



# Children & Families

## Cultural and Educational Challenges

- Communities are becoming increasingly diverse and in order for early childhood educators to be effective they must be sensitive and responsive to children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- If current population trends continue, by the year 2010 55% of America's children will be white, 22% will be Hispanic, 16% will be black, and 6% will be Asian or Pacific Islander.

## Poverty Facts About Children

- In the United States 18% of children under age 18 and 24% of children under age 6 live in poverty. It is estimated that 12 million children do not have enough food to meet their basic needs and approximately 3.2 million are suffering from hunger.
- In the United States 15% of children under age 18--and 24% of those living in poverty--are not covered by health insurance.
- Approximately one-third of children and nearly one-half of black children born in the United States have at least one health risk at birth.
- More than 20% of 2-year-olds in the United States are not fully immunized. Source <http://www.naeyc.org/>
- The Census Bureau reports for 1996, the U.S. population of all ages is 266, 218,000. Of the total U.S. population 70,650,000 are children under age 18 and 14,463,000 of the children under age 18 are poor. Consequently, poor children are 20.5% of all children under age 18, 40.0% of all poor people of any age and 5.4% of the total population in the United States.
- Source - Adapted from <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5704.html>

## Key Facts About Children and Families in Crisis

- In 1997, close to one million children were confirmed as victims of abuse and neglect. An estimated three million were reported to state child protective service agencies as suspected victims of child abuse and neglect.
- Children whose parents abuse alcohol or drugs are at greater risk of abuse and neglect.
  - An estimated 40-80 percent of the families who become child protective service cases have problems with alcohol or drugs.
  - In 1998, 88 percent of the states named substance abuse as one of the top two problems challenging families reported to child protective service agencies for maltreatment; poverty and economic status were the second.
- An estimated 547,000 children were in foster care as of March 31, 1999—a 35 percent increase since 1990. Approximately 117,000 of these are waiting for permanent adoptive families.
- In an estimated 30 to 60 percent of families where some form of family violence occurs, both child maltreatment and domestic violence occur.
- In 1998, 5.4 million children lived in households headed by a relative other than a parent. Thirty-nine percent of these children—2.13 million—lived in these households with no parent present.
- Source - <http://www.childrensdefense.org/>

## Working Families

- In the United States the majority of mothers with children under age 18 work, including 59% of those with infants and 74% of those with school-aged children.
- Approximately 13 million infants, toddlers, and preschool children are regularly in non-parental care in the United States, including 45% of children younger than one year.
- The Census Bureau reports that approximately 50% of working families rely on child care providers to help them care for their children while they work; 25% rely on relatives for child care; and nearly 25% arrange work schedules so that no child care is needed (e.g. parents work different hours or days; one parent works during school hours and is home after school).
- [http://www.naeyc.org/woyc/guide/woyc\\_facts.asp](http://www.naeyc.org/woyc/guide/woyc_facts.asp)

## Teens

- In the course of a year, an estimated 500,000 to 1.5 million young people run away from or are forced out of their homes, and an estimated 200,000 are homeless and living on the streets. The ages of these runaways range from younger than 11 to over 18, with more than half being age 15 or 16.
- Approximately 66 percent of the youth who are runaways seek assistance from youth shelters because of problems with parental relationships.
- Source - <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/facts/youth.htm>
- 8,000,000 or more people in the United States have an eating disorder. 90% are women - Victims may be rich or poor. Eating disorders usually start in the teens but may begin as early as age 8.
- Source: National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders

## *For more information:*

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Administration for Children and Families:**  
<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/opa/facts/>

**National Education Association:** <http://www.nea.org/>

**National Association of the Young Child:** <http://www.naeyc.org/>

**Annie E. Casey Foundation:** <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/kc2000/>

**Children's Defense Fund:** <http://www.childrensdefense.org>

**Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics:** <http://www.childstats.gov>.

**National Center for Education Statistics:** <http://nces.ed.gov/>

**National Child Care Information Center:** <http://nccic.org>

**National Education Goals Panel:** <http://www.negp.gov>

**Head Start Program Facts** <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/opa/facts/headst.htm>

