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## Children facing economic hardships in the United States Differentials and changes in the 1990s.

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### Abstract

This paper helps document significant improvements in the child low-income rate as well as the significant decrease in the proportion of children who relied on public assistance in the United States during the 1990s. Many disadvantaged groups of children were less likely to live in poor or low-income families in the late 1990s than such children a decade earlier. The improvement in the child low-income rates of these disadvantaged groups was accompanied by a substantial increase in parental employment. However, parental employment appears to do less to protect children from economic hardship than it did a decade earlier. This paper shows that working families' children in many disadvantaged social groups, especially groups in medium risk ranks--children in families with parents between ages 25 to 29, with parents who only had a high-school diploma, and in father-only families--suffered the largest increase in economic hardship. Our results indicate that the increased odds of falling below low-income lines among children in working families facing multiple disadvantaged characteristics and the increased proportion of these children in various subgroups of working families in the 1990s can help explain the increased economic hardship among subgroups in the medium risk ranks listed above. Finally, the paper also notes that the official measure of poverty tends to underestimate low-income rates.






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