

TRENDS Child FACT SHEET

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NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT INDEX

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BACKGROUND

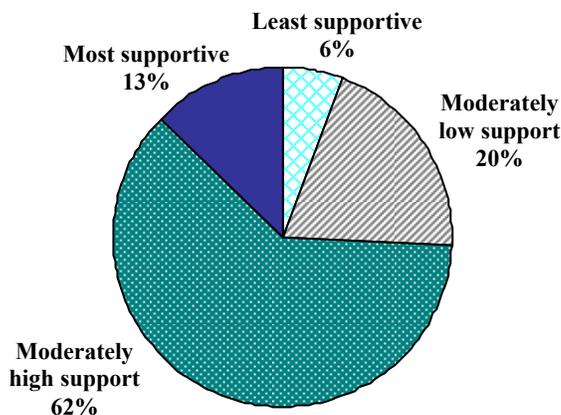
Neighborhoods can affect children in both positive and negative ways. For example, recreation centers in disadvantaged neighborhoods are associated with reductions in crime and violence.¹ Other characteristics, such as too few play areas, heavy street traffic, or too many abandoned homes, can have a negative impact through increased exposure to hazardous areas and risk of injury.²

Several explanations underlie the association between neighborhood quality and child well-being. For instance, the supportiveness of neighbors can influence children's development through social connections, role models, trust, and help.³ When neighbors report high levels of positive social ties, children tend to have more prosocial skills and display fewer problem behaviors.⁴

To assess neighborhoods as an important context for children and their families, parents' responses to six questions included in the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health are used to construct a Neighborhood Support Index: 1) my child is safe in our neighborhood; 2) people in the neighborhood watch out for each other's children; 3) people in the neighborhood help each other out; 4) there are people I can count on in this neighborhood; 5) there are adults nearby who I trust to help my child if he/she got hurt playing outside; and 6) there are people in the neighborhood who might be a bad influence on my children.^a Note that this index reflects parent perceptions of neighborhood support.

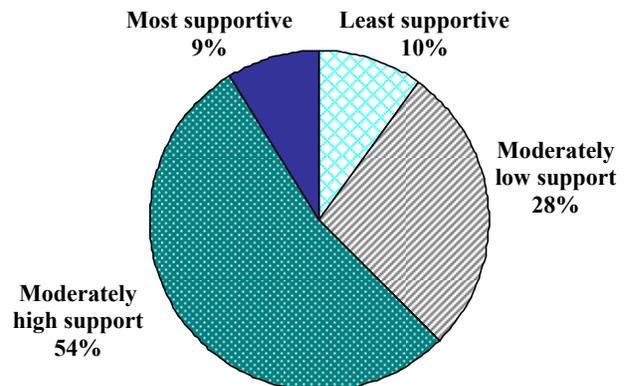
NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT FOR ALL CHILDREN^b

▪ In the U.S., 13 percent of children reside in neighborhoods perceived as most supportive, 62 percent of children live in neighborhoods with moderately high support from neighbors, 20 percent of children live in neighborhoods with moderately low support, and 6 percent live in least supportive neighborhoods.



NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT FOR LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

- Low-income children (below 200 percent of poverty) are less likely to live in supportive neighborhoods: 9 percent are in most supportive neighborhoods, 54 percent are in moderately high support neighborhoods, 28 percent live in neighborhoods with moderately low support, and 10 percent live in least supportive neighborhoods.
- It is important to note that the majority of low-income children live in neighborhoods perceived by their parents to be supportive.



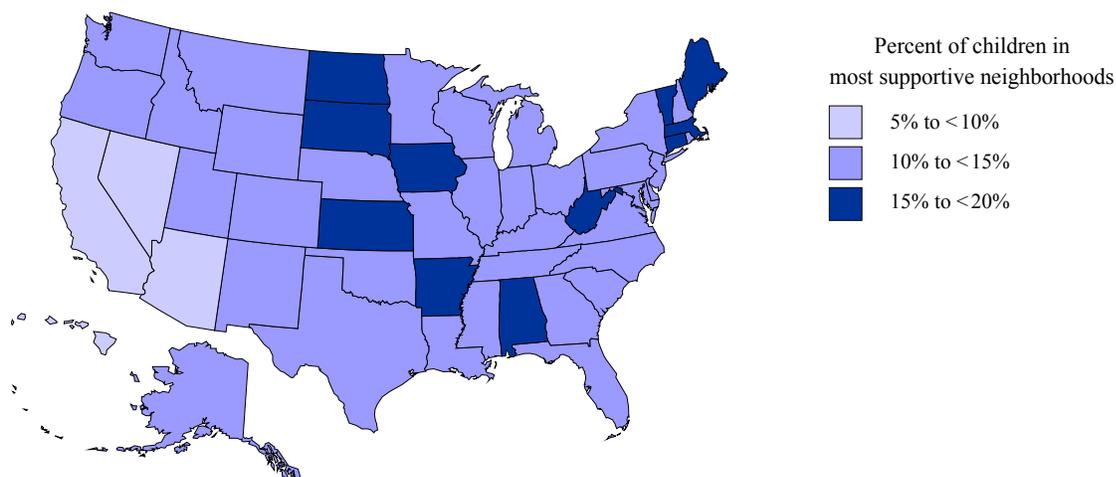
^a The index scores are on a scale of 6 to 24. Children with a score of 24 on the index (indicating that parents gave the most positive response on each individual item) live in *most supportive* neighborhoods (13% of all children). Children with a score of 18-23 (respondents gave a positive or strongly positive response to the 6 items) live in neighborhoods with *moderately high support* (62%). A score between 13 and 17 indicates a neighborhood with *moderately low support* levels (20%). Children in neighborhoods that are *least supportive* have an index score of 6-12 (6% of all children; respondents generally gave a negative or strongly negative response to the 6 items).

^b Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Since research shows that high neighborhood support is related to positive outcomes for children, we provide estimates of the proportion of children who live in neighborhoods perceived as most supportive in each state.

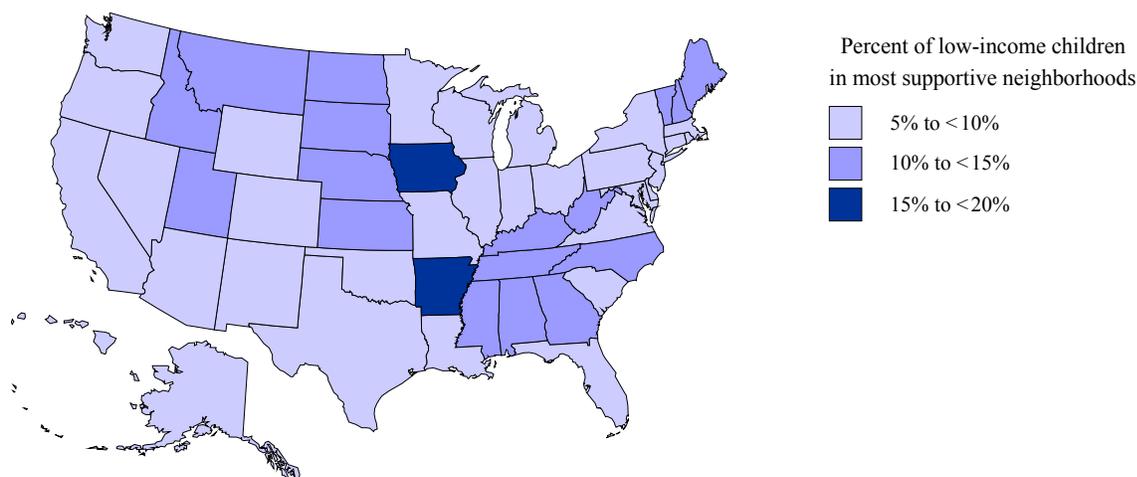
MOST SUPPORTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS BY STATE

- States located in the Midwest and Northeast have higher shares of children living in most supportive neighborhoods.
- Iowa contains the largest proportion of children in neighborhoods perceived as most supportive—19 percent of children.
- D.C., Hawaii, and several southwestern states have smaller proportions of children (less than 10 percent) living in highly supportive neighborhoods.



MOST SUPPORTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS FOR LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

- Among children from low-income families, Iowa and Arkansas are the only states where 15 to 20 percent of children live in neighborhoods perceived as most supportive.



¹ Peterson, R. D., Krivo, L. J., & Harris, M. A. (2000). Disadvantage and neighborhood violent crime: Do local institutions matter? *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 37, 31-63.

² Evans, G. W. (2004). The environment of childhood poverty. *American Psychologist*, 59 (2), 77-92.

³ Sampson, R. J., Morenoff, J. D., & Gannon-Rowley, T. (2002). Assessing “neighborhood effects”: Social processes and new directions in research. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 443-478.

⁴ Elliott, D. S., Wilson, W. J., Huizinga, D., Sampson, R. J., Elliott, A., & Rankin, B. (1996). The effects of neighborhood disadvantage on adolescent development. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 33 (4), 389-426.

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN LIVING IN MOST SUPPORTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS BY STATE (ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

State	All children	Low-income children
Alabama	15.4%	11.5%
Alaska	10.4%	6.7%
Arizona	8.5%	7.6%
Arkansas	16.4%	15.0%
California	9.5%	6.7%
Colorado	11.6%	7.7%
Connecticut	16.3%	8.2%
Delaware	12.0%	7.7%
District of Columbia	5.6%	3.7%
Florida	12.6%	8.5%
Georgia	12.9%	10.2%
Hawaii	9.8%	8.1%
Idaho	12.9%	11.0%
Illinois	10.8%	5.1%
Indiana	13.8%	7.3%
Iowa	19.1%	15.2%
Kansas	15.9%	13.2%
Kentucky	13.0%	12.2%
Louisiana	12.5%	8.1%
Maine	16.1%	10.4%
Maryland	12.2%	9.5%
Massachusetts	15.4%	7.2%
Michigan	12.7%	7.4%
Minnesota	13.7%	9.5%
Mississippi	14.2%	11.4%
Missouri	14.9%	9.8%
Montana	14.4%	10.6%
Nebraska	13.9%	10.4%
Nevada	7.6%	5.0%
New Hampshire	14.6%	10.2%
New Jersey	13.8%	5.3%
New Mexico	10.6%	7.6%
New York	10.6%	7.8%
North Carolina	14.9%	11.0%
North Dakota	17.1%	12.1%
Ohio	13.3%	8.7%
Oklahoma	12.2%	9.8%
Oregon	11.1%	7.6%
Pennsylvania	12.7%	9.7%
Rhode Island	13.2%	7.0%
South Carolina	14.7%	9.9%
South Dakota	16.1%	10.6%
Tennessee	13.8%	13.0%
Texas	12.3%	8.5%
Utah	12.7%	10.8%
Vermont	16.7%	12.0%
Virginia	13.2%	8.7%
Washington	13.0%	9.9%
West Virginia	17.0%	13.8%
Wisconsin	14.9%	9.1%
Wyoming	14.6%	9.9%

Note: All estimates are based on data from the National Survey of Children's Health, 2003, sponsored by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Department of Health and Human Services.