

On the Edge in the Empire State: New York's Low-Income Children

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In New York State, one of the most populous states in the nation, more than two out of every five children live in low-income families. Recent research indicates that the income gap in this state between the wealthiest families and the lowest-income families is the largest in the nation.¹ Nearly half of all New York State residents live in New York City, where the cost of living is especially high.

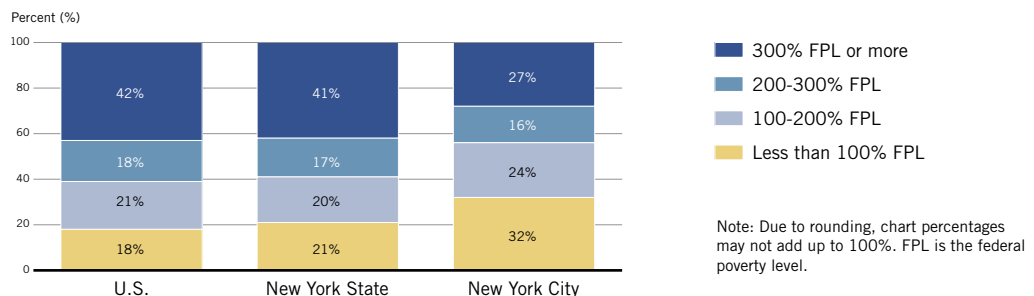
Research suggests that on average in the United States families need an income of about twice the federal poverty level to meet their basic needs, including adequate food, stable housing, and health care. Children living in families with incomes below this level—for 2006, \$40,000 for a family of four—are referred to as low income. Results from the National Center for Children in Poverty's Family Resource Simulator show that even with the help of public benefits—including food stamps, public health insurance, and federal, state, and local income tax credits—low-income families in New York City do not earn enough to afford basic family necessities.² Thus despite high rates of employment and small family sizes, many of New York State's low-income parents struggle to make ends meet.

Characteristics of Children in New York State and New York City³

More than two in five children in New York State live in low-income families. In New York City, where 58% of the state's low-income children reside, over half the children live in low-income families.

- There are approximately 4.6 million children living in New York State.
 - 42%—1.9 million—live in low-income⁴ families.
 - 21%—1.0 million—live in poor⁵ families.
- There are approximately 2.0 million children living in New York City.
 - 56%—1.1 million—live in low-income families.
 - 32%—0.6 million—live in poor families.

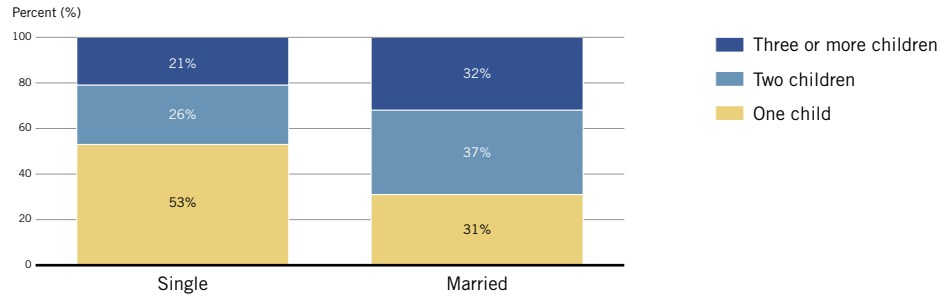
Children by family income, 2004



A majority of low-income single-parent families have only one child.

- 53% of low-income single-parent families in New York State have only one child—55% in New York City.
- 44% of low-income children in New York State have married parents—45% in New York City; most of these families have one or two children.

Family structure and number of children in low-income families in New York State, 2004

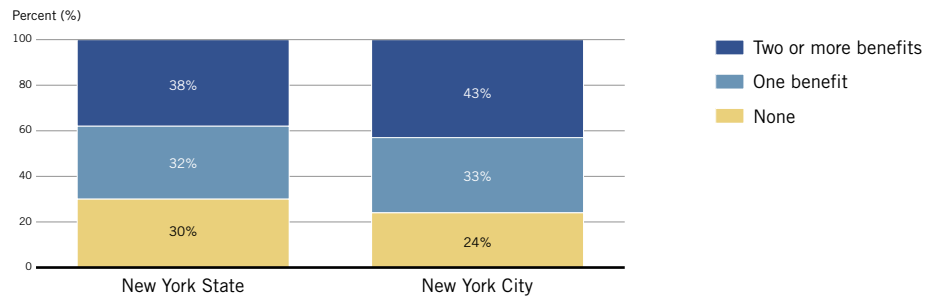


Receipt of Public Benefits in New York⁶

Nearly a third of low-income children live in households that do not report any public benefit receipt.*

- 30% of low-income children in New York State live in households that do not receive any public benefits—24% in New York City.
- 38% of low-income children in New York State live in households that receive two or more public benefits—43% in New York City. The two most common combinations of public benefits are public health insurance (Medicaid/SCHIP) and food stamps, or these two benefits plus TANF cash assistance and housing assistance.

Household public benefit receipt among low-income children in New York, 2004

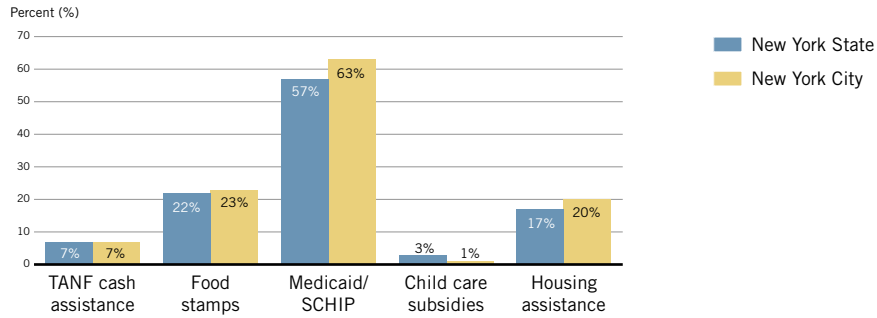


Among children with low-income, employed parents,⁷ benefit receipt is generally low, although the majority of these children live in households that receive public health insurance.

- 57% of low-income children with an employed parent in New York State live in households that report receiving Medicaid/SCHIP⁸—63% in New York City.
- 22% of low-income children with an employed parent in New York State live in households that report receiving food stamps—23% in New York City.
- Only a tiny fraction of low-income children with an employed parent receive child care subsidies.

* Public benefits were limited to TANF cash assistance, food stamps, Medicaid/SCHIP, housing assistance, and child care subsidies in this analysis. Households may receive public benefits not included in the analysis.

Household public benefit receipt among low-income children with employed parents in New York, 2004

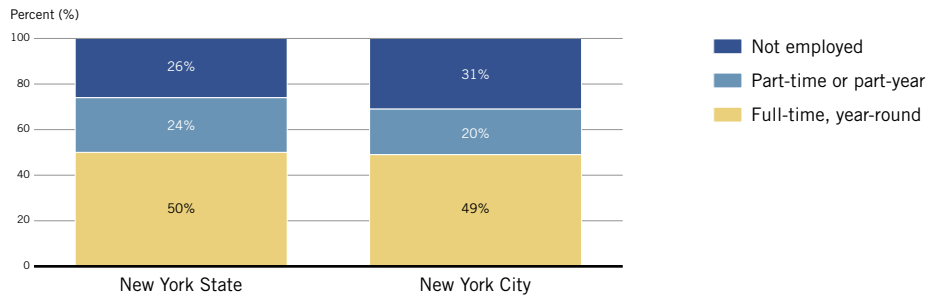


Parental Employment and Education in New York

Most children in low-income families have at least one parent who is employed.

- 74% of children in low-income families in New York State have at least one employed parent—69% in New York City.
- Among low-income parents with no employment in New York State, more than one quarter—29%—reported having an illness or disability that prevented them from working—27% in New York City.⁹

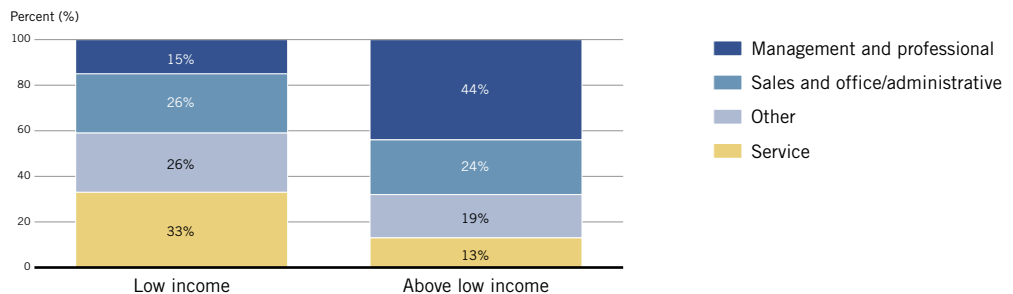
Parental employment among low-income children in New York, 2004



Low-income parents are most likely to be employed in service occupations.¹⁰

- 33% of low-income working parents in New York State work in service occupations—37% in New York City.
- 44% of working parents who are *not* low income in New York State work in management and professional occupations—42% in New York City.

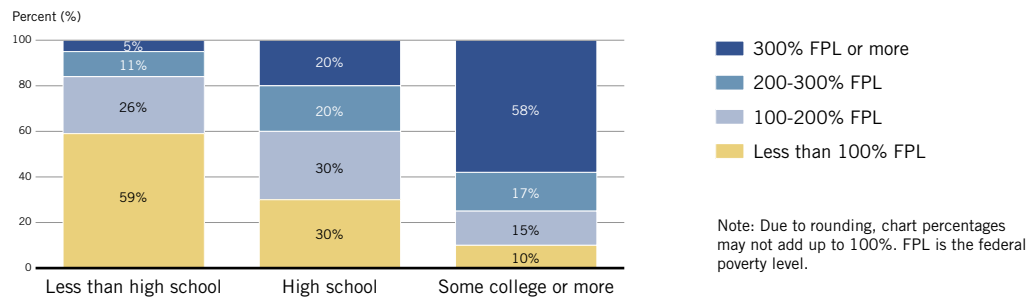
Working parents in New York State by occupation and income, 2004



Low education levels may hinder parents from engaging in job opportunities with higher earnings.

- 84% of children in New York State whose parents do not have a high school degree live in low-income families—85% in New York City.
- 60% of children in New York State whose parents have a high school degree, but no college education, live in low-income families—67% in New York City.
- 25% of children in New York State whose parents have at least some college education, live in low-income families—37% in New York City.

Children in New York State by parental education and income, 2004



Endnotes

This fact sheet is part of the National Center for Children in Poverty's demographic fact sheet series and was prepared by Michelle Chau, Kinsey Alden Dinan, and Sarah Fass. Estimates are based on the U.S. Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, March 2003, 2004, and 2005.

1. Bernstein, J. & McNichol, E. (2006). *Pulling apart: A state-by-state analysis of income trends*. Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.
2. These results were derived from NCCP's Family Resource Simulator <www.nccp.org/modeler/modeler.cgi>, based on simulations for four hypothetical families: single- and two-parent families with one child (age 3) or two children (ages 3 and 6). Each simulation assumed that children are cared for in a registered family child care home when parent(s) are working (the 6-year-old receives after-school care).
3. New York City is comprised of the five boroughs (counties) of Staten Island (Richmond), Manhattan (New York), Queens, Brooklyn (Kings), and the Bronx in New York State.
4. Low-income is defined as twice the federal poverty level, or \$40,000 for a family of four in 2006. More information about federal poverty measures is available at <aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/06poverty.shtml>.
5. Poor is defined as below the federal poverty level, or \$20,000 for a family of four in 2006.
6. Figures for household public benefits receipt are enumerated from self-reported benefit usage during the previous calendar year in the U.S. Current Population Survey's Annual Social and Economic Supplement. These figures may differ from administrative program data reported by federal and state government agencies.
7. Parental employment is the employment level of the parent in the household who maintained the highest level of employment in the previous year. Parents can either have no employment in the previous year, part-year or part-time employment, or full-time, year-round employment. Part-year or part-time employment is defined as either working less than 50 weeks in the previous year or less than 35 hours per week. Full-time, year-round employment is defined as working at least 50 weeks in the previous year and 35 hours or more per week for more than half the year.
8. Medicaid/SCHIP receipt refers to households that report anyone in the household being covered by Medicaid or a state children's health insurance program.
9. Includes reasons for lack of employment for both parents in families with two nonworking parents.
10. Includes occupation for both parents in families with two working parents.

For more state-level demographic data, or to use NCCP's Family Resource Simulator to learn more about the impact of public policies on New York's low-income families, visit NCCP's web site: www.nccp.org.