



**FACT:** Children under the age of 5 had the highest undercount of any age group in the 2010 Census.

## Counting Young Children in the 2020 Census

### THE PROBLEM

In the 2010 Census, the net undercount of children under the age of 5 was 4.6 percent. That's nearly 1 million children. Unlike other age groups, the undercount of young children grew between the 2000 Census and 2010 Census. This is not a new problem, and it's not unique to the United States.

Young children who are missed in the census tend to have complex living arrangements. They might live with only one parent; large, extended families; foster families; or multiple families under one roof. These children may stay in more than one home throughout the year and may not be related to the person responding to the census.

**Young children most likely to be missed tend to live with:**

- Foster families.
- Multiple families.
- People who are not related to them.
- Grandparents, single parents, or young adults.
- Individuals with limited ability to speak English.
- Renters or people who have moved.
- Parents or guardians with lower incomes or without a permanent home.

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U.S. Census Bureau research shows that young children are not included in census responses because there is confusion about who to count. For example, individuals may not understand that they should include children staying in their home who aren't their own. In other cases, individuals intentionally exclude children because they fear they could be exposed for breaking housing rules. Additionally, children can be missed, along with their entire household, because they are homeless or moved on or around Census Day.

## THE IMPACT

The 2020 Census will help determine how more than \$675 billion in federal funding is distributed to communities for the next 10 years—basically, an entire childhood.

When young children are not counted, support for programs, such as health insurance, hospitals, child care, food assistance, schools, and early childhood development, is impacted because the more children there are, the greater the need.

Census data are also the basis of survey data that measure a wide range of characteristics about young children and their communities. When census counts are incomplete, survey estimates are inaccurate, impacting the quality of decisions made by all data users.

## TAKING ACTION

To improve the count of young children in the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau:

- Clarified instructions to highlight that responses should include all babies and young children living or staying in a home.
- Improved Census Bureau employee training to include information related to counting young children.
- Tailored and integrated messaging about the importance of counting young children throughout its communications campaign.
- Is educating national and local partners about ways to improve the count of young children.
- Is marketing to communities where young children are most at risk of being left out of responses to the census.

## HELP ENSURE ALL CHILDREN ARE COUNTED IN 2020

- Count babies and children of all ages (even newborns and infants) living with you, including biological, step, and adopted children, as well as grandchildren, foster children, and children in joint custody arrangements.
- Count newborn babies at the home where they will live and sleep most of the time, even if they are still in the hospital on April 1, 2020. Do not count babies born after April 1, 2020.
- Count children where they live and sleep most of the time, even if their parents do not live there, they are not related to the person completing the census, or they are not related to the person who owns or rents the property.
- If children are moving to a new home in 2020, count them where they are living on April 1, 2020.
- If a child's time is divided between more than one home, count them where they stay most often. If their time is evenly divided between homes, or you don't know where they stay most often, count them where they are staying on April 1, 2020.
- For children that don't have a permanent place to live, count them where they are staying on April 1, 2020, even if they are only staying there temporarily.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Help your friends, family, and stakeholders understand who to include on their 2020 Census questionnaire and why it's important. Remind them that the census counts everyone living in the United States, and that their responses are protected by law.

- Share the link to our Counting Young Children Web page with your family, friends, and neighbors.
- Share our guidance about counting young children.
- Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), and help share our messages.
- Encourage your stakeholders to use our [outreach materials](#) to spread the word in their communities.

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