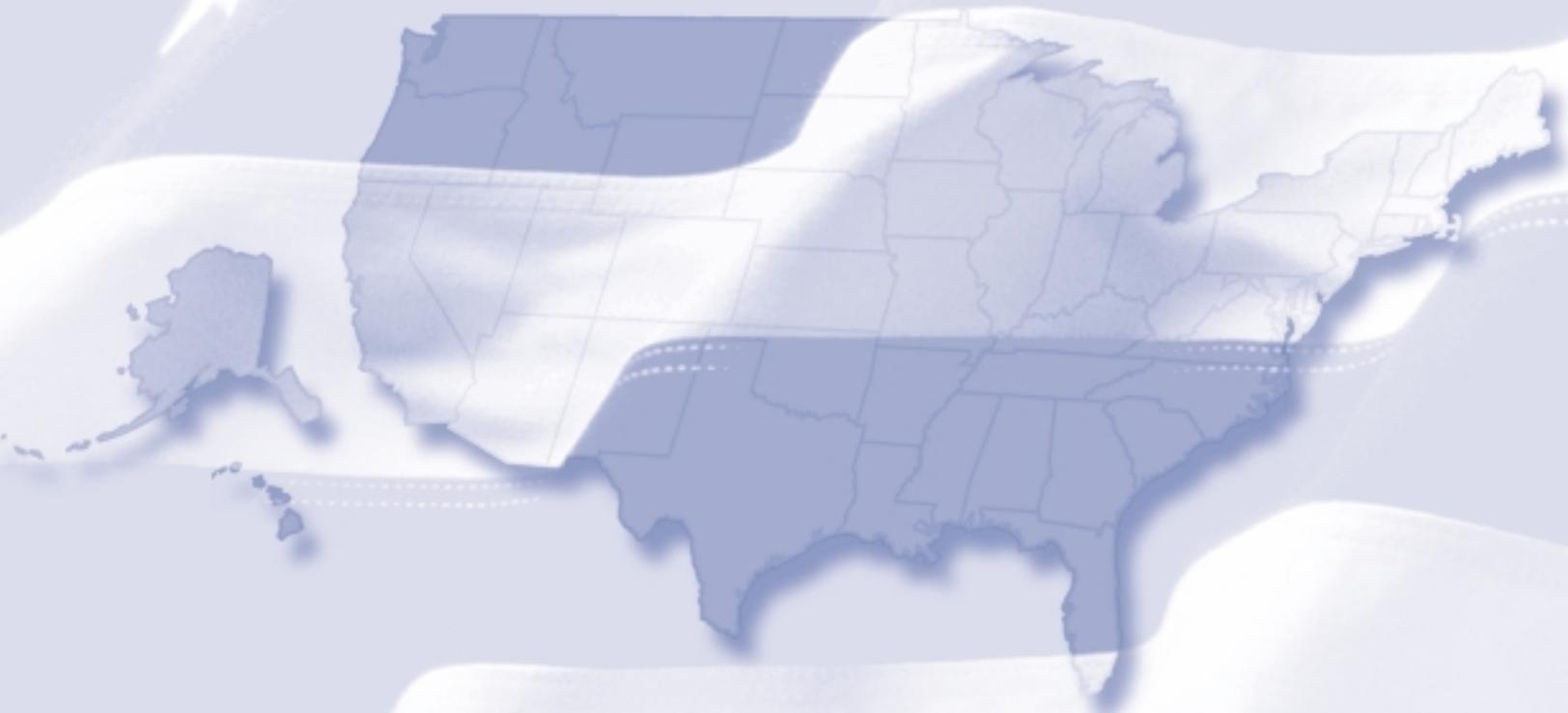


SPECIAL SECTION

Changes in the Lives of America's Children: 1990 to 2000

This special section, *Changes in the Lives of America's Children: 1990 to 2000*, provides information about children for all 50 States and the District of Columbia from the 1990 and 2000 Censuses. This special census data section discusses nine indicators covering three general domains of the report: Population and Family Characteristics, Economic Security, and Education.



Introduction

The key indicators presented in *America's Children* come from a wide variety of data sources, including routine surveys, administrative data, estimation systems, and special or one-time data collections. Consideration has been given over time to data sources that allow for routine updating in the report. Most of these data sources, while recurring, can only provide information about children for the Nation, as a whole. At the same time, data users and policy-makers continue to look for indicators of child well-being that can describe the status of children in States and if possible, at even smaller geographic areas.

Once every 10 years, the decennial census provides the opportunity to generate snapshots of the population for very small geographic units. Much more than a complete count of the Nation's population, the census provides important social, economic, and housing detail about the population, allowing policy-makers and planners to see how characteristics have changed over time in cities, towns, and neighborhoods.

The data presented in this special decennial census section show change for two points in time only, 1990 and 2000, and thus does not consider the point in time that a trend may have changed direction or stabilized during the intervening years. When fully implemented, the American Community Survey (ACS) will provide updates of these characteristics for all states, cities, counties, metropolitan areas, and population groups of 65,000 or more every year, replacing the once-every-ten-year collection of these items. This will allow data users to see the fluctuations in the characteristics that occur between the years of the decennial censuses.

This section presents nine indicators of child well-being from the 1990 and 2000 decennial Censuses, closely aligned to indicators presented routinely in this volume. What is unique about this section is that data for the items highlighted here are shown for all 50 States and the District of Columbia. Doing so allows one to see the variability that exists across the Nation, as well as providing details of change during the past decade.

The scope of the census content is not as wide as that of the 20-plus indicators *America's Children* routinely provides. This special census data section discusses nine indicators, covering three general domains of the report: Population and Family Characteristics, Economic Security, and Education. Because of differences in questionnaire design and administration, estimates from the census may not be exactly comparable to those from the routine measures reported in *America's Children*. However, because these data are all from the same data collection instrument, and the instrument changed little from 1990 to 2000, they provide a rare and consistent glimpse of the change in several indicators for the States as well as the Nation as a whole.¹⁰¹

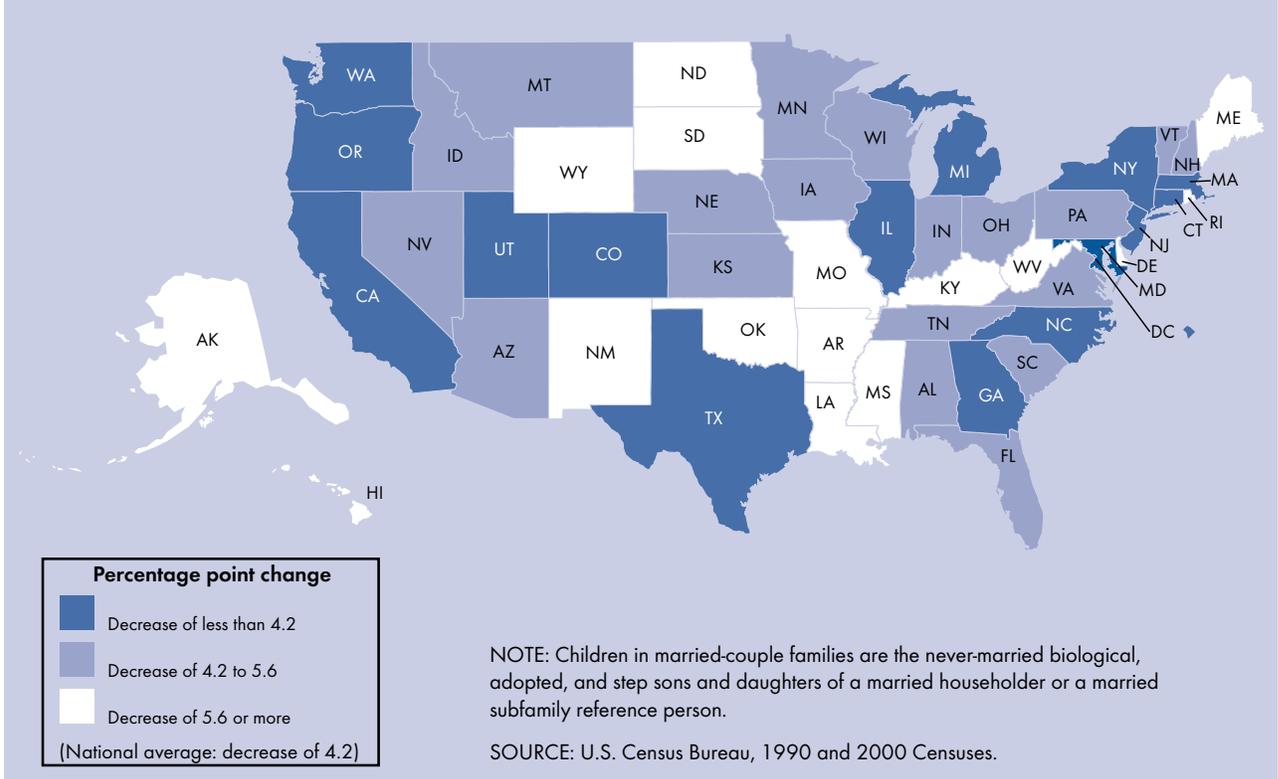
In all the maps shown in this section, estimates, which are based on a sample of the population, are used to partition the States into groups that reflect a specific percentage point change range between 1990 and 2000. As with all sample survey estimates, these estimates may vary from the actual values due to sampling and nonsampling errors, which could possibly result in a State being assigned to a different group. States in different groups may not be significantly different from one another, and States in the same group may be significantly different.

Population and Family Characteristic Measures

One important aspect of children's lives has to do with their own characteristics and those of the family in which they live. Indicators in this section speak to the changing shape of the family and the issues of an increasing foreign-born population, some of whom have English language difficulties.

Figure SPECIAL1.A

Change in percentage of children under age 18 living in married-couple families, 1990 and 2000



Children living in married-couple families

In 2000, 68 percent of children under 18 years old lived in married-couple families, down from 72 percent in 1990.¹⁰² Utah had the highest percentage of children in married-couple families in both 1990 and 2000 (84 percent and 81 percent, respectively).

Figure SPECIAL1.A shows the extent of decline in children living in married-couple families from 1990 to 2000. This decrease occurred in all States in the Nation, with several States showing a decrease of about 7 percentage points. New Jersey had a small decrease (1.7 percentage points) from 74 percent in 1990 to 72 percent in 2000. While many children still live in married-couple families, these data show a trend that extends across the country.

Children with difficulty speaking English

Nationally, the proportion of children ages 5 to 17 with difficulty speaking English increased from 5 percent in 1990 to 7 percent in 2000.¹⁰³ Most States experienced such an increase, with the largest percentage point increase occurring in Nevada, where it rose from 4 percent in 1990 to 9 percent in 2000.

In 1990, California, Texas, and New Mexico had the highest percentages of children with difficulty speaking English (15 percent, 11 percent, and 10 percent, respectively). By 2000, Arizona had replaced New Mexico as the third highest, so that in 2000, the percentage of children with difficulty speaking English was 16 percent in California, 12 percent in Texas, and 11 percent in Arizona.

Foreign-born children

In 2000, 4 percent of children living in the United States were foreign-born, up from 3 percent in 1990.¹⁰⁴

California experienced a two percentage-point drop of foreign-born children from 1990 to 2000; however, despite this drop, California remained the State with the highest percentage at 9 percent in 2000.

Five States had increases of 2.5 percentage points or more in the proportion of foreign-born children: Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon and Washington—all of which were also States that saw their percentages of children with difficulty speaking English increase.

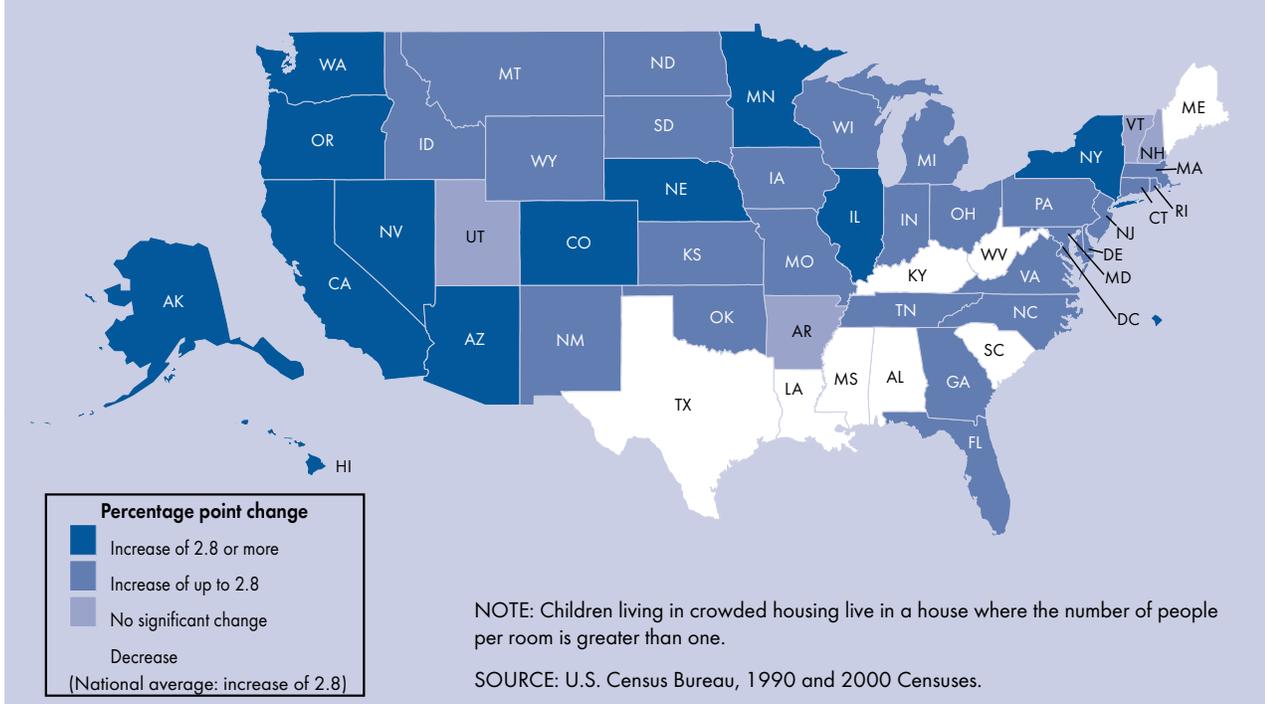
Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table SPECIAL1.A on page 126. Endnotes begin on page 63.

Economic Security Indicators

Indicators of economic security reflect families' abilities to meet their children's material needs. The measures in this section address issues of crowded housing, child poverty, and parental employment – complementary but varied indicators of the economic conditions in which children live.

Figure SPECIAL1.B

Change in percentage of children under 18 living in crowded housing, 1990 and 2000



Children in crowded housing

- In 2000, 19 percent of children lived in crowded housing, up from 16 percent a decade earlier.¹⁰⁵ Children living in two Western States (California and Hawaii) and the District of Columbia experienced the highest rates of crowded housing, all with rates of 30 percent or higher. These same areas had the highest levels of crowded housing in 1990 as well. In contrast, the lowest rates of children living in crowded housing were found in three Northeastern States in 2000—Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont all had rates of around 6 percent or lower.
- Figure SPECIAL1.B shows the change in the percent of children living in crowded housing from 1990 to 2000 by State. In Nevada, the fastest growing State in the Nation,¹⁰⁶ the proportion of children living in crowded housing increased from 20 percent in 1990 to 27 percent in 2000, the largest increase in the Nation.
- However, the largest decrease was found in Texas, where the rate decreased from 25 percent in 1990 to 15 percent in 2000.

Children in families in poverty

- Child poverty decreased for the Nation as a whole from 18 percent in 1990 to 16 percent in 2000.¹⁰⁷ Wide variations in child poverty were noted for States in 2000, from a low of 7 percent in New Hampshire to highs of above 25 percent in Louisiana and Mississippi. The rate of child poverty was 31 percent in the District of Columbia.

- Louisiana and Mississippi had large declines in child poverty over the 1990s, even though they had the highest levels among the States in 2000. Despite a decrease in child poverty for the Nation as a whole and for many individual States, child poverty increased significantly over the decade in five States and the District of Columbia.

Children with at least one parent employed full time

- In 2000, 83 percent of children lived in families with at least one parent employed full time, up from 77 percent in 1990.¹⁰⁸
- Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, New Hampshire, and Utah had 84 percent or more children living in such families in both 1990 and 2000. Conversely, two States (Louisiana and Mississippi) and the District of Columbia had some of the lowest percentages of children living with at least one parent employed full time (less than 77 percent) in both 1990 and 2000. These areas also had high rates of child poverty in both years.
- The largest gain in parental employment was found in Michigan, where the rate of children living in families with an employed parent rose from 73 percent in 1990 to 84 percent in 2000.

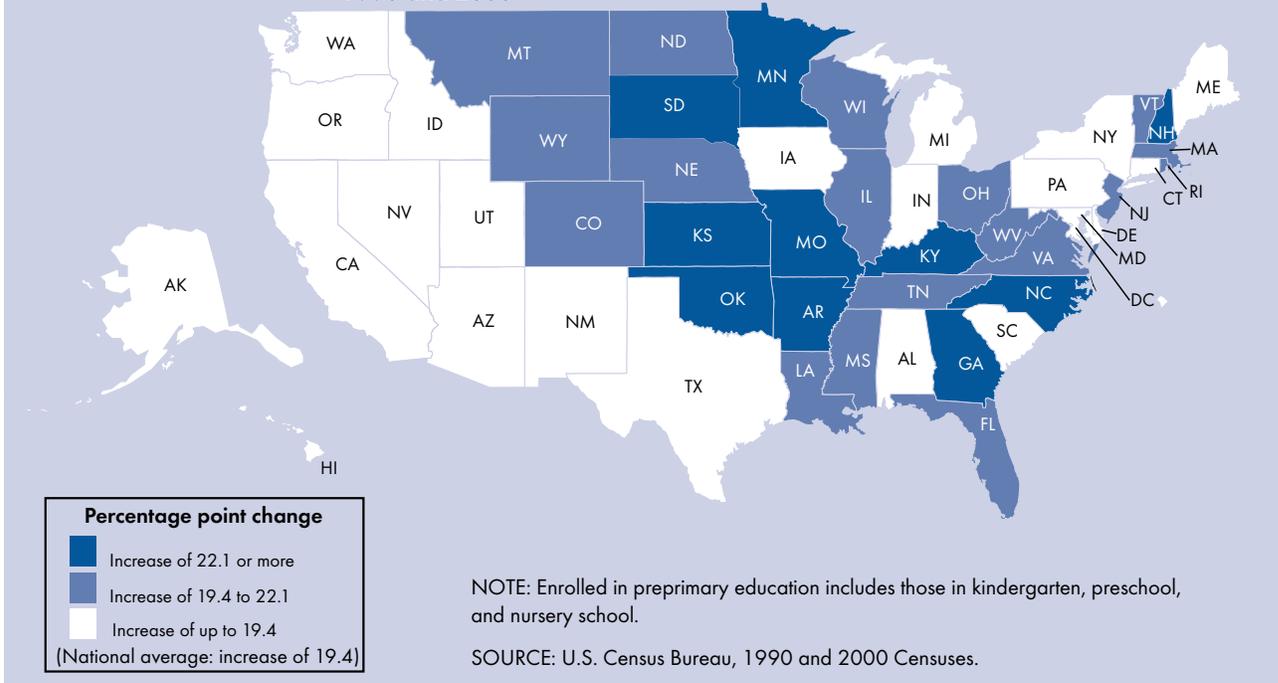
Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table SPECIAL1.B on page 127. Endnotes begin on page 63.

Education Indicators

Education represents a major investment in fostering the well-being of children. The three indicators in this section—preprimary education, high school completion, and ‘detached youth’—help track this concept from early childhood through young adulthood.

Figure SPECIAL1.C

Change in percentage of children aged 3 to 5 enrolled in preprimary education, 1990 and 2000



Preprimary education

- Nationally, the proportion of children aged 3 to 5 enrolled in preprimary education rose from 42 percent in 1990 to 61 percent in 2000, representing an increase of 19 percentage points.¹⁰⁹
- In 2000, more than 70 percent of children aged 3 to 5 living in Connecticut, New Jersey, and the District of Columbia were enrolled in preprimary education, representing the highest rates in the Nation. In contrast, North Dakota had less than 50 percent enrolled in preprimary education.
- Figure SPECIAL1.C clearly shows the geographic variation in the change in preprimary education among children aged 3 to 5, with most of the smaller increases clustered among the Western States. Georgia, a Southern State, had the largest increase—from 41 percent in 1990 to 67 percent in 2000.

High school completion

- Nationally, the percentage of people aged 18 to 24 who had completed high school¹¹⁰ declined from 84 percent in 1990 to 82 percent in 2000. Part of this decrease was fueled by changes in the demographic composition of this age group. Even though completion rates over the decade rose for non-Hispanics, they decreased slightly for Hispanics. This fact, combined with an increase in the proportion of Hispanics in the population aged 18 to 24 (who

have lower completion levels compared with non-Hispanics), acted to lower the overall high school completion rate.¹¹¹

- Declines occurred in many States where the proportion of young Hispanics in the population increased, such as in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and North Carolina.
- Twelve States and the District of Columbia experienced increases in high school completion rates. The rate in West Virginia increased 3 percentage points from 1990 to 2000.

Detached youth¹¹²

- In 2000, 9 percent of youth aged 16 to 19 neither worked nor attended school, representing a decrease from 10 percent in 1990. Several States experienced decreases of around 2 percentage points. In contrast, the rate significantly increased in six States (Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, North Carolina, South Carolina, and South Dakota).
- In both 1990 and 2000, about 14 percent of youth aged 16 to 19 living in the District of Columbia were considered detached youths.
- In contrast, in 1990 and 2000, only about 5 percent of youth aged 16 to 19 in North Dakota neither worked nor attended school.

Bullets contain references to data that can be found in Table SPECIAL1.C on page 128. Endnotes begin on page 63.