

Family and Home Environment

Home Environment

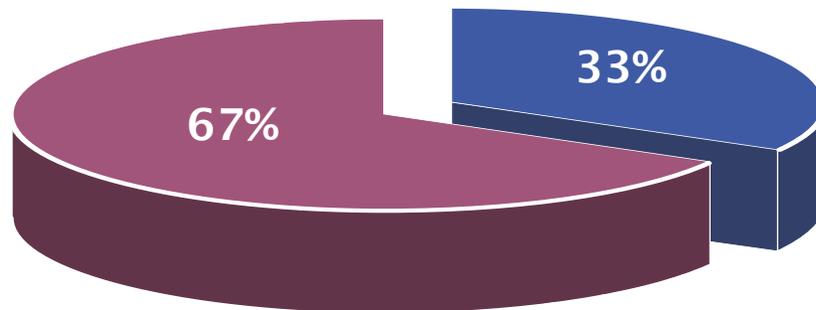
## Family and Home Environment



***why it's important:*** American children are born into, and grow up in, a variety of different types of families. Research consistently shows that the well-being of children is associated with a wide variety of factors, including family income and family structure. Family structure usually is defined as the number, type, and marital status of parents or guardians

Two-thirds of households in Memphis do not include children.

Memphis Households by Presence of Children, 2004



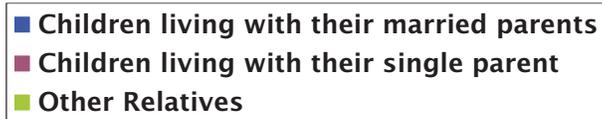
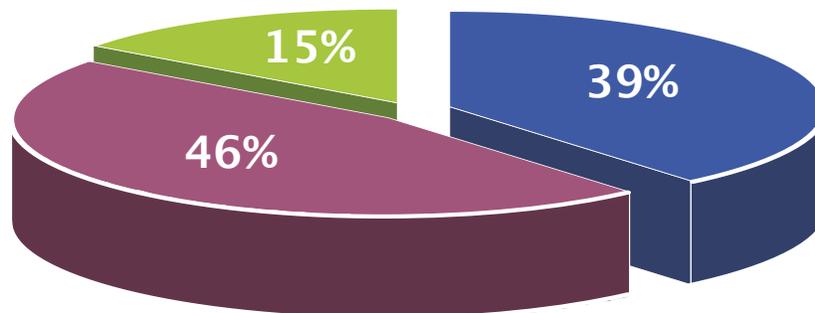
■ Households with Children Under 18  
■ Households without Children

- Of the more than 100 million households in the United States, a third (34 million) have children at home. Similarly, 33 percent of households in Memphis include children.
- While parents with young children made up a majority of U.S. voters in 1956 (55 percent), today they constitute a shrinking minority.

**Critical Issue:** Although there is widespread concern about the condition of children, it becomes increasingly difficult to build a coherent and effective political voice for children and families as the number of households with children declines.

**Children in Memphis have less than a 50-50 chance of being born into a married-couple family.**

Children in Memphis by Living Arrangement, 2000



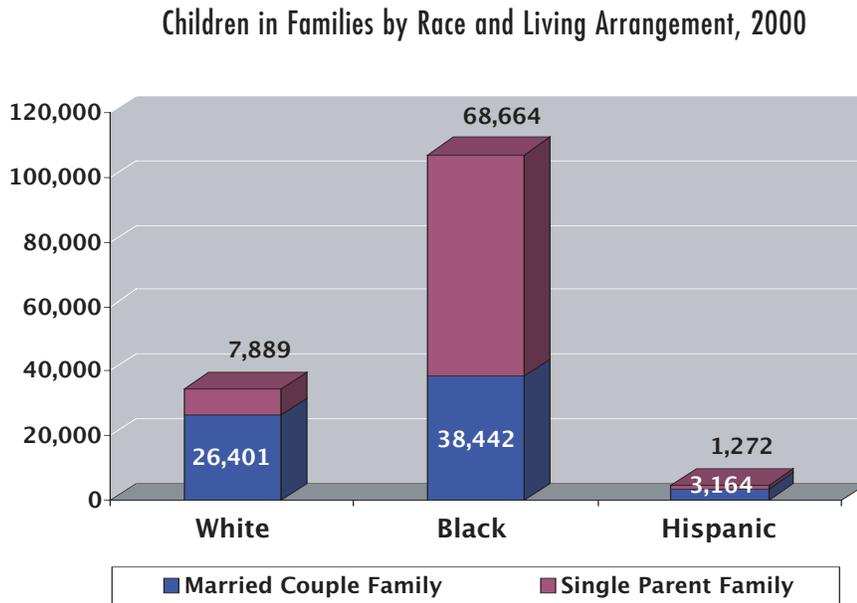
- In Memphis, 39 percent of children live with married parents.
- In contrast, across the rest of Tennessee 75 percent of children live with two parents.
- Across the U.S. 68 percent of children live in a married-couple family.
- Forty-six percent of children in Memphis live with single parents.
- Younger children in Memphis are more likely to live in single, female-headed families than are older children.
- In Memphis 64 percent of children were born to unmarried mothers. This is much higher than the national average.
- One in four children was born to a mother who had less than 12 years of education.

- Fifteen percent of children in Memphis live with grandparents or other relatives.
- More than 20,288 Grandparents in Memphis live with their grandchildren.
- Roughly half of these grandparents (9,660) share responsibility for the care of their grandchildren.
- One in five grandparents living with grandchildren has cared for those children for more than five years.

**Critical Issue:** Social scientists have found that child and family well-being is the product of a complex mix of factors that includes:

- The age at which mothers first give birth
- The educational attainment of mothers and fathers
- Levels of child support received
- Education levels of parents.

## White and Hispanic children are more likely than black children to live with married parents.



- Seventy-five percent of white and Hispanic children in Memphis live with married parents.
- White children are four times more likely to grow up in a married-couple family than a single-female family.
- Twenty-six percent of white babies in Shelby County are born to single mothers. This is comparable to Tennessee's rate (29%).
- Two in three black children live with single mothers.
- Black children are twice as likely to live with a single mother as with married parents.
- The percentage of live births to single, black mothers in Shelby County (77%) is marginally higher than that of Tennessee (74%).

**Critical Issue:** While rates of marriage vary with ethnicity, it would be incomplete to blame poor child and family outcomes on high rates of single parenthood alone. While Hispanic children are just as likely to grow up with married parents, Hispanic families are two and a half times as likely (26%) to confront poverty than their white counterparts (10%).

## Children raised by single mothers are more likely to face poverty and economic hardship.

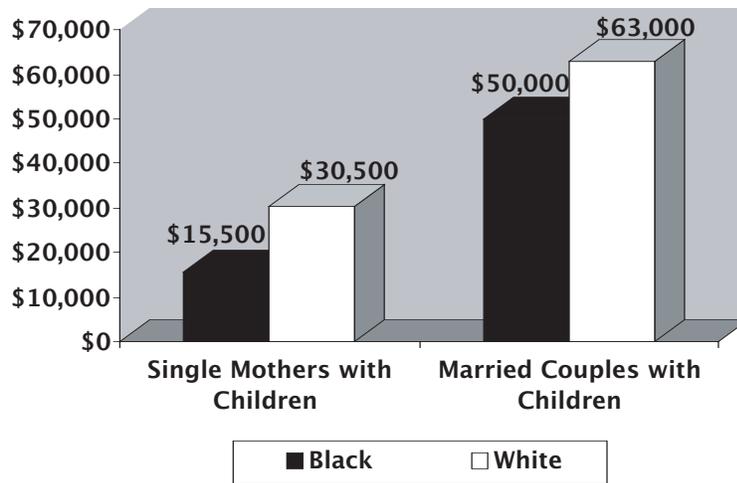
Children Under Age 5 and Ages 5 - 18 in Poverty in Memphis by Living Arrangement, 2000



- Ten percent of children living with married parents live in poverty.
- Forty-eight percent of children raised by single mothers live in poverty.
- The numbers are more serious for young children living with single mothers, where nearly six in 10 (57.6%) children live in poverty.

Even after adjusting for family type, significant differences exist still in the incomes of black and white families.

Differences in Family Income in Memphis by Race and Living Arrangements, 2000

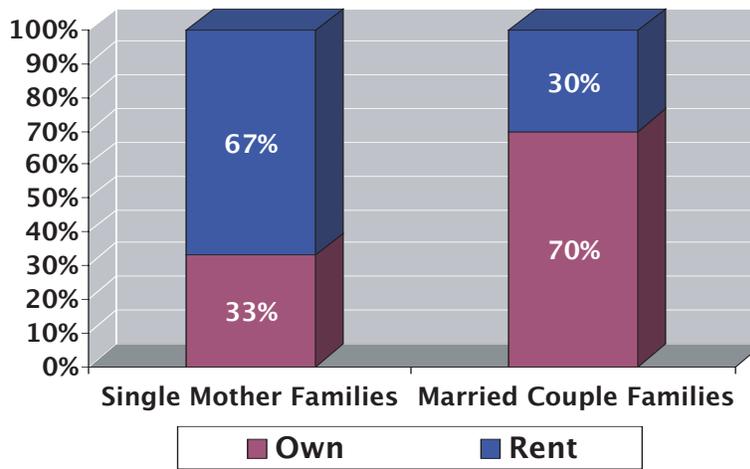


- Families headed by single mothers have significantly lower incomes than do two-parent families.
- The median household income in Memphis is \$32,285. This is almost 25 percent lower than the national median, \$41,994.
- In Memphis, the median married-couple annual income is \$52,666.
- Single-mother families in Memphis have a median annual income of \$18,029.
- So married-couple families in Memphis earn three times as much as do families headed by single mothers.
- In Memphis white, single mothers earn double the amount of black single mothers.
- White married couples earn 20 percent more than do black married couples.

**Critical Issue:** As these findings suggest, low income families and single parent families are not all the same. The data reflects the reality that there are many different paths to poverty and there are subtle but important differences that characterize the well-being of children and families in Memphis.

Married-couple families with children are more than twice as likely as single-parent families to own their homes.

Home Ownership Rates of Families with Children in Memphis, 2000



- Median rent in the city of Memphis is \$530, compared with \$632 in the suburbs.
- Median value of a home in Memphis in 2000 was \$70,4330
- Approximately 85 percent of families in Memphis have lived in Shelby County for at least five years. Over half of families have lived in the same houses for five years.

**Critical Issue:** Homeownership is often considered a key ingredient in family stability. In Memphis rates of home ownership are low among both married-couple and single-parent families. Still, married couples are twice as likely to own their homes as are single parents.

## **Half of all children in Memphis live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.**

Fifty-one percent of children in Memphis live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, whereas 19 percent of children across the State of Tennessee live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.

### **Things we need to learn:**

The relationships between family type, education, income and race result in different opportunities for children in Memphis. Some children are clearly faring better than others. We need to develop an understanding of the reciprocal relations between income, race, educational attainment and family type.

Additional variables to be considered in future studies include age of mother at first birth, levels of involvement of grandparents, parental workforce participation, the degree to which single mothers can rely on child support and differences that exist between single-mother homes (i.e.: differences between families where the mother has never married and families led by a mother who is separated or divorced).