The U.S. adolescent population is growing.

The adolescent population is more racially/ethnically diverse than the general population.

More adolescents live in suburbs than in rural areas and central cities.

Two thirds of adolescents ages 12-17 live with both parents.

Black and Hispanic youth experience poverty at a higher rate than their peers.

The U.S. adolescent population is growing.

The number of adolescents in the U.S. began to increase in the 1990s and is expected to keep increasing through 2050. From 1990 to 2000, the adolescent population ages 10-19 increased by 16.6%, from 34.9 million to 40.7 million. Although the projected figures indicate substantial growth for the adolescent population, they represent a much smaller percentage increase than that projected for the overall population (2.2% between 2000 and 2010, versus an expected 6.6% increase for the total U.S. population) (U.S. Census Bureau, 1992; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; U.S. Census Bureau, 2003a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2003b; U.S. Census Bureau, 2003c).
The racial/ethnic diversity of the adolescent population varies by region. The Northeast and Midwest have the highest percentages of White-NH adolescents, while the South has the highest percentage of Black-NH adolescents. The West has the highest percentage of Hispanic, AI/AN-NH & A/PI-NH adolescents. The highest number of all adolescents live in the South, followed by the Midwest, West and Northeast (35.7%, 23.5%, 22.7% and 18.1% of all adolescents, respectively) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003b).

The percentage of White-NHs in the adolescent population is projected to drop from 62.9% in 2000 to 55.8% in 2020. The Hispanic adolescent population, the second most populous racial/ethnic group, will increase by 50%. Although small in numbers, the A/PI*-NH population will experience the most rapid growth (83%). Relatively small growth is projected for the Black-NH and AI/AN*-NH populations (2.5% and 6%, respectively) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; U.S. Census Bureau, 2003b).

Racial/ethnic diversity is increasing in the adolescent population.

The racial/ethnic distribution of adolescents varies by region.

The racial/ethnic diversity of the adolescent population ages 10-19 varies by region. The Northeast and Midwest have the highest percentages of White-NH adolescents, while the South has the highest percentage of Black-NH adolescents. The West has the highest percentage of Hispanic, AI/AN-NH & A/PI-NH adolescents. The highest number of all adolescents live in the South, followed by the Midwest, West and Northeast (35.7%, 23.5%, 22.7% and 18.1% of all adolescents, respectively) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003b).
More adolescents live in suburbs than in rural areas and central cities.

Over half of all adolescents ages 12-17 live in suburban settings. From 1990 to 2002, the percentage of adolescents ages 12-17 living in the suburbs increased from 46.6% to 53.8% (U.S. Census Bureau, 1992; U.S. Census Bureau, 2003a; Fields, 2003). In 2002, more than a quarter of adolescents lived in central city settings, while 1 in 5 lived in rural areas. White-NH and A/PI youth ages 12-17 are most likely to live in suburban settings (59.7% and 56.3%, respectively). Among same-age Black-NHs, 50.4% live in central city settings and 36.6% live in suburban settings. Hispanic youths are about equally likely to live in central city or suburban settings (44.5% and 46.3%, respectively) (Fields, 2003).

Two thirds of adolescents ages 12-17 live with both parents.

In 2002, two thirds of adolescents ages 12-17 lived with both parents, a decrease from 73% in 1995 (Fields, 2003; Bryson, 1996). This parallels a trend for children ages 0-18: from 1980 to 2002, the number of children living with two parents decreased from 77% to 69% (FIFCFS, 2003). In 2002, about three quarters of A/PI and White-NH youths ages 12-17 lived with both parents, as did 63.1% of same-age Hispanics. By contrast, about two fifths of Black adolescents lived in two-parent families; of all racial/ethnic groups, they were most likely to live with mothers only (46%) or neither parent (10.3%) (Fields, 2003).

Black and Hispanic youth experience poverty at a higher rate than their peers.

Black children and adolescents under age 18 experience poverty more than their same-age peers in other racial/ethnic groups. Hispanic youths had the second highest poverty rate, followed by White and A/PI youth. In 2002, 1 out of 6 youths under age 18 lived below the Federal Poverty Line, close to the lowest rate since data collection began in 1979 (Proctor & Dalaker, 2003).
Data Sources:


1. The Census Bureau defines four geographic regions as 1) Northeast-MN, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, PA; 2) Midwest-OH, IN, IL, MI, WI, MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS; 3) West-MT, ID, WY, CO, NM, AZ, UT, NV, WA, OR, CA, AK, HI; and 4) South-DE, MD, DC, VA, WV, NC, SC, GA, FL, AR, LA, OK, TX, KY, TN, AL, MO.

2. For more information on settings, refer to Fields, 2003.

3. The Federal Poverty Line was $18,392 for a family of four in 2002.

In all cases, the most recent available data were used. Some data are released 1-3 years after collection. For questions regarding data sources or availability, please contact NAHIC.

For racial/ethnic data, the category names presented are those of the data sources used.

Ranges were those of the data sources used. Every attempt was made to standardize age ranges. When this was not possible, age ranges were those of the data sources used.

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Background on NAHIC
The National Adolescent Health Information Center (NAHIC) was established with funding from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau in 1993 (4H06 MC00002) to serve as a national resource for adolescent health research and information to assure the integration, synthesis, coordination and dissemination of adolescent health-related information.

NAHIC Briefs and Fact Sheets
Brief on Clinical Preventive Health Services for Adolescents
Brief on Mental Health: Adolescents & Young Adults
Brief on Obesity: Adolescents & Young Adults
Fact Sheet on Adolescent Health Care Utilization
Fact Sheet on Demographics: Adolescents
Fact Sheet on Mortality: Adolescents & Young Adults
Fact Sheet on Reproductive Health: Adolescents & Young Adults
Fact Sheet on Substance Use: Adolescents & Young Adults
Fact Sheet on Suicide: Adolescents & Young Adults
Fact Sheet on Unintentional Injury: Adolescents & Young Adults
Fact Sheet on Violence: Adolescents & Young Adults