



Carsey: Recession's Impact On Young Child Poverty Uneven Throughout Nation

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DURHAM, N.H. – In 2008, America's recession affected poverty rates for children under six years old unevenly, with rates in the rural Midwest rising significantly while rates in Northeastern central cities fell slightly. And in the rural South, where more than 30 percent of young children are poor, poverty rates for young children persisted at a very high rate.

This analysis of American Community Survey data released by the U.S. Census Bureau today – the first such data released to capture the current recession – is presented in a new report from the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire.

"All children suffer consequences of being poor, but young children are especially vulnerable," says Carsey Institute family demographer Beth Mattingly. "For children under six, the challenges of poverty include poorer health, lower quality education and programs, lower cognitive and behavioral functioning, and greater parental stress. There is also evidence that poverty is associated with a lower quality home environment and poorer parenting practices."

Among the key findings of the report:

- Estimated young child poverty in the rural Midwest in 2008 was 22.8%, significantly higher than in 2007 (21.0%).
- The young child poverty rate in Northeastern central cities fell by 0.7 percentage points to 27.6 percent. However, New England central cities continue to have higher young child poverty rates than Northeastern rural and suburban places.
- Young children in the rural South remain the most likely to be poor. More than one in three young children in the rural South are likely to be poor.
- Estimates suggest more than one in five children under age six lived in poverty in the United States in 2008.
- In no regional breakdowns by place size did the number of young children in poverty decline since 2007 and some saw increases in the number of children under age 6 living in poverty.

Mattingly, who coauthored the report with Carsey research assistant Anne Shattuck, notes that while these changes from 2007 through 2008 are important, they cannot fully reflect the current recession. "When data are available for 2009 we are likely to see a bleaker picture for

poverty, and for children in particular," says Mattingly, who is also a research assistant professor of sociology at UNH.

The complete report, "Regional Young Child Poverty in 2008," will be available to download after 4 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2009: <http://carseyinstitute.unh.edu/publications/IB-Mattingly-childpoverty09.pdf>.

The Carsey Institute conducts policy and applied research on vulnerable families and on sustainable community development, giving policy makers and practitioners the timely, independent resources they need to effect change in their communities. Visit their web site at <http://carseyinstitute.unh.edu/>.

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