children's insurance data, what we can learn from the past three years and solutions moving forward. But here are a few takeaways about kids' coverage in 2019:

**The toll is greatest on immigrant children:** The vast majority of immigrant


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including CHIP and Medicaid. Only a small number of children in Utah are *ineligible* for health insurance due to their citizenship status. Nevertheless, anti-immigrant hostilities and policies, like the Trump Administration's Public Charge rule, keep many families from enrolling their children in health insurance programs for which they are eligible. That's why we continue to work alongside our partners to counter the "chilling effect" and provide timely and accurate information about the Public Charge rule and other immigration policies.

**Behind the numbers:** In Utah, Hispanic or Latinx children are disproportionately uninsured. They make up over a third of the uninsured child population, but only 18% of the total child population. However, between 2018 and 2019 it appears that coverage for Latinx children in Utah *gained* slightly. There may be several contributing factors, but one important driver is the tireless efforts of enrollment & outreach organizations, community health workers, community leaders and others, reaching out to Latinx communities across Utah to help more children get covered.

**Has Utah's strong economy helped or hurt?** As we dig through the data, we will examine what impact Utah's economy had on health insurance rates, especially for low-income families on the edge of poverty. Last year's pre-pandemic economy created opportunities for more families to take on new short-term jobs, temporary shifts or gig work. These job changes may have led their children to lose Medicaid or CHIP, while still making affordable private or marketplace insurance out of reach.

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**Children below poverty continue to have the highest uninsured rates.** 2019 was the year Utah's partial Medicaid expansion went into effect, but many families were confused by this partial expansion plan and whether or not they qualified. Full Medicaid expansion rolled out in January 2020. As we look to 2021, Utah's Medicaid Expansion will be even more critical to help children and families who have lost their jobs as a result of the economic downturn.

**What lies ahead?** In the coming weeks, we will provide additional analysis about coverage loss in Utah over the last 3 years and how we can get kids' coverage back on track. Health insurance status is one of the strongest predictors of a child's outcomes later in life**.** Children with health insurance not only have better health outcomes (which they do), they also do better in school, have higher graduate rates and are less likely to experience poverty as adults. Health insurance provides a foundation for kids to thrive. **We must get Utah kids' coverage back on track for their future, and for our state's future too.**



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