

# Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Child Population

Indicators of Child  
and Youth Well-Being



Between 1980 and 2015, the percentage of children in the United States who are Hispanic nearly tripled, from 9 to 25 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 discrepancies in well-being, including health, mortality, school performance and attainment, and access to family and community resources.<sup>1</sup> These and other disparities are also evident in adulthood.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

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). 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.



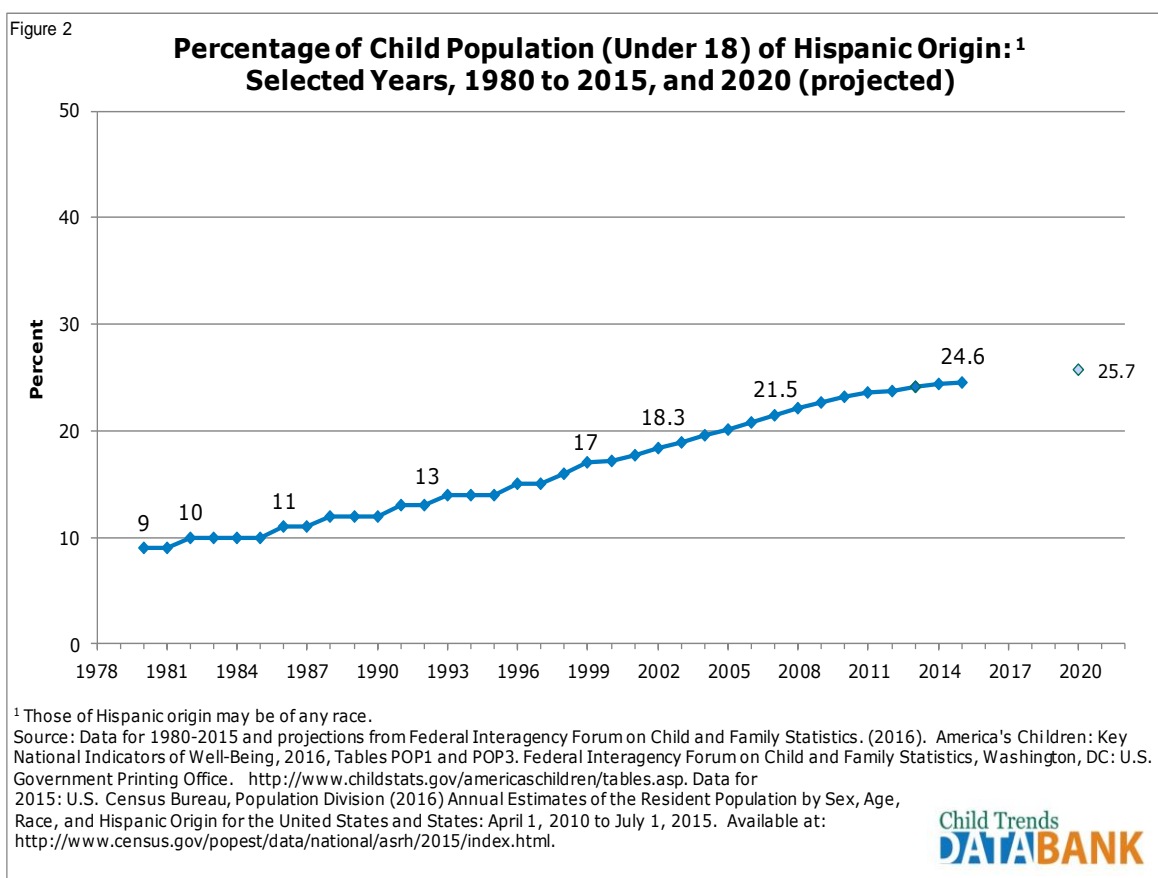
## Trends

From 1980 to 2000, the proportion 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 50 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 ethnically Hispanic has been growing steadily, from 9 percent in 1980 to 25 percent in 2015, 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 U.S. 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 (9 percent). About six percent of children who were Asian-alone were of mixed ancestry. (Appendix 3)

According to data from the 2010 Census, non-Hispanic children of 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 2015 by race and Hispanic origin are available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/103-child-population-by-race?loc=1&loct=2>

Estimates from the American Community Survey are available for states, counties, congressional districts, metropolitan areas, cities, and census tracts, at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>

## International Estimates

None available.

## Related Indicators

- Number of Children: [www.childtrends.org/?indicators=number-of-children](http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=number-of-children)
- Fertility and Birth Rates: [www.childtrends.org/?indicators=fertility-and-birth-rates](http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=fertility-and-birth-rates)
- Immigrant Children: [www.childtrends.org/?indicators=immigrant-children](http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=immigrant-children)

## Data Sources

- Data for 2015: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division (2016) 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, 2015. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/popest/data/national/asrh/2015/index.html>.
- Data for 1980-2015 and projections: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2016). America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2016, Tables POP1 and POP3. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. [www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/tables.asp](http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/tables.asp)
- Data on multiple races for 2000: Unpublished estimates from the 2000 Census, produced by the Population Reference Bureau.



- 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 Appendix 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 <http://www.census.gov/popest/data/historical/1990s/index.html>

All estimates in Appendices 2 and 3 are from the 2000 and 2010 Decennial Censuses.

<http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html> (2000 Census)

<http://www.census.gov/2010census/> (2010 Census)



### Appendix 1: Percentage of Children Under 18, by Race and Hispanic Origin, Selected Years: 1980-2015, and Projections, 2020-2050

	1980	1985	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Total Number of Children (in millions)</b>	63.7	62.6	64.2	69.5	70.2	70.1	71.4	71.9	72.4	72.7	72.9	73.1	73.3	73.5
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>														
<b>White (includes Hispanic)</b>	82	81	80	79	79	79	78	78	76.8	76.5	76.3	76.0	75.7	75.2
<b>White, non-Hispanic</b>	74	72	69	66	65	64	64	63	61.2	60.4	59.7	58.9	58.2	57.4
<b>Black (includes Hispanic)</b>	15	15	15	16	16	16	16	16	15.6	15.6	15.6	15.5	15.5	15.5
<b>Black, non-Hispanic</b>	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	14.8	14.8	14.8	14.7	14.6	14.5
<b>Hispanic<sup>1</sup></b>	9	10	12	14	15	15	16	17	17.2	17.8	18.3	18.9	19.5	20.1
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic</b>	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.1
<b>Asian only</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.9
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native<sup>2</sup></b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
<b>Two or More Races</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.9

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2020	2030	2040	2050
<b>Total Number of Children (in millions)</b>	73.8	74.0	74.1	74.1	74.1	73.9	73.7	73.6	73.6	73.6	76.2	80.3	82.6	85.9
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>														
<b>White (includes Hispanic)</b>	75.1	74.8	74.4	74.1	73.7	73.6	73.4	73.2	72.9	72.7	71.9	69.9	67.9	65.8
<b>White, non-Hispanic</b>	56.6	55.8	55.0	54.3	53.6	53.2	52.8	52.4	51.9	51.5	49.8	46.6	42.5	38.8
<b>Black (includes Hispanic)</b>	15.4	15.4	15.3	15.3	15.2	15.2	15.1	15.1	15.1	15.1	14.9	14.8	14.8	14.8
<b>Black, non-Hispanic</b>	14.5	14.4	14.3	14.2	14.1	14.0	13.9	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.5	13.4	13.2	13.1
<b>Hispanic<sup>1</sup></b>	20.8	21.5	22.1	22.7	23.2	23.5	23.8	24.1	24.4	24.6	25.7	27.2	29.8	31.9
<b>Asian or Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic</b>	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.4	6.2	7.0	7.6
<b>Asian only</b>	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.2	6.0	6.8	7.4
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native<sup>2</sup></b>	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7
<b>Two or More Races</b>	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.7	5.8	6.8	7.9

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<sup>1</sup>People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

<sup>2</sup>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.

Source: Data for 1980-2015 and projections from Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2016). America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2016, Tables POP1 and POP3. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/tables.asp>. Data for 2015: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division (2016) 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, 2015. Available at:

<http://www.census.gov/popest/data/national/asrh/2015/index.html>.

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

	2000		2010	
	Population	Percent	Population	Percent
<b>Total</b>	72,293,812	100.0	74,181,467	100.0
<b>Population of one race:</b>	69,436,926	96.0	70,013,071	94.4
<b>White only</b>	49,598,289	68.6	48,418,349	65.3
<b>Black or African American only</b>	10,885,696	15.1	10,841,316	14.6
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native only</b>	840,312	1.2	888,372	1.2
<b>Asian only</b>	2,464,999	3.4	3,251,636	4.4
<b>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander only</b>	127,179	0.2	157,604	0.2
<b>Some other race only</b>	5,520,451	7.6	6,455,794	8.7
<b>Population of two or more races</b>	2,856,886	4.0	4,168,396	5.6
<b>Population of two races:</b>	2,638,229	3.6	3,805,319	5.1
<b>White; Black or African American</b>	562,914	0.8	1,241,752	1.7
<b>White; American Indian and Alaska Native</b>	337,298	0.5	438,148	0.6
<b>White; Asian</b>	445,082	0.6	817,662	1.1
<b>White; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	46,250	0.1	67,337	0.1
<b>White; Some other race</b>	772,663	1.1	698,572	0.9
<b>Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native</b>	58,325	0.1	84,959	0.1
<b>Black or African American; Asian</b>	49,141	0.1	85,720	0.1
<b>Black or African American; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	11,165	0.0	18,923	0.0
<b>Black or African American; Some other race</b>	164,092	0.2	148,731	0.2
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian</b>	16,774	0.0	18,377	0.0
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	2,736	0.0	4,208	0.0
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native; Some other race</b>	31,731	0.0	38,501	0.1
<b>Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	40,313	0.1	45,133	0.1
<b>Asian; Some other race</b>	86,408	0.1	78,493	0.1
<b>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race</b>	13,337	0.0	18,803	0.0



	2000		2010	
	Population	Percent	Population	Percent
<b>Population of three races:</b>	197,254	0.3	357,615	0.5
<b>White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native</b>	47,418	0.1	99,133	0.1
<b>White; Black or African American; Asian</b>	14,032	0.0	42,263	0.1
<b>White; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	1,876	0.0	6,199	0.0
<b>White; Black or African American; Some other race</b>	26,110	0.0	27,807	0.0
<b>White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian</b>	12,789	0.0	24,155	0.0
<b>White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	2,368	0.0	4,151	0.0
<b>White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Some other race</b>	11,196	0.0	13,276	0.0
<b>White; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	44,436	0.1	66,623	0.1
<b>White; Asian; Some other race</b>	17,178	0.0	20,015	0.0
<b>White; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race</b>	3,521	0.0	3,744	0.0
<b>Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian</b>	2,382	0.0	4,040	0.0
<b>Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	443	0.0	967	0.0
<b>Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Some other race</b>	2,653	0.0	3,286	0.0
<b>Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	2,343	0.0	3,713	0.0
<b>Black or African American; Asian; Some other race</b>	3,497	0.0	3,372	0.0
<b>Black or African American; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race</b>	835	0.0	1,387	0.0
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	1,260	0.0	1,543	0.0
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some other race</b>	846	0.0	1,312	0.0
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race</b>	235	0.0	623	0.0
<b>Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race</b>	1,836	0.0	2,199	0.0



	2000		2010	
	Population	Percent	Population	Percent
<b>Population of four races:</b>	18,389	0.0	29,947	0.0
White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian	4,400	0.0	9,484	0.0
White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	486	0.0	1,424	0.0
White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Some other race	1,912	0.0	3,755	0.0
White; Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1,200	0.0	3,203	0.0
White; Black or African American; Asian; Some other race	728	0.0	1,406	0.0
White; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	180	0.0	308	0.0
White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	3,720	0.0	6,408	0.0
White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some other race	610	0.0	847	0.0
White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	156	0.0	208	0.0
White; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	4,131	0.0	1,857	0.0
Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	314	0.0	422	0.0
Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some other race	146	0.0	257	0.0
Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	43	0.0	68	0.0
Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	277	0.0	186	0.0
American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race	86	0.0	114	0.0



	2000		2010	
	Population	Percent	Population	Percent
<b>Population of five races:</b>	2,736	0.0	3,083	0.0
<b>White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	1,871	0.0	2,146	0.0
<b>White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Some other race</b>	269	0.0	493	0.0
<b>White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race</b>	32	0.0	74	0.0
<b>White; Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race</b>	151	0.0	136	0.0
<b>White; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race</b>	365	0.0	234	0.0
<b>Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race</b>	48	0.0	-	-
<b>Population of six races:</b>	278	0.0	216	0.0
<b>White; Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native; Asian; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some other race</b>	278	0.0	216	0.0

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

Sources: Data for 2000: Unpublished estimates from the 2000 Census, produced by the Population Reference Bureau. Data for 2010: Table QT-P1: Age Groups and Sex. 2010 Census Summary File 2. Available on *American Factfinder* at: <http://factfinder2.census.gov>



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

	Child Population	Percent of Hispanic Population	Percent of Total Population
<b>Total Hispanic</b>	17,130,891	100.0	23.7
<b>Mexican</b>	11,688,578	68.2	16.2
<b>Puerto Rican</b>	1,545,107	9.0	2.1
<b>Cuban</b>	377,398	2.2	0.5
<b>Dominican</b>	407,356	2.4	0.6
<b>Central American (excludes Mexican)</b>	1,014,529	5.9	1.4
<b>Costa Rican</b>	31,050	0.2	0.0
<b>Guatemalan</b>	266,235	1.6	0.4
<b>Honduran</b>	156,377	0.9	0.2
<b>Nicaraguan</b>	77,592	0.5	0.1
<b>Panamanian</b>	40,586	0.2	0.1
<b>Salvadoran</b>	433,560	2.5	0.6
<b>South American</b>	626,140	3.7	0.9
<b>Argentinean</b>	48,004	0.3	0.1
<b>Bolivian</b>	23,160	0.1	0.0
<b>Chilean</b>	28,087	0.2	0.0
<b>Colombian</b>	204,749	1.2	0.3
<b>Ecuadorean</b>	132,687	0.8	0.2
<b>Paraguayan</b>	5,278	0.0	0.0
<b>Peruvian</b>	116,452	0.7	0.2
<b>Uruguayan</b>	12,384	0.1	0.0
<b>Venezuelan</b>	50,005	0.3	0.1
<b>Spaniard</b>	162,585	0.9	0.2



	<b>Child Population</b>	<b>Percent of Asian-Alone Population</b>	<b>Percent of Total Population</b>
<b>Total Asian alone</b>	3,251,636	100.0	4.5
<b>Asian Indian alone</b>	691,684	21.3	1.0
<b>Chinese alone</b>	664,807	20.4	0.9
<b>Chinese     (except Taiwanese     alone)</b>	632,162	19.4	0.9
<b>Taiwanese alone</b>	30,456	0.9	0.0
<b>Filipino alone</b>	500,003	15.4	0.7
<b>Vietnamese alone</b>	389,513	12.0	0.5
<b>Korean alone</b>	277,738	8.5	0.4
<b>Pakistani alone</b>	110,181	3.4	0.2
<b>Hmong alone</b>	103,404	3.2	0.1
<b>Japanese alone</b>	82,251	2.5	0.1
<b>Cambodian alone</b>	61,082	1.9	0.1
<b>Laotian alone</b>	46,556	1.4	0.1
<b>Bangladeshi alone</b>	37,926	1.2	0.1
<b>Burmese alone</b>	30,278	0.9	0.0
<b>Thai alone</b>	22,505	0.7	0.0
<b>Indonesian alone</b>	12,657	0.4	0.0
<b>Nepalese alone</b>	10,983	0.3	0.0
<b>Sri Lankan alone</b>	8,026	0.2	0.0
<b>Bhutanese alone</b>	4,061	0.1	0.0
<b>Mongolian alone</b>	3,829	0.1	0.0
<b>Malaysian alone</b>	2,587	0.1	0.0
<b>Singaporean alone</b>	399	0.0	0.0
<b>Okinawan alone</b>	153	0.0	0.0
<b>More than one Asian origin</b>	191,013	5.9	0.3



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

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



## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2002). *America's Children: Key national indicators of well-being*. Available online at <http://www.childstats.gov>

<sup>2</sup> Blank, R. (2001). An overview of trends in social and economic well-being, by race. Chapter 2 in *America becoming: Racial trends and their consequences, Volume 1*. Neil J. Smelser, William Julius Wilson, and Faith Mitchell, Editors. Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. Available online at <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/9599.html>

<sup>3</sup> Smelser, N., Wilson, W., Mitchell, F. (2001). Introduction. In *America becoming: Racial trends and their consequences, Volume 1*. Neil J. Smelser, William Julius Wilson, and Faith Mitchell, Editors. Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. Available online at <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/9599.html>

<sup>4</sup> Office of Management and Budget. (1997). Revisions to the standards for the classification of federal data on race and ethnicity. Available online at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/ombdir15.html>