

Children in Single-Parent Families

DEFINITION

This indicator measures the percentage of New Hampshire children under age 18 living in a household with an unmarried male or female parent. This does not include children living with two biological parents who are unmarried, or living with two parents who are separated but not divorced, or children living with a married couple other than the child's parents, such as grandparents.

CONTEXT

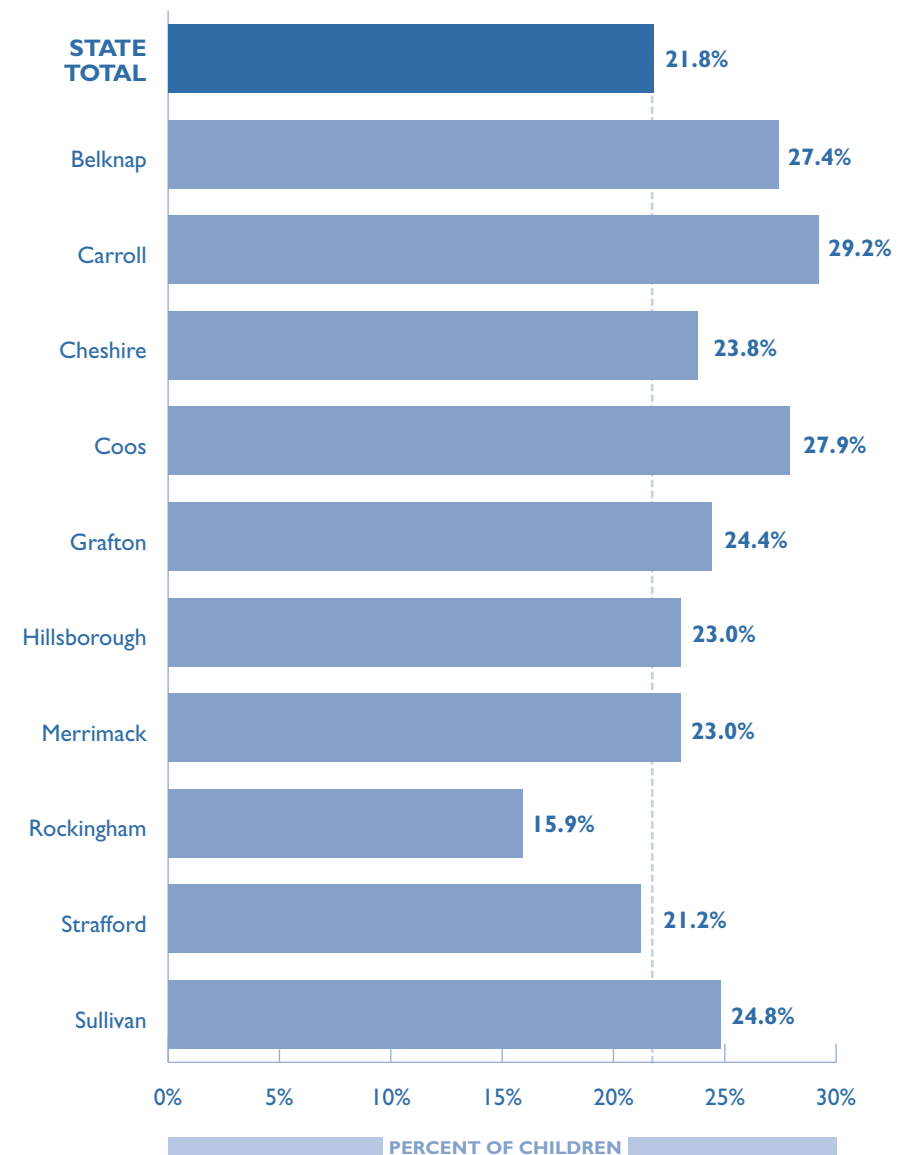
In 2009, the poverty rate for families headed by a single mom (28.3 percent) or a single dad (13.2 percent) was two to five times higher than the poverty rate for married couple families (4.9 percent) (U.S. DHHS 2009). Although many children raised in single-parent homes are successful, research shows that more low income children from single parent households perform poorly in school, are abused or neglected, require psychiatric treatment, commit crime, attempt suicide, abuse alcohol and drugs, or become teen parents.

In 2009, approximately 34 percent of United States children lived with a single parent, a number triple the rate in 1970. (Annie E. Casey 2010). Nationally, 83 percent of children in single-parent families live with a single mom (Mather 2010). Marriage rates in the United States have declined by almost 7 percent between 2005 and 2008 from 7.3 marriages per 1,000 people in 2005 to 6.8 in 2008. (NHES & NHELMIB 2010)

In 2009, New Hampshire had the lowest percentage of children living in single-family homes among the New England states and the third lowest percentage of children in single parent homes in the United States. Southeastern states generally had the highest percentages of children in single parent families and northwestern states generally had the lowest rates. (Annie E Casey 2010).

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By County, 2006-2008, three-year average



NEW HAMPSHIRE FINDINGS

During 2006-2008, 21.8 percent of New Hampshire children lived in single-parent families. Children in single-parent families had lower median family incomes and higher poverty rates than New Hampshire children in married-couple families. Of these New Hampshire children in single-family homes, 73 percent lived with a single mother. The median income for single-mother families was 56 percent lower than median income for married couple families.

The share of children in single-parent families ranges among New Hampshire counties with generally higher rates in the north. At 15.9 percent, Rockingham County has a substantially lower percentage of children in single-parent families than the rest of the state as well as the lowest child poverty rate and the highest median income for married-couple and single-parent families. At 29.2 percent, Carroll County has the highest percentage of children in single-parent families as well as the highest child poverty rate. (see chart on previous page)

SOURCE OF DATA FOR ILLUSTRATION/METHODOLOGY

U.S. Census. 2010a. American Community Survey, Table B09002 3-year average 2006-2008.

U.S. Census. 2010b. American Community Survey, Table B19126 3-year average 2006-2008.

Kids Count Data Center: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>. Original data from U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 3-year estimates.

American Community Survey only reports the relationship of each family member to the householder and therefore cannot accurately estimate certain non-traditional family arrangements, which have grown in importance. Another annual source, the Current Population Survey, provides the best estimates of non-traditional arrangements, but limits its data to national, regional and state level estimates (U.S. Census 2009).

REFERENCES

Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2010. Kids Count Data Center; *Children in single-parent families, 2009*. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>

Mather, Mark. 2010. *U.S. Children in Single-Mother Families*. Population Reference Bureau, Data Brief. May.

New Hampshire Employment Security and Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau. 2010. *Vital Signs: Economic & Social Indicators for New Hampshire 2005-2008*. March. www.nh.gov/nhes/elmi/pdfzip/econanalys/vitalsigns/vs2010/VS2010.pdf

U.S. Census. 2009. *Fact Sheet: Differences in the Households and Family Estimates from the American Community Survey, Current Population Survey, Survey of Income and Program Participation, and Decennial Census*. May. www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/FS-household-fam.html

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (U.S. DHHS). 2009. *TANF Eighth Annual Report to Congress*. Administration for Children and Families. www.acf.hhs.gov