

Counting young children in the 2020 Census

Counting everyone once, only once, and in the right place.

The 2020 Census helps determine which areas qualify for the critical resources that children and families depend on for the next 10 years—basically an entire childhood! An estimated 5 percent of kids under the age of five were missed in the 2010 Census. At about 1 million babies and young children, that's the largest undercount of any age group. We need your help closing this gap in the 2020 Census.

Here's what our research tells us about why young children are missed and what you can do to help make sure they are counted.

If the child splits time between two homes, or if the child lives or stays with another family or with another relative such as a grandparent.

- Emphasize that the census counts everyone where they live and sleep most of the time, even if the living arrangement is temporary or the parents of the child do not live there.
- If the child truly spends equal amounts of time between two homes, count them where they stayed on Census Day, April 1. Coordinate with the other parent or caregiver, if possible, so the child is not counted at both homes.
- If it's not clear where the child lives or sleeps most of the time, count them where they stayed on Census Day, April 1.

If the child lives in a home with a young, single parent or guardian.

- Explain that filling out the census yourself, on your own schedule, is easier than having to respond when a census worker knocks on your door. Remind these homes that the form should only take about 10 minutes to fill out and can be done online, by phone, or by mail.
- Encourage parents and guardians with young children to ask other household members to count them and their children on the form if others live in the home.

If the child is a newborn.

- Emphasize that parents and guardians should include babies on census forms, even if they are still in the hospital on April 1.
- Encourage facilities providing services to newborns to remind parents about the importance of counting their children on the census form.
- Highlight the fact that the census form only takes about 10 minutes to complete, and parents and guardians can fill it out online, by phone, or by mail at a time that works best for them.
- Explain to parents and guardians that if newborns are not counted, the next opportunity to count them will be when they are 10 years old. During those years, their communities could receive less funding for schools, parks, SNAP/WIC, hospitals, transportation, and other things kids need.

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If the child lives in a home that is large, multigenerational, or includes extended or multiple families.

- Remind the person filling out the form to count all children, including nonrelatives, foster children, 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.

If the child lives in a home that rents or recently moved.

- Encourage renters and recent movers to complete their census forms online or over the phone, right away. That way they don't need to worry about paper forms getting lost in the move.
- Focus efforts on multi-unit buildings that are likely to have renters.

If the child lives in a home where they're not supposed to be, for one reason or another.

- Please explain to those that have children living in places where they aren't allowed (for example, grandparents in a seniors-only residence that have a grandchild living with them, a family with more people, including children, than the lease allows) that they should include the children on their census form.
- Emphasize that responses to the 2020 Census are safe and confidential. Personal information is protected by law and cannot be shared with other law enforcement agencies—not the FBI, ICE, or even local police. It also cannot be used to determine personal eligibility for government benefits.
- Explain that all Census Bureau staff take a lifetime oath to protect your personal information, and any violation of this oath comes with a penalty of up to \$250,000 and/or up to five years in prison.

If the child lives in a lower-income home.

- Explain to service providers and families that responding to the census helps determine more than \$675 billion each year in local funding for programs and services such as food assistance, Head Start, childcare, housing, public schools, early intervention services for children with special needs, children's health insurance, and more. When children are missed in the census, these programs miss out on funding that is based on the number of children counted.

If the child lives in a non-English or limited-English speaking home.

- Conduct outreach and create resources in non-English languages that highlight the importance of counting young children.
- Encourage non-English speakers to self-respond to the census and let them know that for the 2020 Census, the online form and telephone line will be available in 13 languages, including English. Language guides will be available in 59 languages other than English.

If the child lives in a home of recent immigrants or foreign-born adults.

- Work with community members to conduct outreach in neighborhoods with recent immigrants. Focus efforts on the community's gathering places like local grocery stores, places of worship, and small restaurants.
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For more information, visit:

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