

# It's time. Make yourself count.

Census 2010



## The 2010 Census is Important for Young Children and the People Who Love Them

Every baby and young child should be counted in the 2010 census so that they and their families will have access to important nutrition, health care, child care, and educational programs. Accurate statistics about children and their families are important to policymakers, social service providers, and foundations in determining where resources are needed and in evaluating the reach and effectiveness of current programs. When infants and preschoolers are missed in the census, planners fail to build enough child care centers and classrooms. The result is overbooked preschools and overcrowded classrooms.

Historically, young children have been among those missed most often, with minority children at greatest risk of being uncounted. In the 2000 census, children under age 5 were missed more than any other age group according to a Census Bureau analysis. An estimate by the Annie E. Casey Foundation suggests that about 750,000 children under the age of 5 were missed in the 2000 census. That's four percent of all children that age, and it's more than the entire population of Atlanta and 80 percent of the population of Detroit. More than five percent of Black boys and girls under the age of five were missed in 2000.

### The census affects the health, education, and well-being of millions of children.

Census information is used by state and federal governments to allocate money for programs that are especially important for young children in lower-income and immigrant families. Governments use data on children to estimate needs for child care, schools, health care, and other services. Undercounts can result in social services being poorly targeted. Families and communities in areas with many uncounted children don't get the resources they deserve.

A newborn baby who is missed by the 2010 count will be at a disadvantage for the next ten years – until he or she is in fifth grade. And none of his or her classmates will get their fair share of public resources. Children in cities and states with the high undercount rates are especially at risk for losing out on after-school programs, sports leagues, parks or other extra-curricular activities. That's why it's important for everyone in the community to work together to make sure that every young child is counted.

### Why are so many children missed?

There are a number of reasons why young children are missed in the census:

- Millions of children live in hard-to-count areas and with lower-income families, where the census is more likely to miss the entire household.
- Young children in large families may go uncounted because the census questionnaire has space for complete information on only six people (eight people on bilingual English-Spanish questionnaires), and many parents tend to fill in oldest members of the household first. In 2007, more than 6 million children lived in households of seven or more people. (The form includes space for the names and ages of an additional six people.)
- Some children may have transient or complicated living arrangements, moving among various relatives or caregivers. Foster children, children living with grandparents or other relatives, and children whose parents are divorced are also more likely to be missed. In 2007 there were 4 million children living with neither parent.
- Language barriers also contribute to the undercount of children in households where people speak a language other than English.

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According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, it will be more difficult to achieve an accurate count of young children in 2010 than it was in 2000 because:

- Minority children have higher undercount rates, and the share of children age 0 to 4 who are Hispanic or a racial minority rose from 41 percent in 2000 to 47 percent in 2008.
- More children live in families with one or more undocumented immigrants, who are themselves historically at risk of being undercounted. Nearly half (47 percent) of unauthorized-immigrant households are couples with children. The number of children of all ages with at least one unauthorized immigrant parent increased from 3.9 million in 2003 to 5.5 million in 2008.
- The foreclosure crisis has caused more families to double up in one housing unit or move to other temporary and unusual housing situations. These uncertain housing arrangements increase the chances that displaced families will be missed or will decline to respond to the census out of fear of landlords or creditors. At least two million children could be affected by the housing crisis.

## The value in getting every child counted

Every year, more than \$400 billion in federal funds is allocated based on the census. Each child who goes uncounted could cost his or her community more than \$14,000 over 10 years in urgently needed federal funds. Here are just some of the programs for individuals and communities whose funding is based in whole or in part on census counts. (Unless noted, figures are for fiscal year 2008 based on analysis by the Brookings Institution.)

- **Title 1: Support for schools serving low-income students – \$7.7 billion**  
Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, currently reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act, provides financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high numbers or high percentages of low-income children. In the 2006-07 school year, Title I served more than 17 million children.
- **State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) – \$7.1 billion**  
SCHIP was created in 1997 to reduce the number of uninsured children by providing subsidized insurance to children of the working poor. SCHIP covers more than 7 million children.
- **Head Start – \$5.7 billion**  
The Head Start program provides grants to local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to provide child development services to economically disadvantaged children and families, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the early reading and math skills they need to be successful in school.
- **Foster Care – \$4.3 billion**  
The Federal Foster Care Program helps to provide safe and stable out-of-home care for children until they are safely returned home, permanently placed with adoptive families, or placed in other planned arrangements for permanency.
- **Child Care and Development Fund – \$4.9 billion**  
The Child Care and Development Fund assists low-income families, families receiving temporary public assistance, and those transitioning from public assistance in obtaining child care so they can work or attend training/education.

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Children in lower-income families can also benefit from resources that provide housing for their families and economic development for their communities:

- **Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers Program – \$15.3 Billion**  
Section 8 vouchers are the nation's leading source of housing assistance for low-income elderly, people with disabilities, and families with children, helping approximately two million households to secure affordable rental housing in the private market.
- **Community Development Block Grants – \$4.5 billion**  
Federal Community Development Block Grants to larger cities and urban counties are designed to improve the quality of life for families in low-income communities living at or below the federal poverty threshold, by providing low-income housing and expansion of economic opportunities.

## Community groups can help make sure all young children are counted.

Community-based organizations can work with local census officials and Complete Count Committees to make sure that parents and other guardians understand the importance of counting every child and how to include children in shared custody arrangements or other nontraditional households. People and organizations that parents and children trust can be effective advocates for the census in helping overcome the obstacles to getting an accurate count, such as distrust of the government or lack of understanding of the importance of the census.

For more information on counting children, see the fact sheet **How to Count Kids 0-5 in the Census** at <http://www.civilrights.org/census/census-resources/factsheet-how-to-count-kids-0-5-in-the-census.pdf>