Update from the Undercount of Young Children Subteam

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Any views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.
Outline

• Overview of the issue
• Review high-level research results
• Updates and activities for the 2020 Census
What is the issue?

• In 2010, the estimated net undercount for children age 0 to 4 was 4.6%, or nearly 1 million young children
• The undercount of young children has been a persistent issue in the census
• An undercount of children has implications for:
  • Political representation
  • Federal funding for programs such as:
    • Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
    • Special Education Grants
    • National School Lunch Program
  • School Planning
Coverage in the 2010 Census

• In 2010, the total population count was very close to the Demographic Analysis estimate
  • Adults were overcounted while children we undercounted
  • Young children, age 0 to 4, had an especially high undercount of 4.6 percent or about 1 million young children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Net Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults (age 18+)</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (age 0 to 17)</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Children (age 0 to 4)</td>
<td>-4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A negative estimate denotes a net undercount
Source: 2010 Census and Demographic Analysis
Coverage in the 2010 Census

- The net coverage of young children varied by race and Hispanic origin
- Original Hispanic/Non-Hispanic estimates were based on projected birth data, while updated estimates use actual births

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Hispanic Origin</th>
<th>Net Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black alone-or-in-combination</td>
<td>-6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Black alone-or-in-combination</td>
<td>-4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (updated)</td>
<td>-6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic (updated)</td>
<td>-3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A negative estimate denotes a net undercount
Source: 2010 Census and Demographic Analysis
Coverage since 1970

- The net undercount of young children has increased in recent decades

Summary of Research on the Undercount of Young Children
Data Sources

• Existing data sources including 2010 Census responses, 2010 Coverage Followup, 2010 Coverage Measurement, ACS, and others

• Limitations
  • These data sources were not collected for this specific purpose
  • The data provide evidence of potential coverage errors and show how the strength of that evidence differs by characteristics of children or households
  • The data DO NOT:
    • Tell us how many children with a certain characteristic were missed
    • Tell us why children missed
  • Despite these limitations, our research has enhanced our understanding of the issue and possible causes of the undercount
Relationship to the Householder

- The 2010 Census asked how each person was related to the householder
- Less evidence of coverage error for biological and adopted children of the householder
- More evidence of coverage error for grandchildren, other relatives (e.g., niece/nephew), and children unrelated to the householder

2. How is this person related to Person 1? Mark X ONE box.
- Husband or wife
- Biological son or daughter
- Adopted son or daughter
- Stepson or stepdaughter
- Brother or sister
- Father or mother
- Grandchild
- Parent-in-law
- Son-in-law or daughter-in-law
- Other relative
- Roomer or boarder
- Housemate or roommate
- Unmarried partner
- Other nonrelative
Complex Household Typology

• We classified households based on the types of relationships within the household
• Households that are complex in structure may be more difficult to enumerate accurately
• Complex households are defined as anything other than a nuclear family or single-parent family (stem family), such as:
  • Multi-generation households
  • Extended families
  • Multi-family households
Complex Household Typology

• In 2010, about 40% of young children lived in complex households

• More evidence of coverage error for children living in complex households

Percentage of Young Children by Household Type

- Nuclear family: 49.3%
- Stem family: 11.1%
- Multi-generation: 10.4%
- Other relative(s): 5.5%
- Blended families: 3.6%
- Other complex: 3.9%
- Family household with nonrelative(s): 16.2%

Source: 2010 Census: special tabulation.
Complex Household Typology

• Young children were more likely to live in complex households than older children and adults

Percentage of the Population in Complex Households by Age

Source: 2010 Census: special tabulation.
Complex Household Typology

• The percent of young children living in complex households differed by race and Hispanic Origin

Percentage of the Young Children in Complex Households by Race and Hispanic Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Hispanic Origin</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Alone</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Alone</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIAN Alone</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Alone</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHPI Alone</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOR Alone</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2010 Census: special tabulation.
Complex Household Typology

Percentage of Young Children Living in Complex Households by County: 2010

Source: Census 2010, special tabulation.
Very Young Children

• Children born in the census year, January 1 to April 1, may be missed at an exceptionally high rate
• Demographic Analysis results show a smaller net undercount for age 0 than for age 1 and 2, but this is likely due to a number of children born after April 1 who are included in the census count
• The number of children with a given birth date decreases through March approaching April 1, suggesting that those born close to Census Day may be especially likely to be missed
Characteristics of Children

• Young children are more likely than older children to have many hard-to-count characteristics
• These results help explain why the net undercount of young children is higher than older children
• We examined selected characteristics from the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey
Characteristics of Children in the 2010 Census

- Householder is grandparent of child
- Young householder (age 18-29)
- Not enumerated by self-response
- Complex household
- Renter-occupied household
- Large household (6-or-more people)

The diagram shows the distribution of children aged 10-17 and 0-4 in various household characteristics.
Characteristics of Children in the American Community Survey

- Household income below poverty threshold
- Lived at different address 1 year ago
- Grandchild of householder
- Living in limited-English speaking household

- Children Age 10-17
- Children Age 0-4
Updates and Activities for 2020
Clarifying Language About Who We Count

• Updated the language on the primary solicitation materials that most households will receive in 2020

  “...all adults, children, and babies living or staying at this address”

  instead of...

  “...everyone living or staying at this address”
Clarifying Language About Who We Count

• Updated the help text on the internet self-response instrument to provide additional guidance about counting children. Example:

Using those guidelines, be sure to INCLUDE the following types of people if they will be living or staying at <ADDRESS> most of the time around <REFDATE>:

• Babies and children of all ages (even newborns and infants), including biological, step, and adopted children, as well as grandchildren, foster children, and children in joint custody arrangements.

• Any other close or extended family members living there, even partners, grandparents, cousins, in-laws, etc.

• <List continues>
Clarifying Language About Who We Count

- Updated the wording of the undercount probe on the questionnaire to specifically mention “grandchildren” and “unrelated” children
- Automated instruments will allow respondents to add these people in real time

2010 Undercount Probe

2. Were there any **additional** people staying here April 1, 2010 that you did not include in Question 1?
   Mark ☑ all that apply.
   - Children, such as newborn babies or foster children

2018 Undercount Probe

2. Were there any additional people staying here on April 1, 2018 that you did not include in Question 1?
   Mark ☑ all that apply.
   - Children, related or unrelated, such as newborn babies, grandchildren, or foster children
Improved Enumerator Training

- Updated training for Nonresponse Followup enumerators
  - Specific mentions of counting children and knowledge check questions for on-line training
  - Case study for in-class training involving respondent who is confused about whether to count grandchild
- Updated training for Census Questionnaire Assistance (telephone) enumerators and Coverage Improvement interviewers
- Included content and topics related to the undercount of young children in the Frequently Asked Questions available for field and telephone enumerators
Partnerships and Communications

• Focused partnership, communications, and outreach efforts on this issue
• Census Innovation Workshops
• Continue work with communications team and Statistics in Schools programs
• Presentations to external groups such as the National Advisory Committee, Children’s Leadership Council, State Data Centers and Census Information Centers, Chief Officers of the State Library Agencies
Partnerships and Communications

- Recent “Director’s Blog” summarized the research results and discussed updates and activities for the 2020 Census

- Posted to census.gov on July 2, 2018
Partnerships and Communications

- Infographic that describes situations where children may be missed and suggests ways for partners to discuss these with individuals and communities

- Posted to census.gov on August 29, 2018
Partnerships and Communications

Common situations where young children aren’t counted

The child lives in a household that is large, multigenerational, or includes extended or multiple families.

How you can help?

• Remind the person filling out the form to count all children, including nonrelatives and children with no other place to live, even if they are only living at the address temporarily on April 1.

• Spread the word that the census counts all people living or staying at an address, not just the person or family who owns or rents the property.
New Webpage on Census.gov

- Developed a page on census.gov that is devoted to the undercount of young children
- Includes research reports, the infographic, the Director’s Blog, and previous presentations

Thank you. Questions?

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