

PF 3.1

RESIDENTIAL STABILITY: PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18¹⁴ WHO HAVE MOVED WITHIN THE LAST YEAR

Research has demonstrated a strong relationship between residential stability and child well-being, with frequent moves associated with such negative outcomes as dropping out of high school, delinquency, depression, and nonmarital teen births. Some researchers theorize that these negative associations may result from a lack of rootedness in a local community and its institutions on the part of frequent movers.¹⁵

The United States has long been a highly mobile society. In 1960, 21 percent of children under the age of 18 had moved to a new residence during the previous year. The general trend since that time has been toward somewhat lower rates of mobility, with a rate of 18 percent in 1996 (see Table PF 3.1.A).

Differences by Age. Young children were the most mobile of any child age group (see Table PF 3.1.B). In 1996, 25 percent of children between the ages of 1 and 4 had changed residences in the previous year, compared with 18 percent among children ages 5 through 9, 15 percent for ages 10 through 14, and 13 percent for youth ages 15 through 17.

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin. For all children under age 18 in 1996, white children were the least mobile, with 17 percent moving during the previous year compared with 22 percent of black children and 23 percent of Hispanic children.

Table PF 3.1.A

Percentage of children in the United States under age 18^a who have moved within the last year: selected years, 1960-1996

	1960	1970	1981	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1996
Total	21	19	18	18	17	18	17	17	18

^aEstimates are based on children ages 1 and older at time of survey.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, "Geographic Mobility," various years; Estimates for 1996 from "Geographic Mobility, Detailed Tables," P20-497u.

¹⁴ Estimates are based on children ages 1 and older at time of survey.

¹⁵ Wood, D., Halfon, N., Scarlata, D., Newacheck, P., and Nessim, S. 1993. "Impact of Family Relocation on Children's Growth, Development, School Function, and Behavior." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 270:1334-1338.
Coleman, J. 1988. "Social Capital and the Creation of Human Capital." *American Journal of Sociology* 94:s95-s120.

Table PF 3.1.B

Percentage of children in the United States under age 18^a who have moved within the last year, by age and by race and Hispanic origin:^b 1990 -1996^c

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1996
All children						
All ages	18	17	18	17	17	18
Ages 1-4	24	23	22	23	22	25
Ages 5-9	19	18	18	17	17	18
Ages 10-14	15	14	15	14	13	15
Ages 15-17	15	15	14	14	15	13
White children						
All ages	18	17	17	16	16	17
Ages 1-4	23	22	21	22	21	24
Ages 5-9	18	17	17	16	16	18
Ages 10-14	14	13	15	13	12	14
Ages 15-17	14	14	14	14	13	12
Black children						
All ages	21	21	21	20	20	22
Ages 1-4	26	26	27	26	25	29
Ages 5-9	22	22	22	20	22	22
Ages 10-14	19	17	18	17	16	18
Ages 15-17	18	16	16	14	18	14
Hispanic children						
All ages	25	21	24	23	21	23
Ages 1-4	32	27	27	28	26	31
Ages 5-9	28	20	25	24	20	23
Ages 10-14	18	19	21	19	15	18
Ages 15-17	21	19	19	20	21	19

^aEstimates are based on children ages 1 and older at time of survey.

^bPersons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Estimates for whites and blacks include persons of Hispanic origin.

^cEstimates for 1995 are not available.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, "Geographic Mobility," various years; Estimates for 1996 from "Geographic Mobility, Detailed Tables," P20-497u.

PF 3.2

CHILDREN IN POOR AND VERY POOR NEIGHBORHOODS

Recent research has demonstrated a significant relationship between neighborhood quality and the well-being of the children and youth who live in them. Even after controlling for relevant personal and family background characteristics, residence in a low-income neighborhood has been shown to have negative effects on early childhood development and to be associated with higher rates of dropping out of high school and teen parenthood.¹⁶

Overall, in 1990, one in 20 American children lived in a very poor neighborhood – defined as a census tract – in which 40 percent or more of the residents live in poor families.¹⁷ More than one in five children lived in neighborhoods in which 20 percent or more of the residents live in poor families (see Table PF 3.2).

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin. Black children were the most likely to live in very poor neighborhoods, followed by Hispanic children, and – at a much lower rate – white children. Almost 19 percent of black children live in very poor neighborhoods, compared to 11.3 percent of Hispanic children and 1.2 percent of white children (see Figure PF 3.2).

Differences by Family Structure. Children in single-parent families were much more likely to live in a very poor neighborhood than were children in two-parent families (12.5 percent versus 2.7 percent) (see Figure PF 3.2).

Differences by Family Income. More than one in six poor children (17.5 percent) lived in very poor neighborhoods, compared with 2.3 percent of nonpoor children.

¹⁶Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G., Klebanov, P., and Sealand, N. 1994. “Do Neighborhoods Influence Child and Adolescent Behavior?” *American Journal of Sociology* 99(2):353-395. See also Crane, J. 1991. “The Epidemic Theory of Ghettos and Neighborhood Effects on Dropping Out of High School and Teenage Childbearing.” *American Journal of Sociology* 96(5):1126-1159.

¹⁷While trend data for children are not available, trends for the entire population show that between 1970 and 1990, the percent of all persons living in very poor neighborhoods increased from 3 percent to 4.5 percent, and the number nearly doubled from 4.1 million to 8 million. See Jargowsky, P.A. 1996. *Poverty and Place: Ghettos, Barrios, and the American City*, Table 2.1. New York: Russell Sage.

Table PF 3.2

Percentage of children in the United States who live in poor neighborhoods by age, family structure, family poverty status, race and Hispanic origin:^a 1990

	Neighborhood Poverty Level	
	20+ % Poor	40+ % Poor
Total	22.9	5.0
Age of child		
Under age 5	23.5	5.3
Ages 5-17	22.7	4.9
Family structure		
Two-parent	17.3	2.7
Single-parent	41.2	12.5
Family poverty		
Poor	54.6	17.5
Nonpoor	16.0	2.3
Race and Hispanic origin		
White, non-Hispanic and other	12.2	1.2
Black	56.4	18.6
Hispanic	46.6	11.3

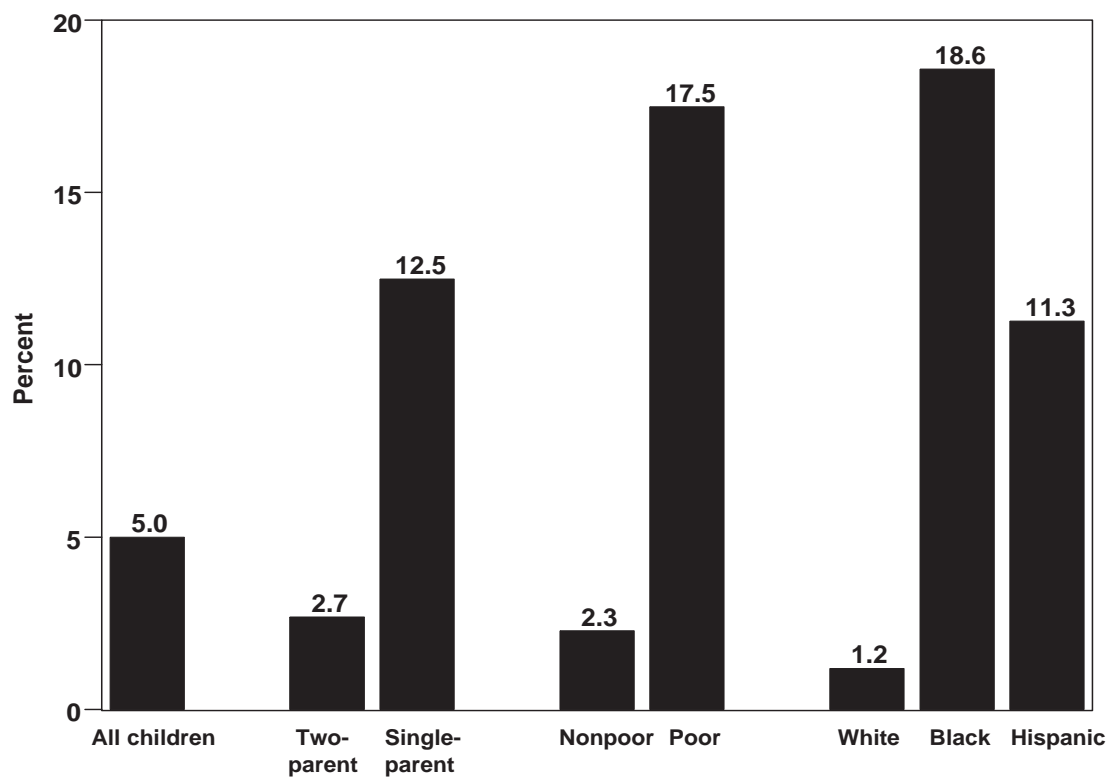
^aPersons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Estimates for whites and blacks include persons of Hispanic origin. Estimates for whites also include all other persons not white, black, or Hispanic.

Note: Neighborhoods are defined as census tracts and block-numbering areas. Both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas are included. The poverty rate is the percentage of all persons in the neighborhood living in families below the federal poverty line in 1990.

Source: Tabulations by Paul A. Jargowski from 1990 Census Summary Tape File 3A (CD-ROM version).

Figure PF 3.2

Percentage of children in the United States who live in very poor (40+% poverty) neighborhoods, by family structure, family poverty status, and race and Hispanic origin:^a 1990



^aPersons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Estimates for whites and blacks include persons of Hispanic origin. Estimates for whites also include all other persons not white, black, or Hispanic.

Note: Neighborhoods are defined as census tracts and block-numbering areas. Both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas are included. The poverty rate is the percent of all persons in the neighborhood living in families below the poverty line in 1990.

Source: Tabulations by Paul A. Jargowski from 1990 Census Summary Tape File 3A (CD-ROM version).

