Youth Development Facts

- “In October 2022, high food costs contributed to 28% of households going hungry nationwide. While this statistic has improved by seven percentage points since spring 2022, it means that more than 1 in 4 families is still struggling to put enough food on the table.
- In 11 states, the share of children that were not eating because food was not affordable hovered between 32% and 43%. Michigan had the highest rate.
- Examining this same statistic by race and ethnicity for households with kids: Only white families bested the national average, with high food costs contributing to hunger 21% of the time. By comparison, 38% of Black families, 37% of Latino and multi-race families and 31% of Asian families have reported facing food insecurity due to rising food costs.
- Hunger and food insecurity are consistently more common in some communities of color. For example, Black kids are almost three times as likely and Latino kids are nearly twice as likely to experience hunger when compared to their white peers.
- One in four (24%) families headed by single mothers were food insecure in 2021.
- While families in all areas face hunger, rural communities tend to have higher levels of hunger.”[1]
- “Currently, criminologists’ preferred method is to keep young, less serious offenders out of the criminal justice system almost entirely. Deflection shows great promise in this regard by intervening before a juvenile offender becomes entangled in the system. According to Police Chief Magazine, “[i]nstead of utilizing traditional police interventions (i.e., arrest, booking and charging), deflection relies on law enforcement to be the referral source to community-based drug treatment and mental health.”15 Put simply, these strategies empower officers to deflect those who may have committed a minor crime to the help and resources they need instead of being arrested, booked and ultimately mired in the criminal justice system. Deflection and diversion are about providing help and services in addition to accountability.”
- Police and school officials in Clayton County, Georgia, enacted a deflection program a decade ago that is credited with reducing arrests by 80 percent and significantly reducing violent incidents in public schools.”[2]
- “Across the nation, 86% of children ages 6 to 17 have at least one adult mentor in their school, neighborhood or community who provides advice or

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[1] The Annie E. Casey Foundation, “NEARLY 11 MILLION KIDS FACE FOOD INSECURITY AS STATISTIC DIPS TO 20-YEAR LOW.” The Annie E. Casey Foundation, https://www.aecf.org/blog/nearly-11-million-kids-face-food-insecurity-as-statistic-dips-to-20-year-low. Accessed 27 April 2024.

[2] Hyden, Marc and Greenhut, Steven. “How Juvenile Justice “Deflection” Programs Reduce Crime and Save Money.” R Street, https://www.rstreet.org/research/how-juvenile-justice-deflection-programs-reduce-crime-and-save-money/. Accessed 27 April 2024.

guidance, according to the 2022 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH). However, access to mentors varies by socioeconomic status, household language, where children grow up and other factors.

By income level: Children and youth from lower-income households are less likely to have mentors than those from more affluent households, a reality that the NSCH and other studies consistently demonstrate. For instance, the NSCH found that the share of children ages 6 to 17 who had a mentor increased with income level as follows:

- 77% of kids living below the federal poverty level (which was $29,678 for a family of two adults and two children in 2022);
- 82% of kids between 100% to 199% of the poverty level;
- 88% of kids between 200% to 399% of the poverty level; and
- 92% of kids living at or above 400% of the poverty level.

By parental education level: Children's access to mentors also differs greatly by parental education level, with mentors available for about two-thirds (68%) of kids ages 6 to 17 whose parents have less than a high school education compared to 91% of kids whose parents have a college degree or higher, according to 2022 data.

By language: Children with a primary household language other than English are much less likely to have the support of a mentor, at 69%, versus 89% for children ages 6 to 17 in households with English as a primary language in 2022.

For children of immigrants: Similarly, less than 8 in 10 (77%) children living with a parent born outside of the U.S. had a mentor compared with 9 in 10 (90%) kids of U.S.-born parents.

By state: Looking across the country in 2021–2022, youth access to mentors varied widely by state, ranging from about three-fourths (76%) of Nevada teens ages 14 to 17 to nearly all teens (96%) in North Dakota and Montana, according to NSCH data on the KIDS COUNT® Data Center.

The 2023 MENTOR study, noted above, affirms several of these findings regarding mentoring inequities and provides an in-depth look at related trends in America. Among the study's insights: Measuring mentoring prevalence as a simple dichotomy — having or not having a mentor — may not be nuanced enough. Realistically, most mentoring relationships do not last the entire duration of childhood and having a mentor at one point does not mean that young people had all of their mentoring needs met. In fact, the study found:

Two-thirds of U.S. young adults ages 18 to 21 said there were times growing up when they did not have a mentor but wished they had one for guidance and support.

Unmet mentoring needs were higher for LGBTQ individuals, youth in lower-income households and people of color.

Other key findings from the 2023 study include:

Nationwide, about 1.8 million young adults ages 18 to 24 “not only didn’t have a mentor but couldn’t nominate anyone that they felt was a meaningful person” in their lives.

Youth living in rural areas or in poverty were less likely to have mentors than those in non-rural areas or higher income households.

Many of these young people said they didn’t know how to find a mentor or didn’t think mentors were available to them.

THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING

At the heart of it, mentoring helps meet the basic human need of letting young people know they matter and are not alone. Mentoring relationships promoted a strong sense of belonging in youth — an internal asset essential for healthy development, according to the 2023 MENTOR study. The emotional and practical support that mentors offer has also been linked to positive academic, personal and professional achievements. For example, the study reported:

[Mentored] youth who experienced adversity while growing up were more than twice as likely to volunteer in their community and hold a leadership position in a club or sports team.

74% of those who had a meaningful mentor say that person contributed significantly to their later success in life.

85% of young people with a mentor say this key relationship has helped them with issues related to school and their education.

58% percent of young people say their mentor has supported their mental health.

60% of those under 40 years old are still drawing advice from their childhood mentors.”[3]

[3]The Annie E. Casey Foundation. “SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH MENTORING.” The Annie E. Casey Foundation, https://www.aecf.org/blog/spotlight-on-youth-mentoring. Accessed 27 April 2024.