

Child Poverty in New York State

Scope:

While Sweden leads the world with only 2.4 percent child poverty, **New York State, at 26.3 percent, ranks last in the industrialized world.**

“A significant percentage of our children are still living in families that are so poor that normal health and growth are at risk.” Tim Smeeding, Maxwell Professor of Public Policy at The Maxwell School of Syracuse University, *Child Well-Being, Child Poverty and Child Policy in Modern Nations*.

- Nearly 13 million American children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level, which is \$20,000 a year for a family of four.
- The number of children living in poverty increased by more than 11 percent between 2000 and 2005.
- There are 1.3 million more children living in poverty today than in 2000, despite indications of economic recovery and growth.

-- The Brookings Institution, December 2006

- Rochester, NY is the 11th worst city in the United States for child poverty; 38% of children under the age of 12 live in poverty. — Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count

Cost-Effective Investments in Children:

Based on a review of benefit-cost evidence, [The Brookings Institution] identifies four areas of investment that merit expanded federal funding even in a time of fiscal austerity. America's future economic well-being will benefit from targeted investments to ensure that children have the skills to become tomorrow's adult workers, caregivers, taxpayers, and citizens. Target areas for a package of proposals totaling about \$25 billion annually and \$133 billion over a five-year period are the following:

- **High-quality early childhood education** programs for three- and four-year-old children (\$94 billion over five years);
- **Nurse home-visiting programs** to promote sound prenatal care and the healthy development of infants and toddlers (\$14 billion over five years);
- **School reform with an emphasis on programs in high-poverty elementary schools** that improve the acquisition of basic skills for all students (\$17 billion over five years); and
- **Programs that reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy** (\$8 billion over five years).

Other resources:

National Center for Children in Poverty (Columbia University) www.nccp.org
Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count -- www.aecf.org
The Brookings Institution – www.brook.edu