Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Child Population

Between 1980 and 2013, the percentage of children in the United States who are Hispanic more than doubled, from nine percent to 24 percent. Their share is projected to increase to more than one-quarter (26 percent) of the child population by 2020.

Importance

The United States has a long history of ethnic and racial diversity in its population. That diversity has accelerated in recent decades, a trend which is expected to continue into the future.

Race and ethnicity have important implications for culture, identity, and well-being. Children of different races and ethnicities often show large variation in well-being, including health, mortality, school performance and attainment, and access to family and community resources.[1] These and other disparities are also evident in adulthood.[2]

According to the National Research Council, race is a social category determined both by genetically transmitted physical markers (skin color, hair texture, and so on), and by the individual, group, and social attributes associated with those characteristics. Race is distinguished from ethnicity, which does not include physical characteristics as part of its definition.[3]

Over time, the federal government has changed the way it defines and measures race. All race and ethnicity information is now based on individuals’ self-report (or, in the case of children, that of their parent or other responsible adult).[4] However, current Census Bureau revisions allow survey respondents to identify themselves as being of more than one race. Additionally, ethnicity has been defined as an attribute distinct from race. Thus, individuals with Hispanic/Latino ethnicity may be of any race. This new classification was first used in 2000, and has since been implemented in all federal surveys and administrative data collection efforts.[4] However, labels for race and ethnicity remain controversial, and there are further changes expected in the options that will be offered in the 2020 Decennial Census.
Trends

From 1980 to 2000, the percentage of non-Hispanic white children in the U.S. population fell from 74 to 62 percent. (Appendix 1) Between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of children who were non-Hispanic white only (following the new classification system used in the 2000 decennial census, in which respondents were given the option of identifying with multiple race categories) declined from 61 to 54 percent, and is projected to decline to 49 percent by 2020. (Figure 1)

The percentage of the child population that is non-Hispanic black has stayed relatively constant, at about 15 percent since 1980, and it is expected to decline only slightly, to 14 percent, by 2020. However, because of changes in the race categories used by the Census Bureau, estimates for 2000 and later years are not directly comparable with earlier estimates. (Figure 1)
The proportion of children who are of Hispanic ethnicity has been growing steadily, from nine percent in 1980 to 24 percent in 2013, and is projected to be 26 percent in 2020. (Figure 2) In 2010, 68 percent of Hispanic children were of Mexican origin, which was 16 percent of the total child population. Nine percent of Hispanic children in the US were of Puerto Rican origin, six percent had a Central American origin (mainly Salvadoran, at 2.5 percent, and Guatemalan, at 1.6 percent), and four percent had a South American origin (the largest group being Colombian, at 1.2 percent). Other large Hispanic groups include Dominicans and Cubans (each accounting for two percent of Hispanic children). (Appendix 3)

Among Asians, the largest origin groups in 2010 were Asian Indians alone (21 percent of Asian children), Chinese (20 percent), Filipinos (15 percent), Vietnamese (12 percent), and Koreans (nine percent). About six percent of children that were Asian alone were of mixed ancestry. (Appendix 3)

According to data from the 2010 Census, non-Hispanic children of a more than one race constituted roughly four percent of the child population, an increase of two percent compared with the 2000 census. (Figure 1) Among all children who were identified as being of more than one race, the majority (four percent of all children) were white combined with one other race, with two percent identified as white and black, one percent identified as white and Asian, and 0.6 percent as white and American Indian or Alaska Native. (Appendix 2)

**State and Local Estimates**

State-level child population estimates from 2000 through 2013 by race and Hispanic origin are available from the [KidsCount Datacenter](http://www.kidscount.org).
Estimates from the American Community Survey are available for states, counties, congressional districts, metropolitan areas, cities, and census tracts from the Census Bureau.

**International Estimates**

None available.

**Related Indicators**

- Number of Children
- Fertility and Birth Rates
- Immigrant Children

**Data Sources**

Data for 2013: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division (2014) Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States and States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013. Available at:

http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/tables.asp


Data on multiple races and ethnicities for 2010: Table QT-P1: Age Groups and Sex. 2010 Census Summary File 2. Available on American Factfinder at:
http://factfinder2.census.gov

**Raw Data Source**

All estimates in Table 1 are from the Census Bureau's Population Projections and Estimates Branch, based on models that draw on many data sources.

Estimates based on the 1990 Census are available from the Census Bureau at
All estimates in Appendices 2 and 3 are from the 2000 and 2010 Decennial Censuses.

Appendix 1 - Percentage of Children Under Age 18, by Race and Hispanic Origin, Selected Years, 1980-2011 and Projections, 2020-2050

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## Projections

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<td>15.1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
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</table>

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American Indian or Alaska Native\(^2\)  
2 0.9 0.9 0.9 0.9 0.9 0.9 Å 0.9 Å 0.9 0.9 0.9 0.8 0.8 0.8

Two or More Races  
2.9 3.0 3.2 3.3 3.5 3.7 3.8 Å 3.9 Å 4.0 4.7 5.5 6.5 7.4

\(^1\) People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.\(^2\) Includes American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut who are not Hispanic.

Notes: Beginning in 2000, respondents were able to select multiple races. Therefore estimates after 2000 are not strictly comparable to earlier estimates.


Appendix 2 - Number and Percentage of Single- and Multi-Race Children Under Age 18, 2000 & 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Å</th>
<th>2000 Number</th>
<th>2000 Percent</th>
<th>2010 Number</th>
<th>2010 Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population Å of one race:</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Å only</td>
<td>69,436,926</td>
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<td>49,598,289</td>
<td>68.648,418,349</td>
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<td>10,885,696</td>
<td>15.110,841,316</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian only</td>
<td>840,312</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>888,372</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander only</td>
<td>2,464,999</td>
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<td>3,251,636</td>
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<tr>
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<th>Race Combination</th>
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<th>Percent Distribution</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
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Some other race
White; Â  Black or African American;Â Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Â  Some other race
White; Â  American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian;Â Native Hawaiian and Other Â  Pacific Islander
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Population of five races:
White; Â  Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
White; Â  Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
White; Â  Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some Â  other race
White; Â  Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian Â

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and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race
White; Â Black or African American; Asian;
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Â
Some other race
White; Â American Indian and Alaska Native;
Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Â
Islander; Some other race
Black Â or African American; American Indian
and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Â Hawaiian
and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race

Population Â of six races:
White; Â Black or African American; American
Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Â Hawaiian
and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race

Note: Racial subgroups with fewer than 100 Â members in the United States are excluded from
this table.
Sources: Data for 2000: Unpublished estimates from the 2000 Â Â Â Census, produced by the
Population Reference Bureau.Â Data for 2010: Table QT-P1: Age Groups Â Â Â and Sex.Â
2010 Census Summary File 2. Â Â Â Available on American Factfinder at:
http://factfinder2.census.gov

Appendix 3: Number and Percentage of Children Under Age 18 with
Asian or Hispanic Origins, by Country of Origin, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Population</th>
<th>Percent of Hispanic Population</th>
<th>Percent of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Â Hispanic</td>
<td>17,130,891</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>11,688,578</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Â Rican</td>
<td>1,545,107</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>377,398</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>407,356</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Â American (excludes Mexican)</td>
<td>1,014,529</td>
<td>5.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costa Â Rican</td>
<td>31,050</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemalan</td>
<td>266,235</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Child Population</td>
<td>Percent of Asian Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduran</td>
<td>156,377</td>
<td>0.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicaraguan</td>
<td>77,592</td>
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<td>Panamanian</td>
<td>40,586</td>
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<td>Salvadoran</td>
<td>433,560</td>
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<td>South American</td>
<td>626,140</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argentinean</td>
<td>48,004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bolivian</td>
<td>23,160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chilean</td>
<td>28,087</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombian</td>
<td>204,749</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecuadorian</td>
<td>132,687</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paraguayan</td>
<td>5,278</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peruvian</td>
<td>116,452</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguayan</td>
<td>12,384</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuelan</td>
<td>50,005</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaniard</td>
<td>162,585</td>
<td>0.9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Population</th>
<th>Percent of Asian Population</th>
<th>Percent of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Asian alone</td>
<td>3,251,636</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Indian alone</td>
<td>691,684</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese alone</td>
<td>664,807</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese (except Tiawanese) alone</td>
<td>632,162</td>
<td>19.4</td>
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<td>Tiawanese alone</td>
<td>30,456</td>
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<td>Filipino alone</td>
<td>500,003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnamese alone</td>
<td>389,513</td>
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<td>Korean alone</td>
<td>277,738</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pakistani alone</td>
<td>110,181</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hmong alone</td>
<td>103,404</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japanese alone</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian alone</td>
<td>61,082</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laotian alone</td>
<td>46,556</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td>Bangladeshi alone</td>
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<td>Burmese alone</td>
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<td>Thai alone</td>
<td>22,505</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesian alone</td>
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<td>Sri Lankan alone</td>
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<td>Bhutanese alone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Origin</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mongolian alone</td>
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<td>Singaporean alone</td>
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<td>Okanawan alone</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than one Asian origin</td>
<td>191,013</td>
<td>5.9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Racial subgroups with fewer than 100 members in the United States are excluded from this table.

Sources: Table QT-P1: Age Groups and Sex. 2010 Census Summary File 2. Available on American Factfinder at: http://factfinder2.census.gov

### Endnotes


### Suggested Citation:
