

Update from the Undercount of Young Children Subteam

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National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations
Fall 2018 Meeting
November 2, 2018

Any views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

Outline

- Overview of the issue
- Review high-level research results
- Updates and activities for the 2020 Census

What is the issue?

- In 2010, the estimated net undercount for children age 0 to 4 was 4.6%, or nearly 1 million young children
- The undercount of young children has been a persistent issue in the census
- An undercount of children has implications for:
 - Political representation
 - Federal funding for programs such as:
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
 - Special Education Grants
 - National School Lunch Program
 - School Planning

Coverage in the 2010 Census

- In 2010, the total population count was very close to the Demographic Analysis estimate
 - Adults were overcounted while children we undercounted
 - Young children, age 0 to 4, had an especially high undercount of 4.6 percent or about 1 million young children

Age Group	Net Coverage
Total	0.1
Adults (age 18+)	0.7
Children (age 0 to 17)	-1.7
Young Children (age 0 to 4)	-4.6

A negative estimate denotes a net undercount

Source: 2010 Census and Demographic Analysis

Coverage in the 2010 Census

- The net coverage of young children varied by race and Hispanic origin
- Original Hispanic/Non-Hispanic estimates were based on projected birth data, while updated estimates use actual births

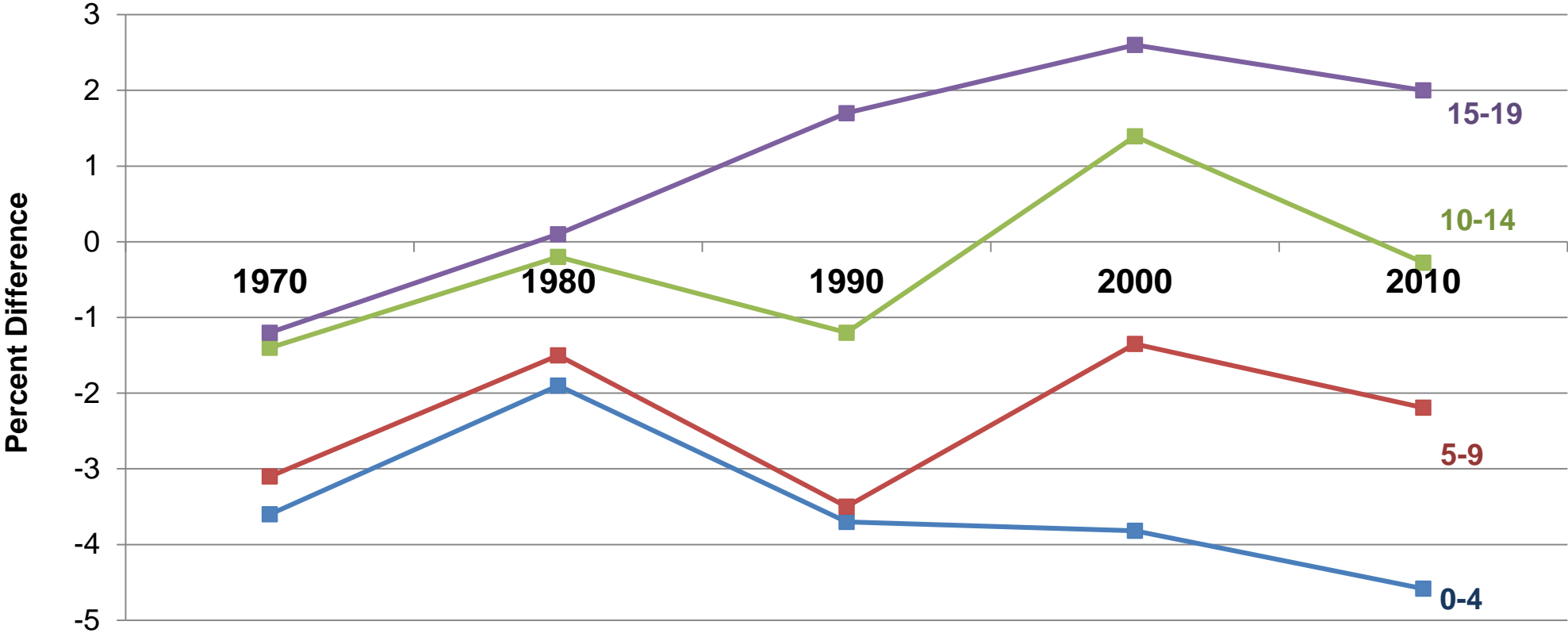
Race/Hispanic Origin	Net Coverage
Total	-4.6
Black alone-or-in-combination	-6.3
Not Black alone-or-in-combination	-4.2
Hispanic (updated)	-6.5
Non-Hispanic (updated)	-3.9

A negative estimate denotes a net undercount

Source: 2010 Census and Demographic Analysis

Coverage since 1970

- The net undercount of young children has increased in recent decades



Source: 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010 Census and Demographic Analysis

Summary of Research on the Undercount of Young Children

Data Sources

- Existing data sources including 2010 Census responses, 2010 Coverage Followup, 2010 Coverage Measurement, ACS, and others
- Limitations
 - These data sources were not collected for this specific purpose
 - The data provide evidence of potential coverage errors and show how the strength of that evidence differs by characteristics of children or households
 - The data DO NOT:
 - Tell us how many children with a certain characteristic were missed
 - Tell us why children missed
- Despite these limitations, our research has enhanced our understanding of the issue and possible causes of the undercount

Relationship to the Householder

- The 2010 Census asked how each person was related to the householder
- Less evidence of coverage error for biological and adopted children of the householder
- More evidence of coverage error for grandchildren, other relatives (e.g., niece/nephew), and children unrelated to the householder

2. How is this person related to Person 1? Mark ONE box.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent-in-law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological son or daughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Son-in-law or daughter-in-law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted son or daughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stepson or stepdaughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Roomer or boarder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister | <input type="checkbox"/> Housemate or roommate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried partner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild | <input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative |

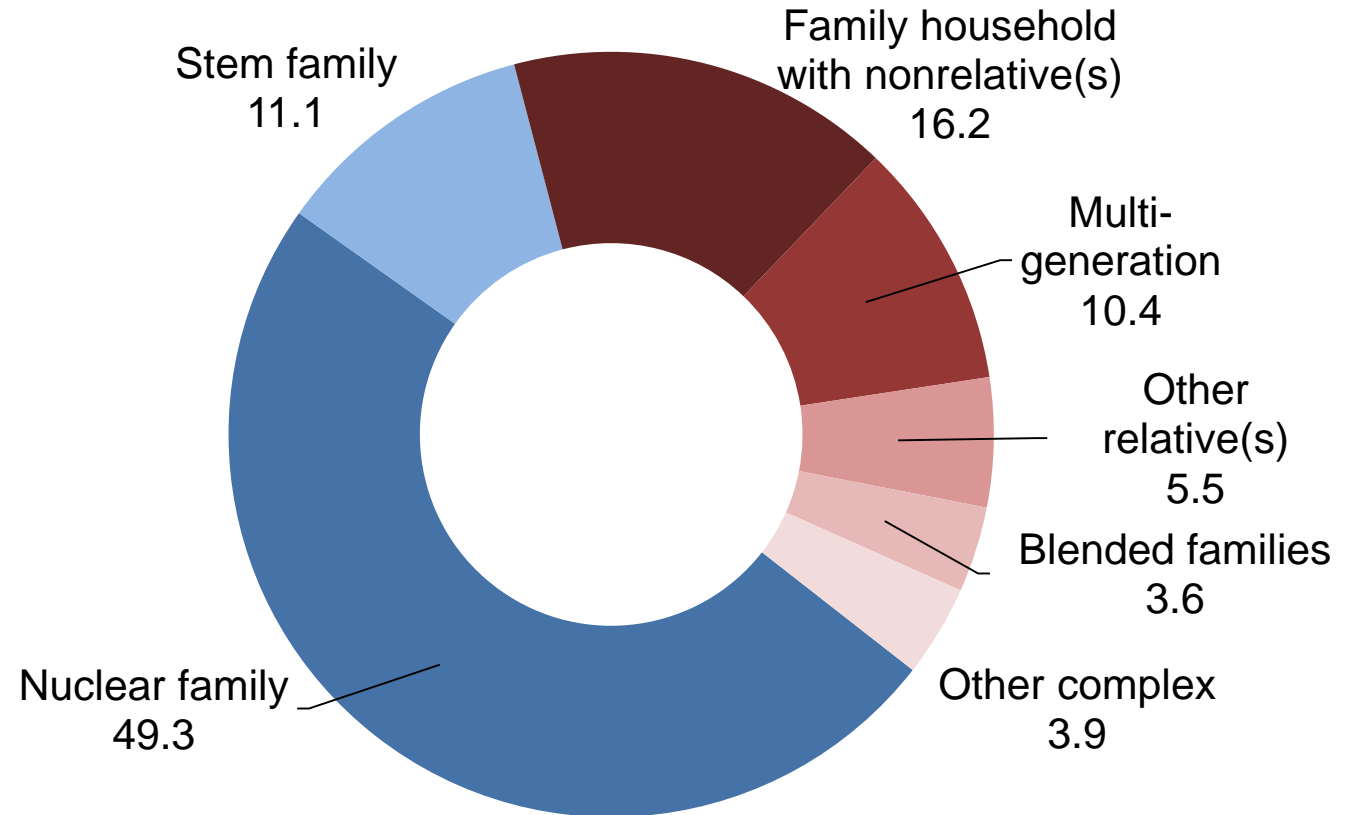
Complex Household Typology

- We classified households based on the types of relationships within the household
- Households that are complex in structure may be more difficult to enumerate accurately
- Complex households are defined as anything other than a nuclear family or single-parent family (stem family), such as:
 - Multi-generation households
 - Extended families
 - Multi-family households

Complex Household Typology

- In 2010, about 40% of young children lived in complex households
- More evidence of coverage error for children living in complex households

Percentage of Young Children by Household Type

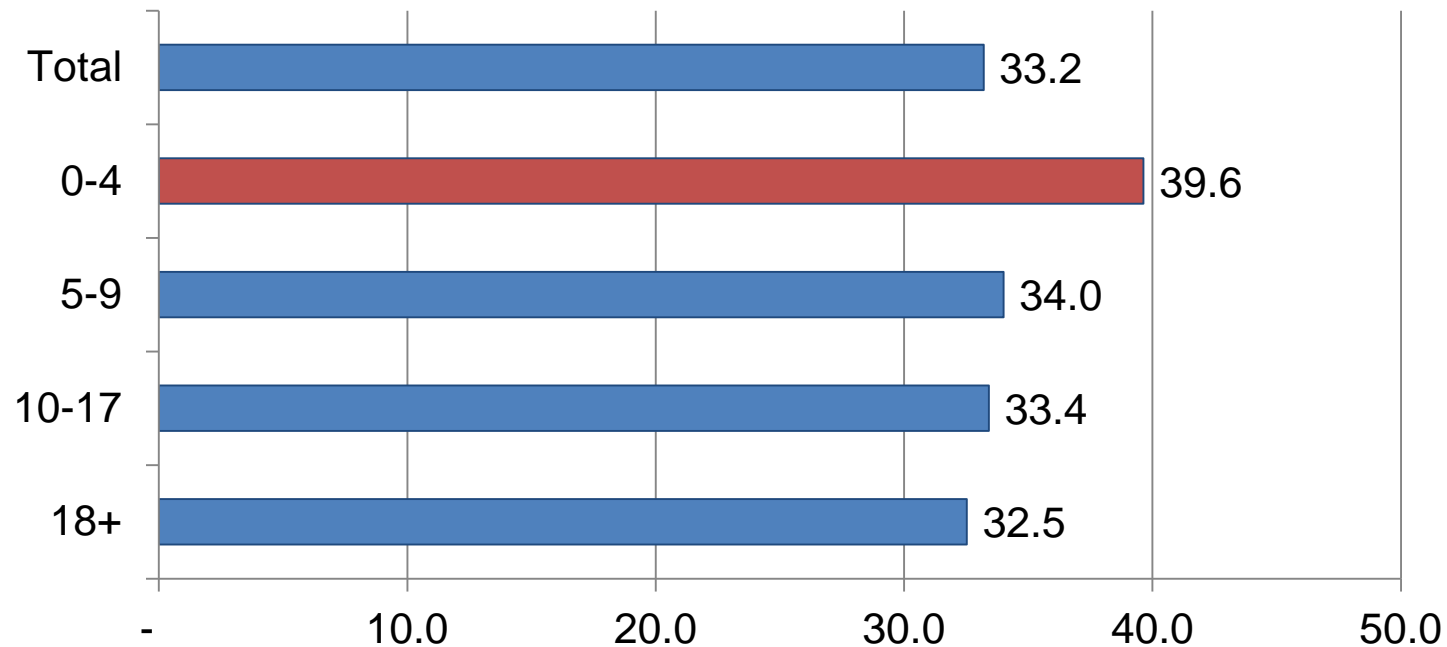


Source: 2010 Census: special tabulation.

Complex Household Typology

- Young children were more likely to live in complex households than older children and adults

Percentage of the Population in Complex Households by Age

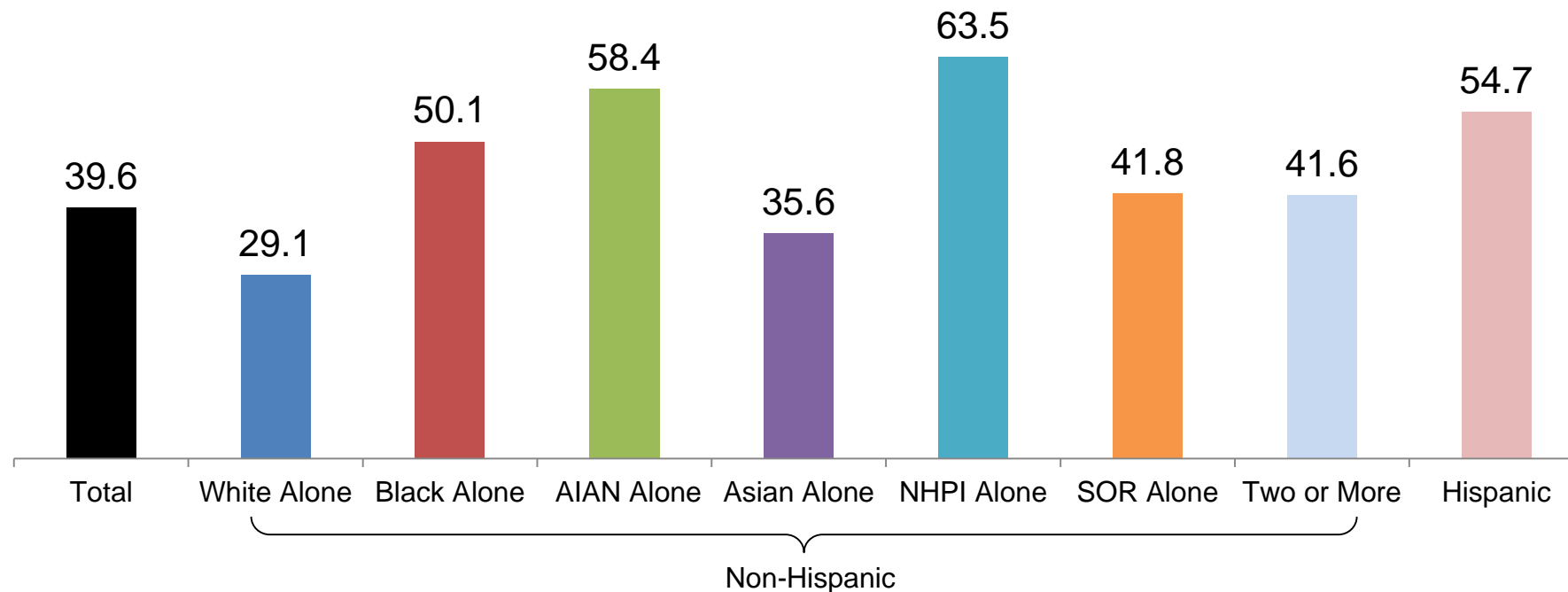


Source: 2010 Census: special tabulation.

Complex Household Typology

- The percent of young children living in complex households differed by race and Hispanic Origin

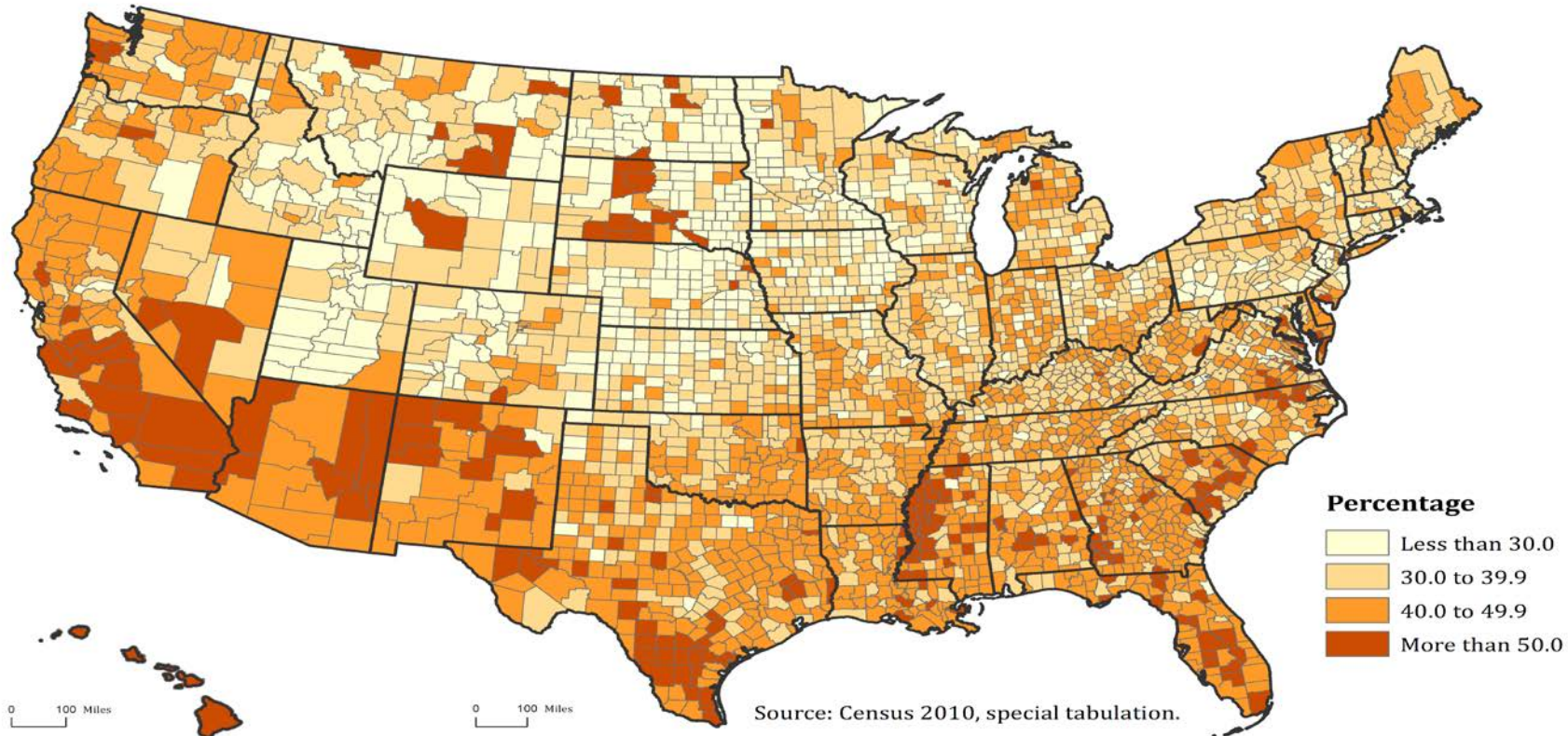
Percentage of the Young Children in Complex Households by Race and Hispanic Origin



Complex Household Typology



**Percentage of Young Children Living
in Complex Households by County: 2010**



Very Young Children

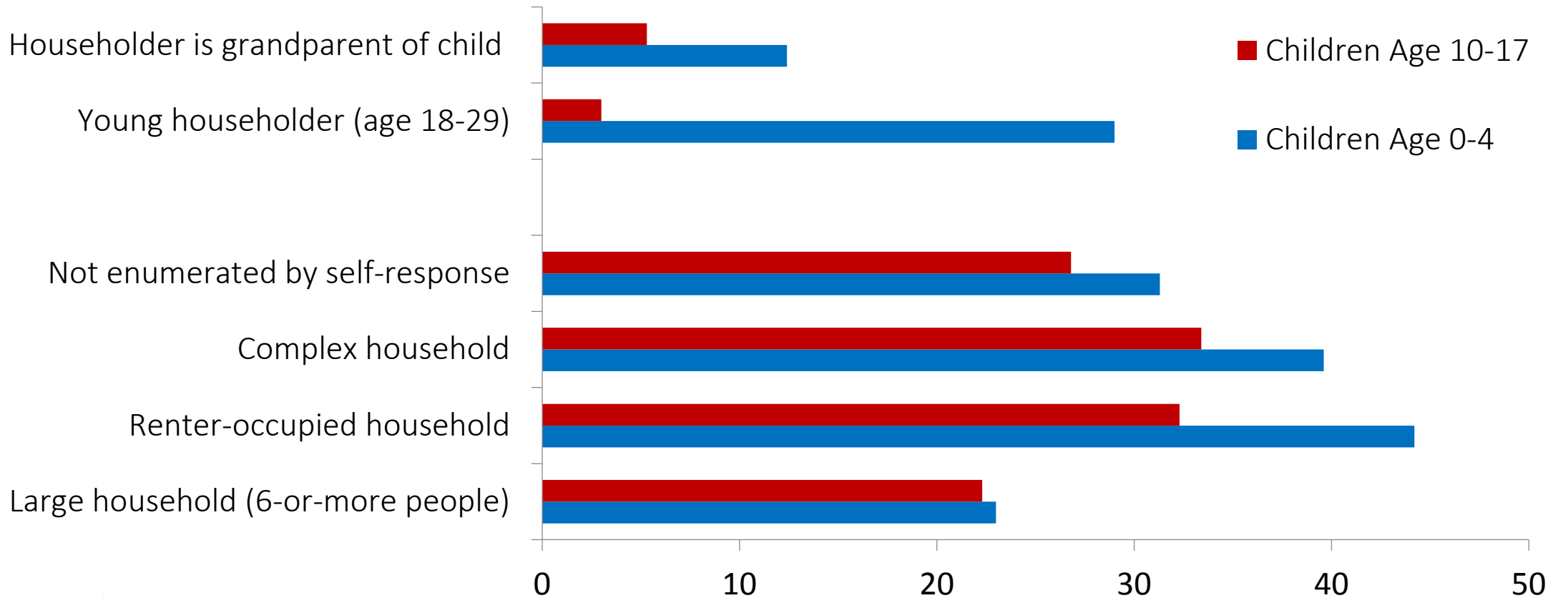
- Children born in the census year, January 1 to April 1, may be missed at an exceptionally high rate
- Demographic Analysis results show a smaller net undercount for age 0 than for age 1 and 2, but this is likely due to a number of children born after April 1 who are included in the census count
- The number of children with a given birth date decreases through March approaching April 1, suggesting that those born close to Census Day may be especially likely to be missed

Characteristics of Children

- Young children are more likely than older children to have many hard-to-count characteristics
- These results help explain why the net undercount of young children is higher than older children
- We examined selected characteristics from the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey

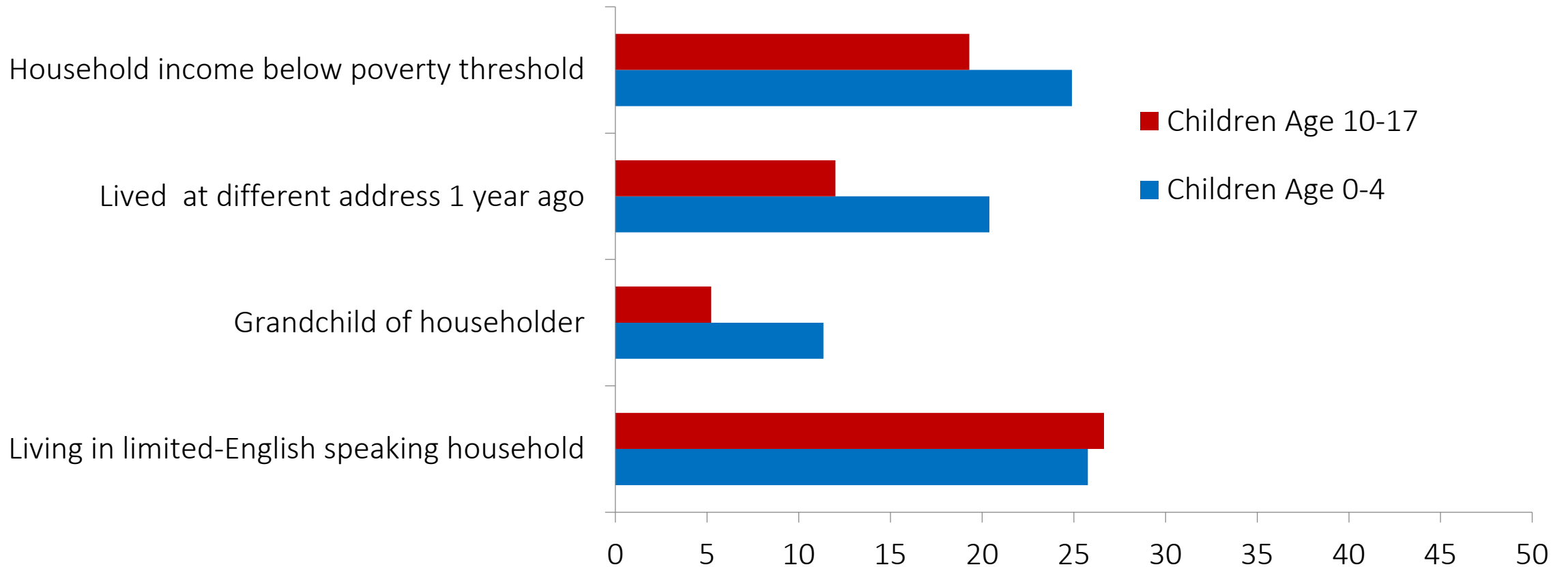
Characteristics of Children

Characteristics of Children in the 2010 Census



Characteristics of Children

Characteristics of Children in the American Community Survey



Updates and Activities for 2020

Clarifying Language About Who We Count

- Updated the language on the primary solicitation materials that most households will receive in 2020

“...all adults, children, and babies living or staying at this address”

instead of...

“...everyone living or staying at this address”

Clarifying Language About Who We Count

- Updated the help text on the internet self-response instrument to provide additional guidance about counting children. Example:

Using those guidelines, be sure to INCLUDE the following types of people if they will be living or staying at <ADDRESS> most of the time around <REFDATE>:

- Babies and children of all ages (even newborns and infants), including biological, step, and adopted children, as well as grandchildren, foster children, and children in joint custody arrangements.
- Any other close or extended family members living there, even partners, grandparents, cousins, in-laws, etc.
- <List continues>

Clarifying Language About Who We Count

- Updated the wording of the undercount probe on the questionnaire to specifically mention “grandchildren” and “unrelated” children
- Automated instruments will allow respondents to add these people in real time

2010 Undercount Probe

2. Were there any additional people staying here April 1, 2010 that you did not include in Question 1?
Mark all that apply.

Children, such as newborn babies or foster children

2018 Undercount Probe

2. Were there any additional people staying here on April 1, 2018 that you did not include in Question 1?
Mark all that apply.

Children, related or unrelated, such as newborn babies, grandchildren, or foster children

Improved Enumerator Training

- Updated training for Nonresponse Followup enumerators
 - Specific mentions of counting children and knowledge check questions for on-line training
 - Case study for in-class training involving respondent who is confused about whether to count grandchild
- Updated training for Census Questionnaire Assistance (telephone) enumerators and Coverage Improvement interviewers
- Included content and topics related to the undercount of young children in the Frequently Asked Questions available for field and telephone enumerators

Partnerships and Communications

- Focused partnership, communications, and outreach efforts on this issue
- Census Innovation Workshops
- Continue work with communications team and Statistics in Schools programs
- Presentations to external groups such as the National Advisory Committee, Children's Leadership Council, State Data Centers and Census Information Centers, Chief Officers of the State Library Agencies

Partnerships and Communications

- Recent “Director’s Blog” summarized the research results and discussed updates and activities for the 2020 Census
- Posted to census.gov on July 2, 2018

Census Blogs

About Census Blogs



Director's Blog



Global Reach

Random Samplings



Research Matters

Comment Policy

Improving Our Count of Young Children

Mon Jul 02 2018

WRITTEN BY: DR. RON JARMIN, PERFORMING THE NONEXCLUSIVE FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

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By conducting the decennial census, the Census Bureau aims to count everyone living in the United States once, only once and in the right place. Over the decades, the Census Bureau has vastly improved its procedures to reduce or even eliminate occurrences of both overcounted and undercounted persons. As in the past, we are taking the lessons learned from previous surveys and studies to ensure a complete and accurate 2020 Census. In particular for 2020, we are well aware of and focused on the problem of undercounting young children ages 0 to 4 – a critical issue highlighted in a recent [report](#) by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Partnerships and Communications

- Infographic that describes situations where children may be missed and suggests ways for partners to discuss these with individuals and communities
- Posted to census.gov on August 29, 2018

Counting Young Children in the 2020 Census

Counting everyone once, only once, and in the right place

An estimated 5 percent of kids under the age of 5 weren't counted in the 2010 Census. That's about 1 million young children, the highest of any age group.

We need your help closing this gap in the 2020 Census. Here's what our research tells us about why young children are missed and what you can do to help make sure they are counted.



Common situations where young children aren't counted



The **child splits time between two homes.**

The child lives or stays with **another family or with another relative such as a grandparent.**

How you can help?

- Emphasize that the census counts **everyone where they live** and sleep most of the time, even if the living arrangement is temporary or the parents of the child do not live there.
- If the child truly spends equal amounts of time between two homes, count them where they stayed on **Census Day, April 1**. Coordinate with the other parent or caregiver, if possible, so the child is not counted at both homes.
- If it's not clear where the child lives or sleeps most of the time, count them where they stayed on Census Day, April 1.

Partnerships and Communications

Common situations where young children aren't counted



The child lives in a household that is **large, multigenerational, or includes extended or multiple families.**

How you can help?

- Remind the person filling out the form to count all children, including nonrelatives and children with no other place to live, even if they are only living at the address temporarily on April 1.
- Spread the word that the census **counts all people living or staying** at an address, not just the person or family who owns or rents the property.

New Webpage on Census.gov

- Developed a page on census.gov that is devoted to the undercount of young children
- Includes research reports, the infographic, the Director's Blog, and previous presentations

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/research-testing/undercount-of-young-children.html>

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Census Bureau website with the logo and search bar. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: // Census.gov / Decennial Census of Population and Housing / 2020 Census / Research and Testing / The Undercount of Young Children. The main heading is '2020 Census' followed by 'The Undercount of Young Children'. A left sidebar contains a menu with 'Research and Testing' selected, and sub-items like 'Census Testing by Year'. The main content area has an 'Overview' section with a paragraph explaining the undercount issue and a 'Published Research Reports' section listing three reports from July 2017: '2010 Undercount of Young Children – Characteristics of Children by Age', '2010 Undercount of Young Children – Analysis of Coverage Followup', and '2010 Undercount of Young Children – Geographic Distribution of Results'.

Thank you. Questions?

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