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Written by: Terry Haven

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## Utah Shows Slight Improvement in the Number of Children Living in Concentrated Poverty

*Native American children in Utah are twice as likely as children in the U.S. to live in concentrated poverty.*

**Salt Lake City, UT** — The percentage of children in Utah living in concentrated poverty — that is, a neighborhood where 30 percent or more of the population is living in poverty — declined from a high of 6% in 2010-2014 to just 2% in 2013-2017 according to “Children Living in High Poverty, Low-Opportunity Neighborhoods,” a new KIDS COUNT® data snapshot released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Using the latest data available from the U.S. Census Bureau, the snapshot examines where concentrated poverty has worsened across the country despite a long period of national economic expansion.

Utah’s rate of 2% in 2013-2017 (down from 3% in 2006-2010) compares to 12% nationally. Even so, there are 22,000 Utah children living in areas of concentrated


# New KIDS COUNT Data Snapshot "Children Living in High Poverty, Low-Opportunity Neighborhoods"

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poverty. Growing up in a community of concentrated poverty is one of the greatest risks to child development.

Children in high-poverty neighborhoods tend to lack access to healthy food and quality medical care and they often face greater exposure to environmental hazards, such as poor air quality, and toxins such as lead. Financial hardships and fear of violence can cause chronic stress linked to diabetes, heart disease and stroke. And when these children grow up, they are more likely to have lower incomes than children who have relocated away from communities of concentrated poverty.



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

## CHILDREN LIVING IN HIGH-POVERTY, LOW-OPPORTUNITY NEIGHBORHOODS

All children and youth deserve to live in communities where they can learn, play and grow. When neighborhoods have quality schools, accessible job opportunities, reliable transportation and safe places for recreation, children are better positioned for success in adulthood. Yet millions of children live in high-poverty neighborhoods that lack these critical assets.

Though the number of children living in areas of concentrated poverty<sup>1</sup> (areas where overall poverty rates of 30% or more) fell as the nation recovered from the Great Recession, the total remains far too high: more than 8.5 million, or 12%, of all kids. Moreover, children of color are much more likely than white children to live in high-poverty communities.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2012 "Data Snapshot on High-Poverty Communities" underscored that living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty undermines child well-being. Moreover, a 2015 study showed that children under age 13 who moved from low-income neighborhoods to more affluent communities had higher incomes as adults compared to peers who remained in impoverished areas.<sup>2</sup>

High-poverty neighborhoods generally don't provide access to healthy food and quality public schools or medical care, and they often subject residents to greater exposure to environmental hazards, such as poor air quality or lead. Financial hardships and fear of violence also can cause chronic stress in children, which has been linked with diabetes, heart disease and stroke later in life.<sup>3</sup>


<sup>1</sup>Research indicates that as poverty rates increase, undesirable outcomes rise. The effects of concentrated poverty begin to appear once neighborhood poverty rates rise above 20% and continue to grow as the concentration of poverty increases up to 40%. Because 50% lies between the starting point and breaking all points for negative neighborhood effects, this figure is often used to define "concentrated poverty."

The 2017 federal poverty level was \$24,858 for a family of two adults and two children.

CHILDREN IN HIGH-POVERTY, LOW-OPPORTUNITY NEIGHBORHOODS

## data snapshot

KIDS COUNT®



Concentrated Poverty and Race

African-American and American Indian children are seven times more likely to live in high-poverty neighborhoods than white kids. Latino children are nearly five times more likely.

These disparities are the legacies of racial and ethnic oppression, as well as the needs of present-day lives and practices. Federal and local policies, such as redlined segregation, or discriminatory real estate practices, such as redlining and limited access to financial institutions, locked millions of African-American families in communities that lacked resources to help children thrive.<sup>4</sup> Native Americans have suffered displacement since before the nation's founding, as well as broken promises from federal and local officials that stripped them of wealth. Latent have faced discrimination in workplaces and from home lenders that have limited their economic opportunities.

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Key findings from the snapshot include:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native children in Utah are much more likely to live in concentrated poverty at 24%

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- Hispanic children in Utah are three times as likely to live in concentrated poverty (6%)
- Utah children living in metropolitan areas are more likely than their rural counterparts to live in concentrated poverty at 10% compared to 4% respectively.
- Immigrant children are slightly more likely to live in these neighborhoods at 5%.

Voices for Utah Children joins the Casey Foundation in calling on national, state and local stakeholders to act now to help families lift themselves out of these circumstances. Policies at the community, county and state level that can have a significant impact on the lives of children in struggling families include:

- Supporting development and property-ownership models that preserve affordable housing, such as community land trusts and limited-equity cooperatives.
- Ending housing discrimination based on whether a person was formerly incarcerated or is using a federal housing voucher.
- Assisting low-income residents in paying higher property taxes that often come with new development/redevelopment or with a family's relocation to a more affluent area.
- Expanding workforce training that is targeted to high-poverty, low-opportunity communities.
- Requiring and incentivizing anchor institutions to hire locally and contract with businesses owned by women and people of color.
- Developing and funding small-business loan programs that serve entrepreneurs in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color — or people that traditional lenders tend to reject, such as individuals with poor credit or criminal records.

Click [here](#) to read full report.

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