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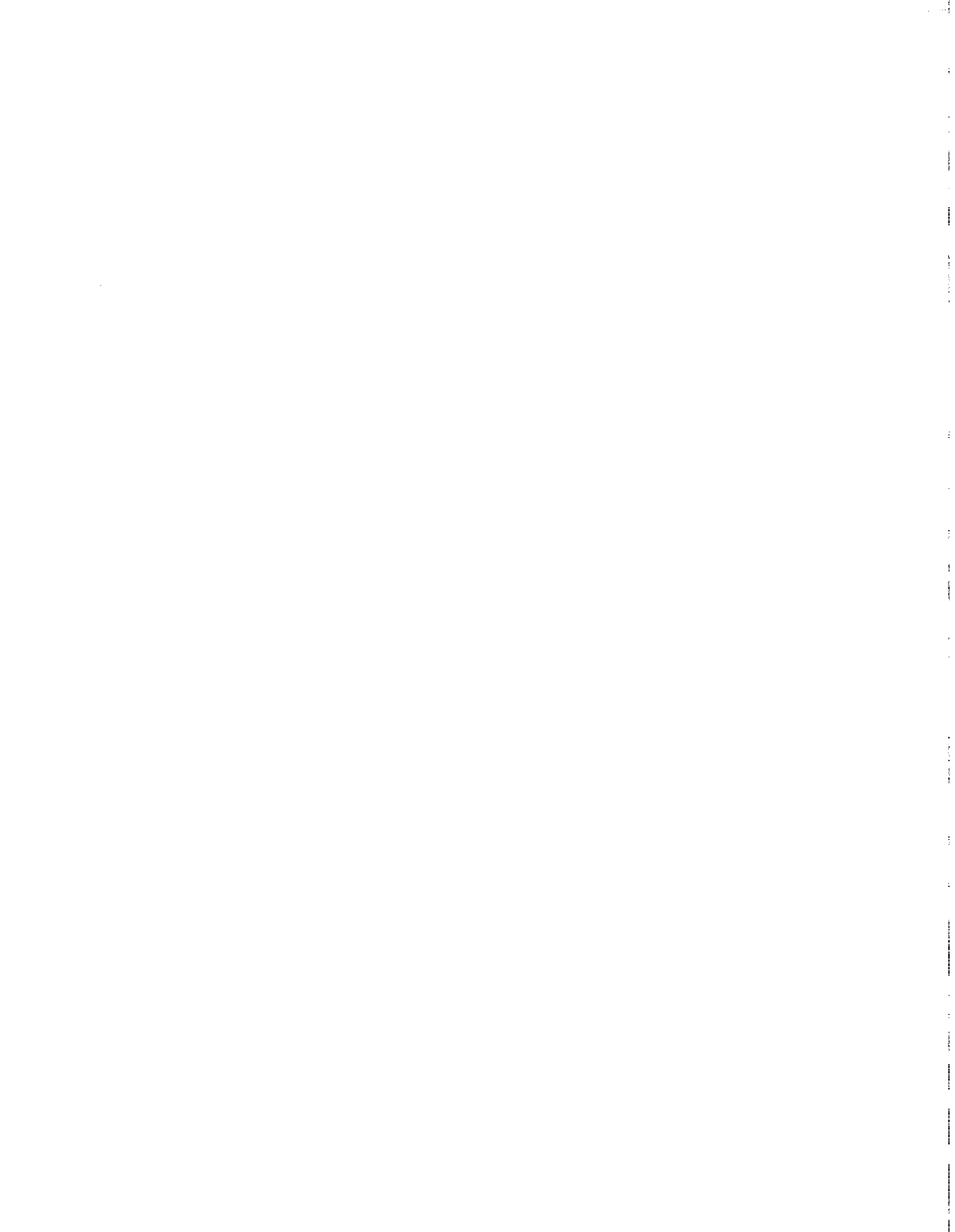
Report to Congressional Requesters

April 1994

SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Poverty and Diversity Challenge Schools Nationwide



United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Health, Education, and
Human Services Division

B-256807

April 29, 1994

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Chairman, Committee on Labor and Human Resources
United States Senate

The Honorable Claiborne Pell
Chairman, Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities
Committee on Labor and Human Resources
United States Senate

The face of school-age America is changing dramatically, with more children living in poverty and a rapidly growing number from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. These children are more likely than others to be at risk of academic failure. Addressing the needs of these children while striving to meet higher education standards and the national education goals[1] will pose increasing challenges for policymakers and school officials, especially in a time of tight budgets.

In light of these concerns and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, you requested that we examine changes in key demographic characteristics of school-age children between 1980 and 1990 and the problems such changes signal for schools. We testified on these issues before your Committee and Subcommittee on March 16, 1994, and this report presents our findings and additional data related to school-age children.

Results in Brief

During the 1980s an increasing number of our nation's school-age children[2] were poor, more racially and ethnically diverse, and at risk for school failure. The problems facing school-age America were not limited to our nation's large cities or a few states or geographic areas. Poor school-age children were found in concentrations across the country, in the Northeast as well as the South, and in rural as well as urban areas.[3] While these

[1]In 1990, the President and governors agreed on six goals for the nation's education system to be reached by the year 2000. They include, for example, having all students achieving at high standards in five core academic subjects.

[2]School-age children are children ages 5 to 17 living in families. Families are defined as households in which one or more persons are related. We chose this population because it is the same population used in ESEA's Title 1, Chapter 1, allocation formula.

[3]We analyzed the data by metropolitan and nonmetropolitan county classifications but substituted the terms urban and rural, respectively. We selected these geographic classifications because they are at the county level, and Chapter 1 funds are allocated according to county-level poverty statistics.

pockets were located throughout the country, between 1980 and 1990, the number of poor school-age children increased significantly in the West and the Southwest. During this same period, areas throughout the country experienced a dramatic increase in the number of at-risk children.[4]

These changes among school-age children signal extraordinary problems for schools across the nation. The growing number of poor and at-risk children means that many schools will have to address the needs of children who change schools frequently, are potential low achievers, and have other difficulties such as health and nutrition problems. Addressing the needs of children from a multitude of language and cultural backgrounds also poses a growing educational challenge for school districts.

ESEA—the federal government's primary vehicle for addressing the needs of poor and at-risk children—will also face increasing demands as the number of these children increases. Ignoring these demands now may cause greater problems later as needy children face a potential future of joblessness and lower incomes. Addressing these demands during a time of budget austerity will be difficult, however, and will challenge lawmakers and school officials to make every dollar count.

Background

Poor children and those with limited English proficiency (LEP) are more likely than others to experience academic failure, and the consequences of this failure follow them for their whole lives. These children are more likely to drop out of school, for example, and high school dropouts are more likely than high school graduates to be arrested and to become unmarried parents. These negative consequences not only harm the individual but also society in terms of higher crime and unemployment and a lower quality of life.

High concentrations of poverty present additional problems for schools. Research has shown that greater concentrations of poor children are associated with lower academic performance, magnifying the risk of academic failure.

Recognizing the links of these factors to academic achievement, the federal government provides educational assistance to poor and other at-risk populations through a variety of programs. Many of these programs

[4]At-risk children are those who, while not necessarily poor, face significant obstacles to achieving academic success in school. In this report, the term refers to children who live in immigrant families or linguistically isolated households, and children with limited English proficiency.

are part of ESEA, which specifies 46 programs that provide financial aid to meet the educational needs of the nation's children. In fiscal year 1994, the Congress appropriated about $8.6 billion under ESEA.

The largest of ESEA's programs is Chapter 1, Part A, of Title I. Chapter 1 targets financial aid through states to local educational agencies to assist educationally disadvantaged students attending schools with concentrations of low-income students. In fiscal year 1994, close to $7 billion was available through Chapter 1.

ESEA also provides other, smaller, programs to assist at-risk children. For example, Title VII, the Bilingual Education Act, provides financial assistance to local education agencies to develop bilingual education programs. The Emergency Immigrant Education Program under Title IV provides supplementary educational services to immigrant children enrolled in elementary and secondary schools. Programs for migrant children under Chapter 1, Part D, provide grants to state educational agencies for programs to meet the educational needs of these children. Funding for these three and other ESEA programs totaled more than $1.6 billion in fiscal year 1994.

The Congress is currently considering proposals for reauthorizing ESEA. These proposals intend to make ESEA a vehicle for raising educational standards for all children and reforming schools. They increase the amount of Chapter 1 funding directed towards areas with higher concentrations of poor school children. The proposals also include modifications of Chapter 1 to facilitate greater participation of LEP children and changes in the Bilingual Education Act that would seek to strengthen the act in many ways, including fostering the professional development of teachers.

Scope and Methodology

Our analysis is derived from a special tabulation of data from the 1980 and 1990 decennial censuses that we obtained from the Bureau of the Census in December 1992. The tabulation contains detailed information about children and their families, including race and ethnicity, family income, ability to speak English, and immigration status. The tabulation includes this information for all counties in the United States, which are classified as metropolitan or nonmetropolitan, and the data can be aggregated by metropolitan area, state, region, and the nation.[5]

[5]For further details on the content of the special tabulation and definitions of metropolitan and nonmetropolitan classifications, see appendix II of School-Age Demographics: Recent Trends Pose New Educational Challenges (GAO/HRD-93-105BR, Aug. 5, 1993).

Because the special tabulation is determined from the detailed sample files of the 1980 and 1990 decennial censuses, the data we present have associated sampling errors. Sampling errors were estimated at the 95-percent confidence level, and, generally, the sampling errors of national and state data did not exceed 1 percent.[6]

Data points used in this report appear in appendix I. Tables containing additional data on school-age children appear in appendix II. We conducted our reviews between September 1992 and March 1994 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

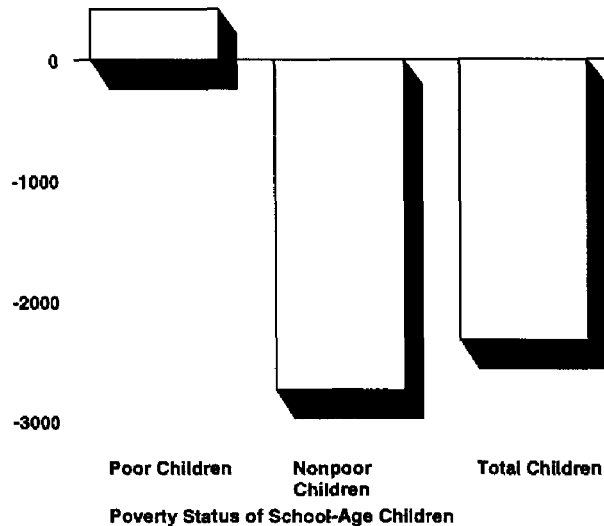
Number of Poor School-Age Children Increased Between 1980 and 1990 Even Though the Total Number Declined

Between 1980 and 1990, the number of poor school-age children increased by more than 400,000 to 7.6 million. This occurred even as the total school-age population declined by 5 percent, or 2.3 million, to 44.4 million (see fig. 1). Because of both changes, the national poverty rate for school-age children—the percentage of all school-age children who live in poor families—increased from 15.3 percent in 1980 to 17.1 percent in 1990. The poverty rate for all children has continued to increase since 1990. Recent evidence suggests that since 1990 both the total school-age population and the number of poor children have increased.[7]

[6]The 95-percent confidence level means that the chances are about 19 out of 20 that the actual number or percentage being estimated falls within the range defined by our estimate, plus or minus the sampling error. For example, if we estimated that 30 percent of a group has a particular characteristic and the sampling error is 1 percentage point, there is a 95-percent chance that the actual percentage is between 29 and 31.

[7]The increase in the number of all poor children is derived from the Bureau of the Census' 1992 Current Population Survey (CPS). Poverty rates determined from CPS data, however, are not directly comparable to our decennial census data because CPS does not collect annual data on school-age children.

Figure 1: Number of Poor School-Age Children Increased Although the Total Number of School-Age Children Declined

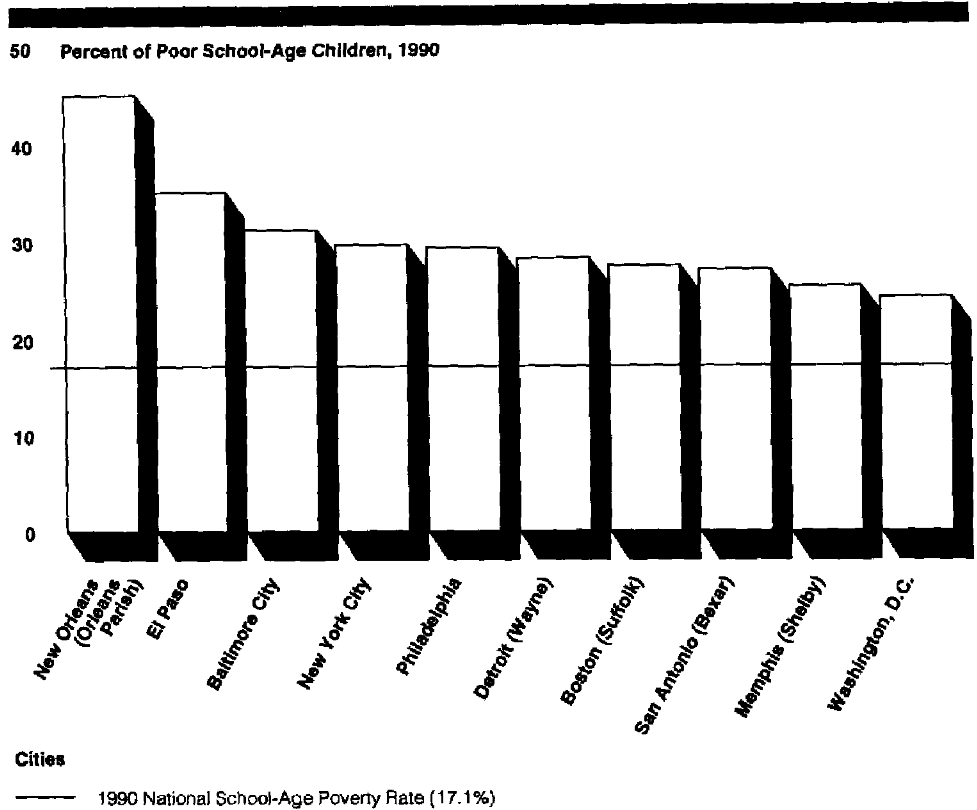


Poor Children Remained Concentrated in Pockets Throughout the Country

Large numbers of poor school-age children remained in areas that traditionally have had high concentrations of such children, including large cities in the East and South, rural counties, and the South. Overall, about 50 percent of all poor school-age children lived in either counties containing the nation's 25 largest cities or in rural counties. Urban and rural areas also exhibited high poverty rates. In 1990, the counties containing the nation's 25 largest cities registered a collective school-age poverty rate of 21.6 percent, while all rural counties registered a poverty rate of 20.4 percent.

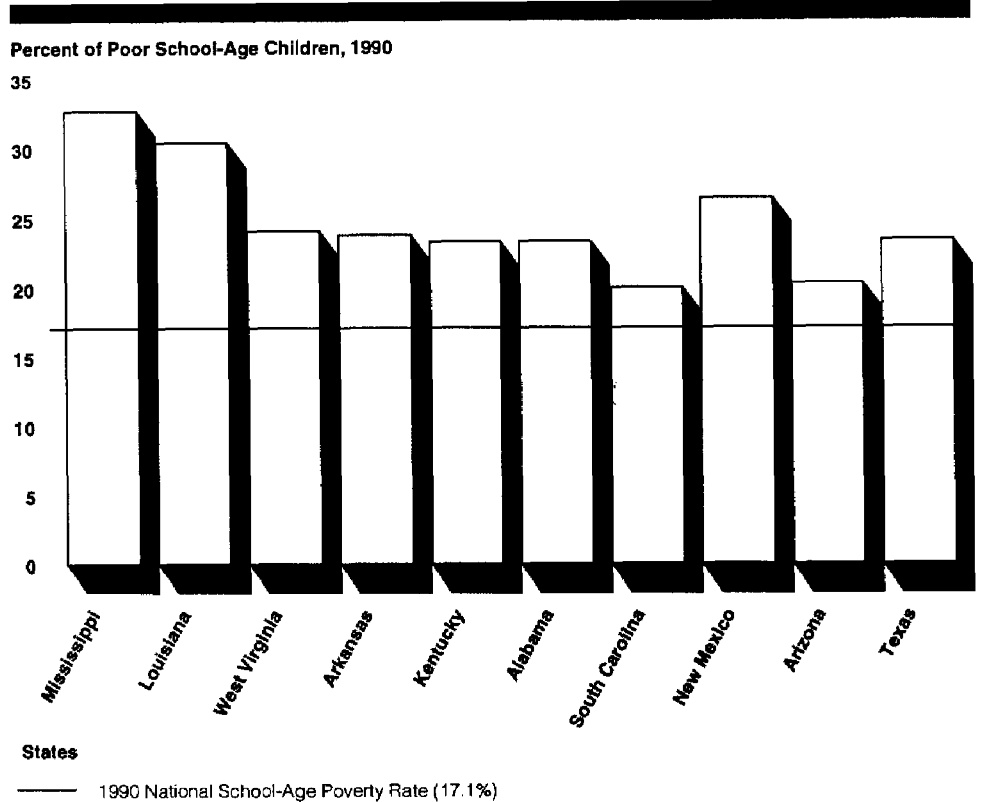
Urban school-age poverty also remained regionally concentrated. Of the 10 cities with the highest 1990 school-age poverty rates, 7 were located in either the East or the South (see fig. 2). For example, the poverty rate for Suffolk County, which contains the city of Boston, registered a poverty rate of 27.4 percent—over 10 points above the national average.

Figure 2: Seven of the 10 Cities With the Highest 1990 School-Age Poverty Rates Located in the East and South



Southern states continued to have some of the highest school-age poverty rates in the nation. In Mississippi, for example, in 1990 about one-third of all children were poor, almost twice the national average. Of the 10 states with the highest school-age poverty rates in the nation, 8 were located either in the South or were "border" states such as Kentucky and West Virginia (see fig. 3). Further, poverty rates increased in 7 of these 8 "high poverty" states during the 1980s.

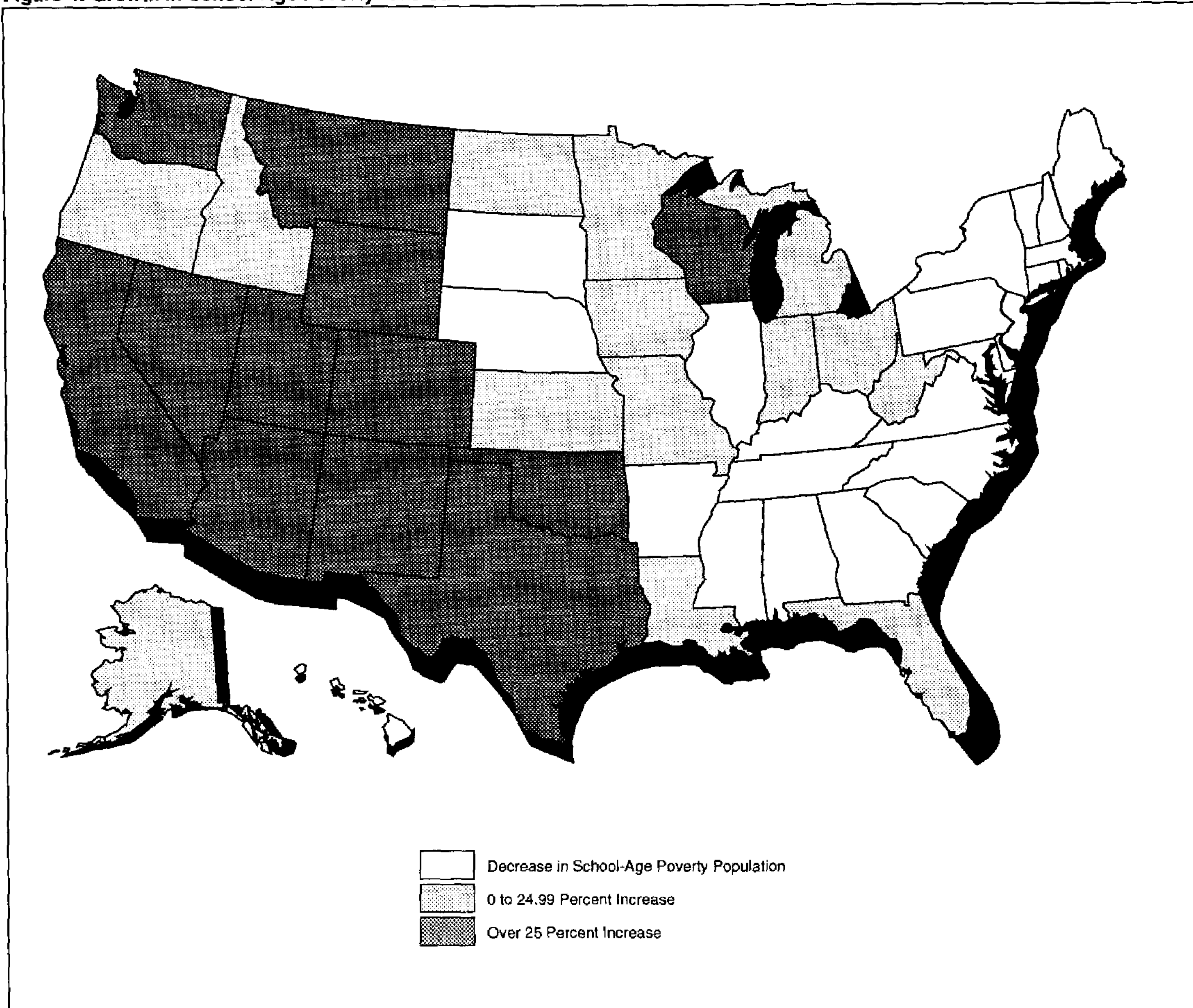
Figure 3: Eight of the 10 States With the Highest 1990 School-Age Poverty Rates Were in the South or in "Border" States



Number of Poor School-Age Children Increased Significantly in the West and Southwest

The number of poor school-age children grew substantially in the West and Southwest during the 1980s. Of the 12 states where the number of poor school-age children increased by more than 25 percent, 11 were located in the West and Southwest (see fig. 4).

Figure 4: Growth in School-Age Poverty Was Substantial in the West and the Southwest



Poverty rates in all 12 of these states grew more than the national rate, as did the concentration of total school-age poverty. California and Texas, the two states with the largest number of poor school-age children in 1990, also registered the largest numerical increases in poor school-age children

between 1980 and 1990. Together, these two states gained almost 467,000 poor children.

Poor School-Age Children Became More Racially and Ethnically Diverse

Similar to the total school-age population, poor school-age children became more racially and ethnically diverse.[8] The number of poor Hispanic children grew by over 43 percent, increasing by 481,000 to 1.6 million, and the number of poor Asian children more than doubled, increasing by 118,000 to 228,000. However, the number of poor white children declined by 5.9 percent, and the number of poor black children showed little change, falling by about 1 percent.

While the number of black children showed little change, this group experienced the highest rates of school-age poverty in both urban and rural areas. The poverty rate for black children ranged from 36 percent in urban counties to 47 percent in rural counties. Except for Asian children, rural children of each race and ethnic group had the highest school-age poverty rates.

Dramatic Increase in Number of At-Risk Children Throughout the Country

The number of children from at-risk groups, such as immigrant households, linguistically isolated (LI) households, and LEP children, grew substantially during the 1980s.[9] Although in 1990 their numbers remained fairly small—between 1.7 million to 2.3 million children or between 4 and 5 percent of all school-age children—each group increased by at least 20 percent during the 1980s.[10] For example, the number of children living in immigrant households rose by 24 percent during the decade, and the number of LEP children grew by almost 26 percent.

[8]We based our designations for race and ethnicity on the 1990 decennial Census question regarding Hispanic origin. The categories "white," "black," "Asian," and "American Indian/other" refer only to non-Hispanic members of these racial groups. All Hispanics, regardless of race, are included in the Hispanic category.

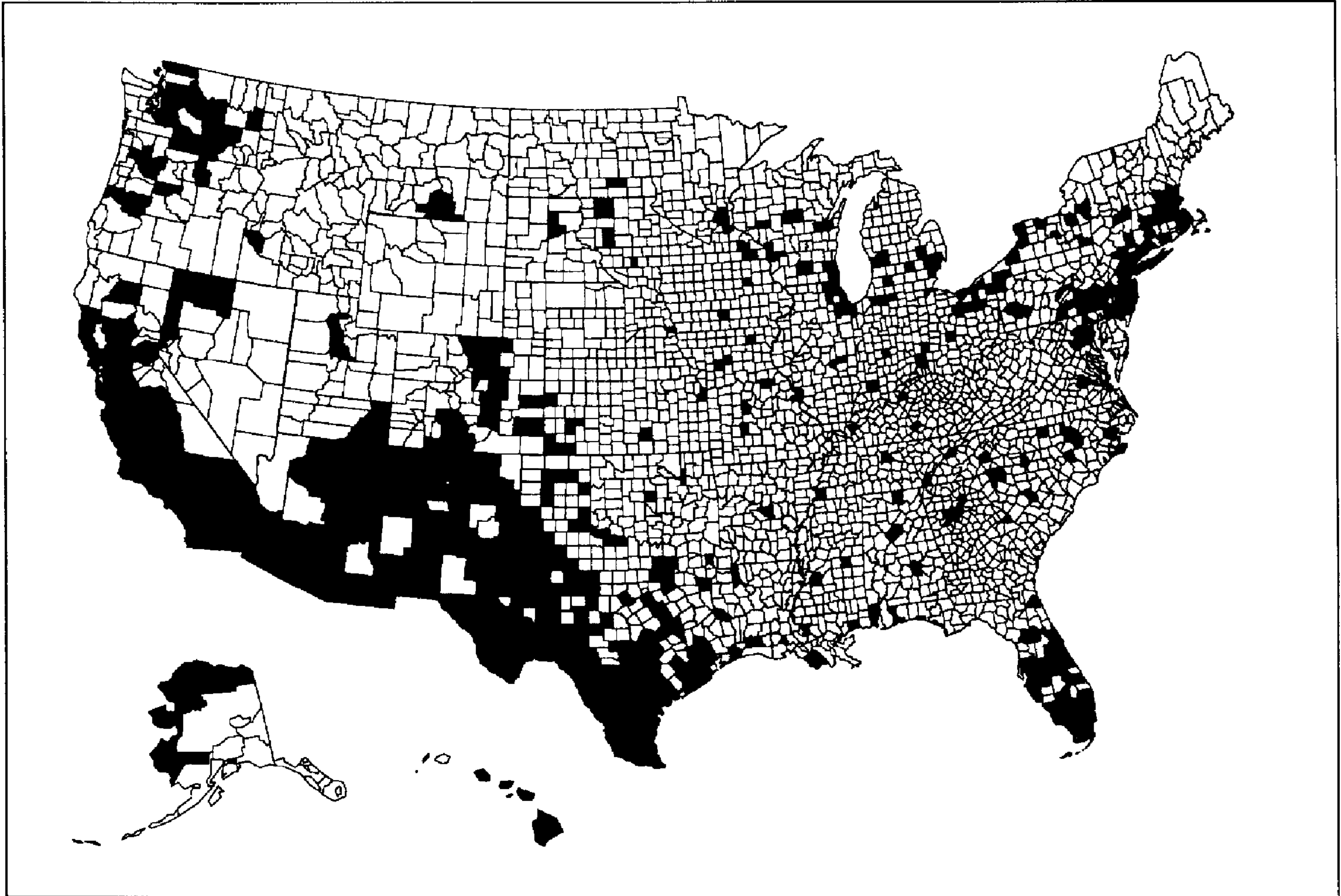
[9]Children from immigrant families are children who are foreign born or native born in families with a mother who came to the United States during the 10 years before the decennial Census. The Census Bureau classifies the ability to speak English into five categories: "speak English only," "speak English very well," "speak English well," "do not speak English well," and "do not speak English at all." Children in LI households are those living in households where no person 14 years or older speaks "English only" or no person 14 years or older who speaks a language other than English speaks "English very well." LEP Children are those in the last three categories.

[10]The immigrant, LI, and LEP populations are not additive because some children fall into more than one of the categories. In 1990, over 686,000 school-age children were in all three categories but 2.3 million children—over 5 percent of all school-age children—were in one of the three categories exclusively.

Large numbers of these at-risk populations were scattered in counties throughout the country. In 1990, about one-sixth of all counties (533 out of 3,140) located in 47 states had school-age populations where at least 500 children or 5 percent of all children were LEP (see fig. 5). Within these LEP concentrations, there also was considerable linguistic diversity. Almost one-third of the 533 counties had 10 or more languages represented.

However, significant numbers of at-risk children lived in only a few states. For example, California and Texas contained almost 50 percent of the nation's LEP children in 1990, and California alone accounted for nearly 40 percent of the national school-age immigrant population. New York, Illinois, and Florida also experienced significant concentrations of at-risk school-age children.

Figure 5: More Than 500 Counties Had Substantial Numbers of LEP Students in 1990



Note: Shaded areas indicate the 533 counties in which at least 5 percent or 500 students were LEP, according to 1990 decennial Census data. We chose 500 because this definition parallels the Emergency Immigrant Education Program under Title IV, which provides funds to districts if 500 or more (or 3 percent or more) of the students are immigrants who have been attending U.S. schools for fewer than 3 academic years.

Changes in School-Age Populations Signal Extraordinary Problems for Schools

The recent increases in the number of poor and at-risk school-age children pose problems for many schools across the nation. Compounding these problems is the increased mobility associated with poor and at-risk children. Because of the growing number of poor children, schools must contend with more children who are potential low achievers and have other difficulties. The diversity of poor and at-risk children could require schools to consider new educational strategies as well.

Schools Face Difficulties in Educating Children Who Change Schools Frequently

Poor and at-risk children face many difficulties in achieving academic success. One problem, for example, is the greater tendency for these children to change schools frequently. We found that one in six of the nation's third-graders changed schools frequently, attending at least three different schools since the beginning of first grade. These proportions were even greater for poor and some at-risk children.[11] Such change can disrupt children's educational programs, making learning and achievement difficult. Children who change schools frequently also are more likely to have behavior problems and have more problems related to nutrition and health than children who change schools less frequently. We reported that 41 percent of the children who changed schools frequently read below their grade level, compared with 26 percent of those third-graders who have never changed schools.

Children's Educational Needs Greater in Schools With High Poverty Concentrations

Our findings on the composition of school-age America also have implications for schools with high concentrations of poor children. We reported that schools with large numbers of poor children have a disproportionately higher share of low achievers than schools with fewer children in poverty.[12] One study recently reported that children in high-poverty schools were also more likely to have been retained in grade at some time during their school career and have higher rates of absenteeism.[13] Teachers in these schools are more likely to report that their students have difficulties that may affect their ability to perform in school, including health/hygiene problems and inadequate nutrition or rest. Because poor school-age children have become increasingly concentrated, many schools serve more low-achieving children than ever before and, thus, will have to serve children with more needs than ever before.

Many School Districts Face a Growing Educational Challenge in Meeting LEP Children's Needs

The nation's ability to achieve the national education goals is increasingly dependent on local districts' ability to educate children who are at-risk, such as immigrant, LEP, and LI children. Districts that serve large numbers of LEP children are in almost every state in the nation. They face a multitude of challenges beyond the obvious one of the language barrier

[11] See Elementary School Children: Many Change Schools Frequently, Harming Their Education (GAO/HEHS-94-45, Feb. 4, 1994).

[12] See Remedial Education: Modifying Chapter 1 Formula Would Target More Funds to Those Most in Need (GAO/HRD-92-16, July 28, 1992).

[13] Prospects: The Congressionally Mandated Study of Educational Growth and Opportunity, The Interim Report, U.S. Department of Education (1993).

because LEP children are often poor and have significant social, health, and emotional needs.

We found that many districts are struggling to educate large numbers of LEP children who also are linguistically and culturally diverse.[14] Some districts have difficulties in obtaining sufficient numbers of bilingual teachers and material in most languages. This situation was particularly true when student populations were diverse in language; one district that reported such difficulty, for example, had students from almost 90 different language backgrounds.

Implications for Education Policy

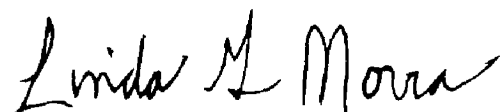
Ignoring these demographic changes—the growing number of poor and at-risk children in many parts of the nation—could mean a grim future for America and its children. To address these changes, policymakers and school officials will have to develop new strategies to assist poor and at-risk children to achieve at the high levels that will be demanded by new education standards. For example, schools will have to develop new ways to address the educational disruption experienced by children who change schools frequently, as well as the needs of children from varying languages and backgrounds.

ESEA, as the federal government's primary vehicle for addressing the educational needs of poor and at-risk children, will play an important role in the national response to the changes we have identified. As more schools serve growing numbers of needy children, they may require more Chapter 1 funds to serve them. In addition, many schools are facing large increases in LEP children even as federal funding has not kept pace in real terms. The Congress will encounter difficulty, however, assisting schools with many poor and at-risk children, given current fiscal constraints. This will challenge lawmakers and school officials to ensure that every dollar spent on education is spent wisely.

As arranged with your offices, we plan no further distribution of this report until 5 days after its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Education and other interested parties. We will also make copies available to others on request.

[14]See Limited English Proficiency: A Growing and Costly Educational Challenge Facing Many School Districts (GAO/HEHS-94-38, Jan. 28, 1994).

If you have any questions concerning this report, please call me at (202) 512-7014. Other major contributors to this report are listed in appendix III.



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Abbreviations

CPS	Current Population Survey
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
LEP	limited English proficiency
LI	linguistically isolated
PES	Post Enumeration Survey

Data Points for Figures in Letter

Table I.1: Data for Figure 1: Change in School-Age Population, by Poverty Status, 1980-90

	Number of school-age children		
	1980	**1990**	**Change, 1980-90**
Poor	7,152,784	7,571,259	418,475
Nonpoor	39,533,403	36,795,019	–2,738,384
Total	**46,686,187**	**44,366,278**	**–2,319,909**

Table I.2: Data for Figure 2: Ten Cities (Metropolitan Counties) With the Highest School-Age Poverty Rates, 1990

Cities (counties)[a] with highest school-age poverty rates	School-age poverty rate
New Orleans (Orleans Parish)	45.1
El Paso	35.1
Baltimore City	31.2
New York City (5 counties)	29.6
Philadelphia	29.3
Detroit (Wayne)	28.2
Boston (Suffolk)	27.4
San Antonio (Bexar)	27.0
Memphis (Shelby)	25.3
Washington, D.C.	24.1
National average	**17.1**

[a]The name of the county is in parentheses except where there is more than one county or if the county has the same name as the city.

Table I.3: Data for Figure 3: Ten States With the Highest School-Age Poverty Rates, 1990

States with highest school-age poverty rates	School-age poverty rate
Alabama	23.3
Arizona	20.3
Arkansas	23.8
Kentucky	23.3
Louisiana	30.4
Mississippi	32.7
New Mexico	26.4
South Carolina	20.0
Texas	23.4
West Virginia	24.1

Table I.4: Data for Figure 4: Percent Change in State School-Age Poverty Rate, 1990

State	Percent decrease	State	0- to 24.99% increase	State	Over 25% increase
Alabama	–10.1	Alaska	6.9	Arizona	51.7
Arkansas	–4.1	Florida	10.9	California	37.8
Connecticut	–22.9	Idaho	14.3	Colorado	30.2
Delaware	–31.8	Indiana	1.4	Montana	39.2
Georgia	–8.2	Iowa	0.8	Nevada	57.4
Hawaii	–10.6	Kansas	20.6	New Mexico	28.0
Illinois	–2.4	Louisiana	20.7	Oklahoma	29.2
Kentucky	–3.8	Michigan	13.4	Texas	38.5
Maine	–25.9	Minnesota	15.1	Utah	45.1
Maryland	–20.8	Missouri	8.0	Washington	31.8
Massachusetts	–20.1	North Dakota	5.2	Wisconsin	26.4
Mississippi	–1.4	Ohio	15.5	Wyoming	65.6
Nebraska	–1.2	Oregon	22.8		
New Hampshire	–30.0	West Virginia	6.7		
New Jersey	–33.5				
New York	–15.2				
North Carolina	–18.4				
Pennsylvania	–8.4				
Rhode Island	–17.3				
South Carolina	–8.9				
South Dakota	–6.5				
Tennessee	–12.9				
Vermont	–23.9				
Virginia	–18.0				

Characteristics of School-Age Children

Table II.1: Number of Poor School-Age Children and Poverty Rates in 1980 and 1990, for the Counties Containing the 25 Largest Cities in 1990

	Poor school-age children		All school-age children		Poverty rate	
City (county)[a]	**1980**	**1990**	**1980**	**1990**	**1980**	**1990**
New York City: total	392,393	341,655	1,278,303	1,155,197	30.70	29.58
(Bronx)	102,367	92,846	247,972	223,558	41.28	41.53
(Kings)	161,749	138,818	452,062	419,298	35.78	33.11
(New York)	64,962	60,322	179,995	163,752	36.09	36.84
(Queens)	55,234	42,437	321,450	283,262	17.18	14.98
(Richmond)	8,081	7,232	76,824	65,327	10.52	11.07
Los Angeles	260,128	327,370	1,440,449	1,545,639	18.06	21.18
Chicago:[b] total	214,519	194,235	1,219,052	1,026,808	17.60	18.92
(Cook)	209,859	190,250	1,074,143	885,263	19.54	21.49
(Dupage)	4,660	3,985	144,909	141,545	3.22	2.82
Houston:[b] total	72,266	123,991	579,782	645,174	12.46	19.22
(Fort Bend)	3,323	5,551	31,839	52,499	10.44	10.57
(Harris)	66,451	112,919	515,012	553,581	12.90	20.40
(Montgomery)	2,492	5,521	32,931	39,094	7.57	14.12
Philadelphia	94,565	75,226	322,972	257,225	29.28	29.25
San Diego	45,718	60,818	336,149	404,544	13.60	15.03
Detroit (Wayne)	99,397	110,702	505,971	391,999	19.64	28.24
Dallas:[b] total	49,006	68,072	399,168	443,014	12.28	15.37
(Collin)	2,512	3,190	38,067	52,979	6.60	6.02
(Dallas)	44,193	60,863	326,598	334,086	13.53	18.22
(Denton)	1,767	3,193	29,644	49,271	5.96	6.48
(Kaufman)	256	451	1,355	1,155	18.89	39.05
(Rockwall)	278	375	3,504	5,523	7.93	6.79
Phoenix (Maricopa)	36,992	59,115	304,423	375,915	12.15	15.73
San Antonio (Bexar)	57,086	65,905	229,741	243,761	24.85	27.04
San Jose (Santa Clara)	21,977	24,068	262,526	239,795	8.37	10.04
Baltimore City	49,368	37,340	155,891	119,525	31.67	31.24
Indianapolis (Marion)	22,157	23,504	156,177	136,885	14.19	17.17
San Francisco	15,577	14,508	82,103	78,830	18.97	18.40

(continued)

City (county)[a]	Poor school-age children 1980	Poor school-age children 1990	All school-age children 1980	All school-age children 1990	Poverty rate 1980	Poverty rate 1990
Jacksonville (Duval)	25,297	20,614	118,283	118,093	21.39	17.46
Milwaukee:[b] total	30,938	46,321	273,849	247,356	11.30	18.73
(Milwaukee)	27,712	43,465	183,392	167,370	15.11	25.97
(Washington)	1,028	726	21,219	19,646	4.84	3.70
(Waukesha)	2,198	2,130	69,238	60,340	3.17	3.53
Memphis (Shelby)	45,501	39,657	168,026	156,888	27.08	25.28
Washington, D.C.	27,949	18,375	106,154	76,328	26.33	24.07
Boston (Suffolk)	29,623	22,931	104,793	83,741	28.27	27.38
Seattle (King)	16,928	19,934	227,268	229,547	7.45	8.68
El Paso	35,567	48,284	122,508	137,413	29.03	35.14
Cleveland (Cuyahoga)	44,384	47,435	288,429	234,939	15.39	20.19
Columbus:[b] total	25,715	28,139	191,634	179,844	13.42	15.65
(Fairfield)	1,706	2,167	22,209	20,561	7.68	10.54
(Franklin)	24,009	25,972	169,425	159,283	14.17	16.31
New Orleans (Orleans Parish)	43,569	43,783	115,097	96,999	37.85	45.14
Nashville (Davidson)	14,077	14,356	85,852	78,343	16.40	18.32
Total	**1,770,697**	**1,876,338**	**9,074,600**	**8,703,802**	**19.51**	**21.56**

[a]The name of the county is in parentheses except if the city is located in one county and that county has the same name as the city.

[b]Most of the city is located in one county: Chicago - Cook County, Houston - Harris County, Dallas - Dallas County, Milwaukee - Milwaukee County.

Table II.2: Change in Number of Poor Rural and Poor Urban School-Age Children, Rural and Urban School-Age Poverty Rates, 1980-90

Geographic area	Poor school-age children 1980	Poor school-age children 1990	Poor school-age children Percent change, 1980-90	School-age poverty rate 1980	School-age poverty rate 1990
Rural	2,141,296	2,194,088	2.47	18.6	20.4
Urban	5,011,488	5,377,171	7.3	14.3	16.0
Total	**7,152,784**	**7,571,259**	**5.85**	**15.3**	**17.1**

Table II.3: Change in Number of Poor School-Age Children, 1980-90, and 1990 School-Age Poverty Rates, by State

State	Number of poor school-age children		Change in poor school-age children, 1980-90		School-age poverty rate, 1990
	1980	1990	Numerical	Percent	
Alabama	198,674	178,559	–20,115	–10.1	23.3
Alaska	10,207	10,910	703	6.9	9.6
Arizona	90,072	136,626	46,554	51.7	20.3
Arkansas	111,691	107,170	–4,521	–4.0	23.8
California	651,039	897,104	246,065	37.8	17.3
Colorado	63,062	82,083	19,021	30.2	13.8
Connecticut	65,610	50,611	–14,999	–22.9	9.8
Delaware	18,098	12,342	–5,756	–31.8	11.0
District of Columbia	27,949	18,375	–9,574	–34.3	24.1
Florida	311,021	344,969	33,948	10.9	17.5
Georgia	249,998	229,402	–20,596	–8.2	18.9
Hawaii	22,721	20,316	–2,405	–10.6	10.5
Idaho	28,254	32,279	4,025	14.2	14.5
Illinois	336,783	328,801	–7,982	–2.4	15.9
Indiana	130,984	132,837	1,853	1.4	12.8
Iowa	64,847	65,378	531	0.8	12.7
Kansas	49,397	59,578	10,181	20.6	12.8
Kentucky	168,030	161,587	–6,443	–3.8	23.3
Louisiana	221,714	267,555	45,841	20.7	30.4
Maine	36,249	26,853	–9,396	–25.9	12.4
Maryland	104,310	82,612	–21,698	–20.8	10.5
Massachusetts	140,978	112,691	–28,287	–20.1	12.2
Michigan	254,479	288,557	34,078	13.4	16.7
Minnesota	80,983	93,242	12,259	15.1	11.4
Mississippi	180,439	177,895	–2,544	–1.4	32.7
Missouri	139,765	150,951	11,186	8.0	16.3
Montana	21,083	29,340	8,257	39.2	18.4
Nebraska	37,105	36,655	–450	–1.2	12.0
Nevada	14,653	23,065	8,412	57.4	11.8
New Hampshire	17,314	12,117	–5,197	–30.0	6.4
New Jersey	202,184	134,371	–67,813	–33.5	10.8
New Mexico	64,849	82,984	18,135	28.0	26.4
New York	626,784	531,845	–94,939	–15.1	18.1
North Carolina	221,699	180,954	–40,745	–18.4	16.0
North Dakota	18,941	19,931	990	5.2	15.9

(continued)

State	Number of poor school-age children		Change in poor school-age children, 1980-90		School-age poverty rate, 1990
	1980	1990	Numerical	Percent	
Ohio	279,040	322,358	43,318	15.5	16.2
Oklahoma	92,894	120,018	27,124	29.2	19.9
Oregon	55,332	67,926	12,594	22.8	13.4
Pennsylvania	310,663	284,692	–25,971	–8.4	14.5
Rhode Island	23,353	19,306	–4,047	–17.3	12.4
South Carolina	143,925	131,053	–12,872	–8.9	20.0
South Dakota	28,336	26,501	–1,835	–6.5	18.8
Tennessee	194,569	169,437	–25,132	–12.9	19.5
Texas	573,661	794,774	221,113	38.5	23.4
Utah	33,895	49,183	15,288	45.1	10.9
Vermont	14,048	10,695	–3,353	–23.9	10.7
Virginia	158,083	129,565	–28,518	–18.0	12.5
Washington	84,403	111,198	26,795	31.8	12.8
West Virginia	74,934	79,980	5,046	6.7	24.1
Wisconsin	96,167	121,585	25,418	26.4	13.4
Wyoming	7,515	12,443	4,928	65.6	12.7
Total	**7,152,784**	**7,571,259**	**418,475**	**5.9**	**17.1**

Table II.4: Racial and Ethnic Characteristics of Poor School-Age Children, 1980-90

Race/ethnicity	Number of poor school-age children			School-age poverty rate, 1990
	1980	1990	Percent change, 1980-90	
White	3,323,291	3,128,969	–5.9	10.1
Black	2,462,667	2,436,150	–1.1	37.7
Asian	110,144	228,355	107.3	16.4
Hispanic	1,123,585	1,604,865	42.8	31.2
American Indian/ other races	133,097	172,920	29.9	34.4
Total	**7,152,784**	**7,571,259**	**5.9**	**17.1**

Table II.5: Poverty Rates of Rural and Urban School-Age Children, by Race and Ethnicity, 1990

	Number of poor school-age children		School-age poverty rate, 1990	
Race/ethnicity	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
White	1,314,701	1,814,268	15.1	8.2
Hispanic	208,818	1,396,047	37.5	30.4
Black	550,503	1,885,647	47.3	35.6
Asian	12,942	215,413	14.5	16.5
American Indian/ other races	107,124	65,796	41.5	26.8
Total	**2,194,088**	**5,377,171**	**20.4**	**16.0**

Table II.6: Change in Number of School-Age Children in Each At-Risk Group, 1980-90

	Number of school-age children		Change in school-age children, 1980-90	
At-risk group	1980	1990	Numerical	Percent
Immigrant	1,871,791	2,319,826	448,035	23.9
Limited English proficiency	1,838,657	2,311,158	472,501	25.7
Linguistically isolated	1,440,643	1,726,829	286,186	19.9

Table II.7: Poverty Rates of At-Risk School-Age Children, 1990

At-risk group	Poverty rate
Immigrant	30.56
Limited English proficiency	36.63
Linguistically isolated	41.26

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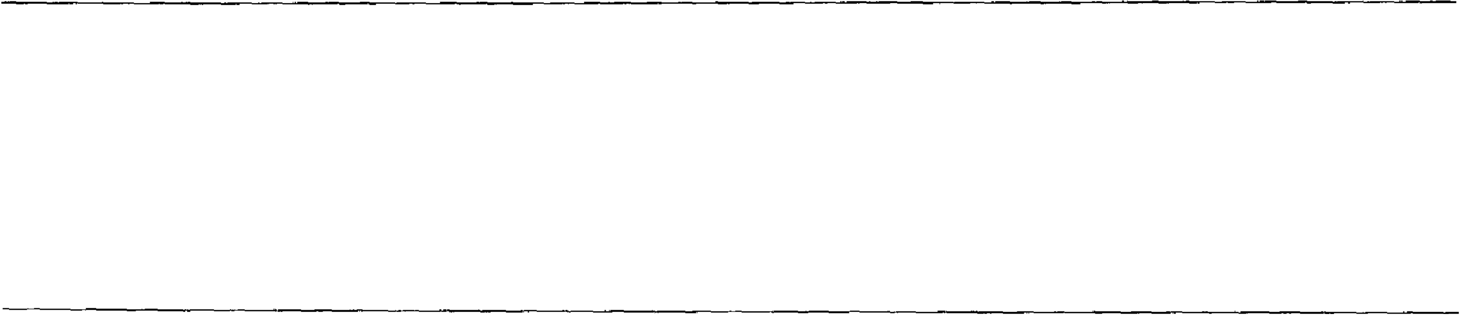

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