

Poverty and children in america



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Poverty and Children in the United States Who are America's poor children? How many children in America are poor? What are some of the hardships that face poor children in America? These are only a few questions that we can ask ourselves when considering children who live in poverty in America. Children face monumental hardships in our country because of poverty or the condition of not possessing the means to afford basic human needs.

The economic crisis that we find ourselves in today threatens to cause a dramatic increase in the number of America's poor children; however poverty in America has long been a crisis that has faced the children of our nation. This essay will investigate the previously asked questions and research the challenges that poverty plays on the sociology of children in the United States. Who are America's Poor Children? According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) 14 million American children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level, which is \$22, 050 a year for a family of four.

They also state that the number of children living in poverty increased by 21 % between 2000 and 2008 and it is estimated that there are 2. 5 million more children living in poverty today than in 2000. (Wright, 2010) These numbers are staggering and are estimated to grow significantly in the next few years considering the current economic crisis facing the United States. The NCCP explains that current research shows, on average, families need an income of about twice the federal poverty level to survive. Children who live in homes with incomes of \$44, 100 or less, for a family of four, are considered low income.

This means that forty one percent of children in the United States live in low income homes. Children represent 25 % of the population and 41 % of all children live in low income families and nearly one in every five live in poor families (NCCP, 2010). Families in the United States are facing challenging economic times where workers are seeing decline in wages and the loss of jobs. Many cannot afford basic human needs with increased costs on food, gas, and of homes; these economic realities have a profound sociological effect on America's children.

The NCCP goes on to state that some of the characteristics of children who live in poverty in the United States are race and ethnicity related. They note that 11 % of white children live in poor families, 35 % of black children live in poor families, and 31% of Hispanic children live in poor families. These figures show that black and Hispanic children are disproportionately poor in the United States. Also children who live in single parented homes are more likely to live below the poverty line especially those who live with single mothers. Female headed households live in poverty more than all other household types" (Poverty, 2001). Single mothers have been labeled the "new poor" most often because of changes in family composition such as divorce, separation, and remarriage, driven by a series of events in their lives. Who are America's children living in poverty? They are the kids who live in the confines of these statistics generated by levels of income and they are often children which we see every day. Unlike the torturous pictures we see in the United States who live in poverty are struggling to survive in a society where poverty goes very often unnoticed.

Hardships Facing Children who live in Poverty Hunger In the article " In America Today, hunger is very real"; Yolanda Young quoted President Obama saying " Hunger rose significantly last year. " Mr. Obama said that he hopes to alleviate childhood hunger by 2015. (Young, 2009) What does that mean then for the children who are going hungry today? These children eat less healthy meals, they visit shelters, they get help from school food programs, and they eat at emergency kitchens. The U. S. Census Bureau states that nearly 14 % of all American homes were afraid they might not be able to put enough food on the table this past year.

Fortunately there are programs that assist families in crisis and can help to feed the children of the United States; however the number of hungry children is growing. Child hunger in the United States has been described as an increasingly complex problem and has been called the " silent epidemic. " (Goldstein, 2009) Malnutrition is being reported by medical professionals everywhere and is of major concern in almost every state in the nation. Children who suffer the effects of malnutrition contribute to a high number of those with negative health problems.

Obesity is being associated as a side effect of malnutrition, as children who don't get enough to eat regularly eat foods that are less healthy. Childhood hunger also contributes to health conditions like a deteriorated immune system, chronic fatigue, developmental problems, and behavioral issues. Many poor children in the United States today, experience an uneasy or painful sensation caused by lack of food, or hunger. Homelessness " The National Center on Family Homelessness currently estimates that as many as fifty U. S. children (1. 5 million) are homeless or " precariously housed" in <https://assignbuster.com/poverty-and-children-in-america/>

temporary quarters such as motels and shelters" (Cohen, 2009). Today's economic crisis is not helping this growing number of families that are being relocated as home relocations and loss of jobs add to the overwhelming number of homeless children in the United States. The result of homelessness can cause children to feel disassociated with those around them, they feel a sense of loss and privacy, and they ultimately feel an overwhelming sense of insecurity.

Although these temporary quarters put a roof over the heads of millions of children in the United States, children often are left with psychological issues that last a lifetime. It is reported that homeless children are sick more often, go hungry more often, and repeat more than one grade in school over kids who have a home. Also, children who are homeless are more apt to have been exposed to sexual or physical abuse. The government has instituted many programs to help with the homelessness crisis in the United States; however for a child who has no home to call his own, this is little consolation.

Inadequate Healthcare More often than not, children who live in poverty do not have adequate health care and comes as a result of a parent losing a job. We have discussed in this essay how the current economic crisis has affected families. With so many people losing jobs comes those same people who are losing the option of healthcare for their families. Government programs exist in order to provide healthcare for those who essential for healthy living and the lack of this care affects children their whole lives.

The NCCP reports that 17% of poor children lack health insurance, whereas 10% of all children (poor and non-poor) lack health insurance. In the ten

most populated states, the percentage of poor children who lack insurance options ranges from nine percent in the state of Michigan to 31% in Florida, showing that state to state healthcare options are significantly different. The Children's Health Insurance Reauthorization Program (CHIP) was instituted in 2009 and is intended to give additional Medicaid benefits to children of low income families.

Without programs like this, and others many children who live in poverty would have no insurance coverage at all. Many low income families lose insurance coverage every day because of job layoffs or employers who can no longer afford to offer insurance to their workers. Along with the health issues that come from living in poverty, inadequate health care coverage threatens the youth of our society. Education Children of poverty are more likely to fail in school achievement and are twice as likely to have repeated a grade, been suspended, or dropped out of high school.

The effect of poverty on children as it relates to education clearly demonstrates the possibility of poor outcomes. Children who are hungry are less likely to learn, children who are homeless are far less likely to adapt socially to a classroom setting, and children who consistently miss school because of illness will be unable to pass the tests of authorized curriculum. Children who live in poverty are more likely to have learning disability and are more likely to fall prey to gangs and crime. Children of poverty are also more likely to be exposed to lower quality schools as neighborhood conditions often determine the quality of schools.

Many poor children are at a disadvantage when it comes to education and struggle their entire lives because of this problem. Poverty contributes to low self esteem and causes a lack of confidence in children leading to lifelong deficiencies that threaten their economic futures. " Poorer health and social behavior due to poverty undermine education achievement" (Moore, 2009). Researchers also suggest that chronic stress due to poverty undermines children's working memory. It is evident that childhood poverty compromises educational prospects of children.

Conclusion Child poverty is a significant and growing social problem as poverty negatively affects children's development, health, home life, and educational goals. Children, who face these monumental hardships in our country because of poverty or the condition of not having basic human needs, are rapidly growing in numbers. The sociological implications of children living in poverty in the United States threaten the very social structure of our country. The stability pattern of social behavior in the United States can be uprooted by the problems associated with children who live in poverty.