

U.S. CHILDREN BY THE NUMBERS

I

HIGHLIGHTS OF GAO-18-41SP

Assessing the well-being of U.S. children

The success of the nation depends in large part on how well families and society care for children so that they become healthy and productive adults.



WHAT DID WE EXAMINE?

We collected and analyzed federal data in three categories:



WHAT DID WE FIND?

minority

In recent years, the well-being of U.S. children has:

worsened in some areas
remained constant in some areas
improved in others



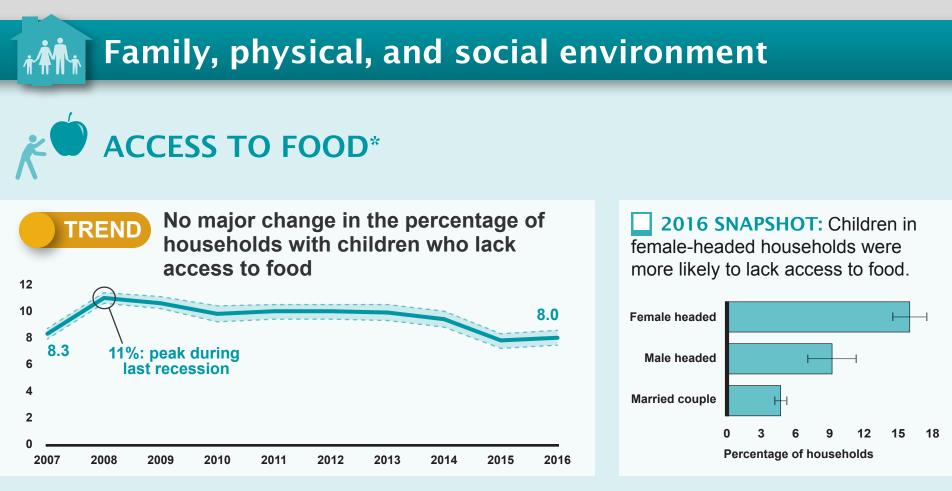
Well-being continues to be generally worse for children who are:

poor

from families headed by single mothers

BELOW ARE SOME OF OUR SPECIFIC FINDINGS.

How precise are these results? Data ranges represented by \implies or \square indicate 95% *confidence intervals.* These mean that if agencies were to survey the entire population, there is a 95% chance that the result would be within the interval.



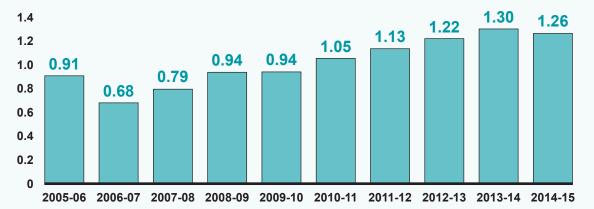
*We are referring to food insecurity, which is a lack of access to adequate food for a healthy lifestyle for all household members. Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Dept. of Commerce's Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.





Increase in number of students schools identify as homeless

Number of enrolled public school students who were homeless (in millions)



2014-15 SNAPSHOT:



>950,000 homeless students: "doubled-up" (living with others)

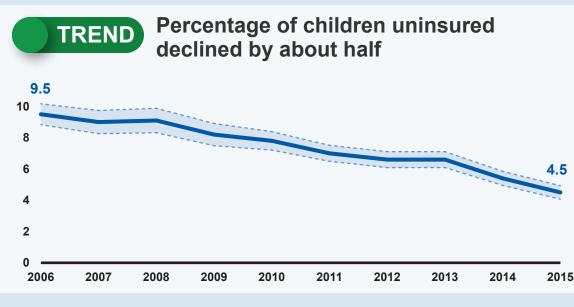
~95,000 homeless students:

unaccompanied (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian)

Source: U.S. Department of Education's Consolidated State Performance Report data from the National Center for Homeless Education.

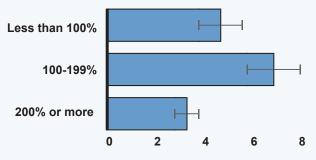
Physical and mental health

ACCESS TO INSURANCE



2015 SNAPSHOT: Among those considered "near poor," a higher percentage lacked insurance.

Percentage of children without insurance by percentage of the federal poverty level



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Health Interview Survey.

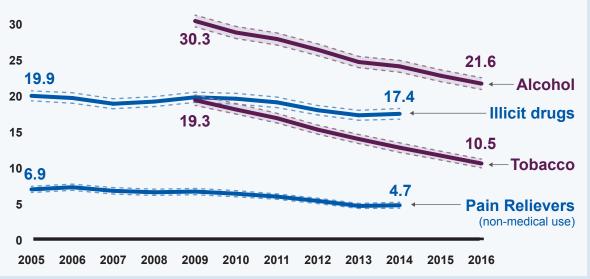
ALCOHOL, SMOKING, AND DRUG USE



Illicit drugs and use of pain relievers: Slight decrease

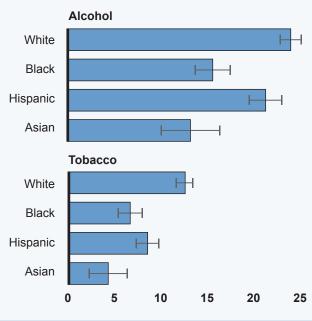
Percentage of youth age 12-17 reporting use of each substance in the last year

TREND



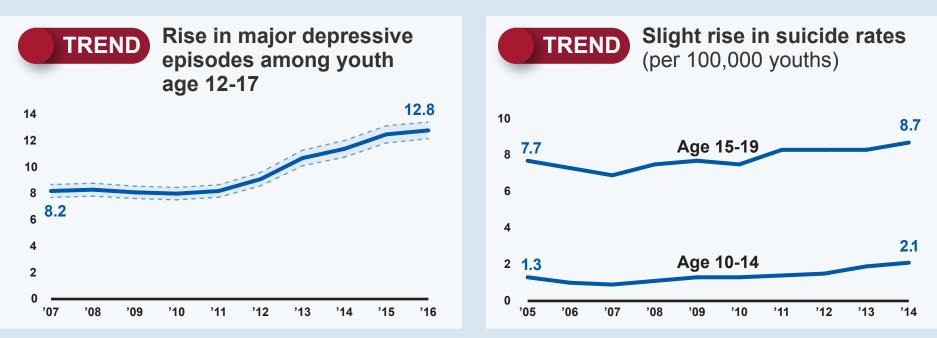
2016 SNAPSHOT: There were variations in substance use by race.

Percentage of youth age 12-17 reporting use

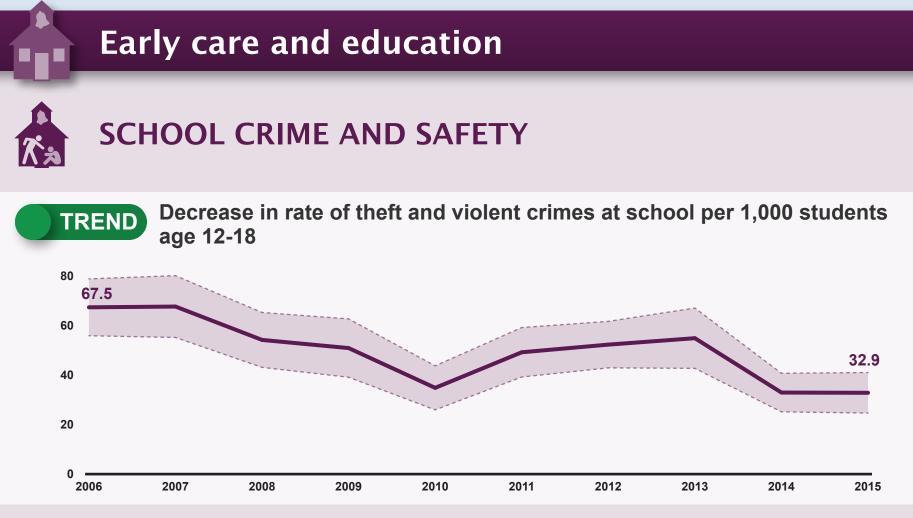


Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Survey on Drug Use and Health and National Vital Statistics System.



Source: U.S. Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey.

For notes on data definitions and methodology, see full report.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INCLUDING OUR RECOMMENDATION, see GAO-18-41SP at GAO.GOV.



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