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UNH Research Finds One in Four Very Young Low-Income Children Being Raised by Young Adults

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(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2019/12/12/UNH-RESEARCH-FINDS-ONE-FOUR-VERY-YOUNG-LOW-INCOME-CHILDREN-BEING-RAISED-BY-YOUNG-ADULTS)

DURHAM, N.H.—An estimated 2.5 million children under the age of four are being raised by young adult parents (age 18-24), with significant concentrations of these families in the South and Southwest, according to new research (<https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/young-adult-families>) by the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. While fewer than 5 percent of children live with young adult parents, 16 percent of children age 0-3 and 25 percent of low-income children age 0-3 do.

Low-income young adult parents have different characteristics than their older counterparts, more often parenting their first child with no co-parent present and still enrolled in school.

“These characteristics can add up to a lack of resources for children during a key period of child development and barriers for these parents who are in a critical period for shaping their own educational and employment trajectories,” said Jess Carson, research assistant professor with the Carsey School’s Vulnerable Families Research Program. “While supportive policies exist, most could be strengthened to better support young adult families, including stronger income supports such as refundable tax credits, more affordable education for parents via Pell grants, and stronger childcare systems.

The Carsey School of Public Policy conducts research, leadership development, and engaged scholarship relevant to public policy. They address pressing challenges, striving for innovative, responsive, and equitable solutions at all levels of government and in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors.



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