

North Carolina 2019 Policy Priorities for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

Think Babies™ NC Leadership Team



Make Kids Count: Young Children and Census 2020

Introduction

Census population estimates have a big impact on North Carolina's federal funding for family supports as well as the fairness of our local resource allocation. Every family missed in the census results in a loss for North Carolina. Young children have been undercounted in the past, so it's critical that we reach their families to ensure that Census 2020 accurately reflects North Carolina's needs.

Why Is This Important to Do Now?

North Carolina failed to count an estimated 25,000 young children in the 2010 census.

The net undercount of young children – the difference between the actual census count of children ages 0-4 and Census Bureau population estimates – has steadily worsened over the past 40 years. In the 2010 Decennial Census, children under 5 were missed at a higher rate than any other age group.¹ North Carolina's undercount in 2010 resulted in the 8th highest young child undercount in the nation.²

A high undercount means less federal support.

North Carolina will jeopardize more than \$5 billion in funding for child-serving programs if we undercount young kids in Census 2020.³ These federal funds are used for foster care, CHIP, SNAP, child care subsidies, and a variety of other services and programs impacting children and families, so it's critical that we get the count right.

We have to reach the hard-to-count.

Young children are overrepresented in populations considered "hard-to-count" by the U.S. Census Bureau. An estimated 73,000 children under 5 in North Carolina are part of these groups, which include low-income households, families who rent their homes, and racial and ethnic minorities.⁴ If missed in the count, these children also stand to suffer the most from reductions in funding to vital programs.



It's not too late.

We still have time in North Carolina to provide the resources and support necessary to ensure a full and accurate census. Take action to ensure that everyone – including every young child – counts in 2020.



¹ Fernandez, L. Shattuck, R., & Noon, J. (2018). The Use of Administrative Records and the American Community Survey to Study the Characteristics of Undercounted Young Children in the 2010 Census [Working Paper #2018-5]. United States Census Bureau, Center for Administrative Records Research and Applications.

² United States Census Bureau. (2014). The Undercount of Young Children.

³ Reamer, A. (2017). Counting for Dollars 2020: 16 Large Federal Assistance Programs that Distribute Funds on Basis of Decennial Census-derived Statistics, Fiscal Year 2015, North Carolina [Report #1], George Washington University Institute of Public Policy.

⁴ Estimates produced by Steven Romalewski, Mapping Services Director, Center for Urban Research, CUNY Graduate Center, www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us, and compiled and analyzed by William O'Hare. Population totals are from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012-2016 American Community Survey estimates.

About Think Babies™ NC:

Think Babies™ NC seeks to advance policies that support the healthy development of North Carolina's babies and toddlers. It is aligned with the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading initiative and the NC Early Childhood Action Plan. Think Babies™ NC is led by the NC Early Education Coalition with support from the NC Early Childhood Foundation and a Leadership Team of state and local organizations focused on advancing public awareness and policy solutions for infants, toddlers, and their families.