focus on CHILDREN in travis county

Travis County snapshot from the

american community survey 3-year estimates 2009 - 2011

Spring 2013

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This report was researched and written by the staff at the Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service (HHS/VS), Research & Planning Division. Lead writers were Miranda DuPont and Lori Miranda, with contributing help from Korey Darling and Rachel Coff, and with the support of Blanca Tapia Leahy (Division Director) and Sherri E. Fleming (County Executive for Travis County HHS/VS).

Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service strives to maximize quality of life for all people in Travis County. We work to protect vulnerable populations, promote healthy living and build a shared understanding of our community. We address community needs by investing in social and economic well-being through internal and external investments and services.

The Research & Planning Division works to inform our community, find solutions, and ensure effectiveness. Through these roles we seek to improve knowledge and understanding of community needs, create comprehensive solutions to community problems, and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the service delivery system in Travis County. To learn more about our work and for links to our other publications please visit: http://www.co.travis.tx.us/health_human_services/research_planning/default.asp.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

For questions or for more information, please contact the Research & Planning Division at HHS_R&P@co.travis.tx.us.

Travis County snapshot from the
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 4
Age & Sex 6
Race & Hispanic Origin 8
Family Composition 9
Family Income 11
Poverty 12
Parent Employment 14
Languages Spoken at Home 15
Place of Birth 16
Citizenship & Nativity 17
School Enrollment 19
Disability 20
Health Insurance 21
Methodology 24
Additional Resources 27

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

This report uses the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 2009-2011 3-Year Estimates to provide a point-in-time snapshot of the child population in Travis County. All data in this report are from the detailed tables in the 3-Year Estimates unless otherwise noted.

We have chosen to report on the child-related information available in one data set rather than produce a broad assessment of children using a variety of sources. While this has allowed us the opportunity to create a user-friendly tool for understanding and utilizing the ACS data, we recognize the limitations in using a single data source to report on the characteristics of a population. As a result, we offer some additional data resources at the end of this report.

We hope this information is helpful in efforts to design and improve programs, inform or make funding decisions, and shape local policies that support and improve the lives of children in our community. We encourage users to borrow and cite this material.

Suggested Citation: Research & Planning Division, "Focus on Children in Travis County," Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service, 2013.

THE DATA SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 3-YEAR ESTIMATES

Below are some brief methodological notes to assist the reader in understanding the limitations of or nuances with the data presented in the report. For a more detailed methodology, please see page 24.

Estimates

As previously stated, this report utilizes the American Community Survey (ACS) 2009-2011 3-Year Estimates data set. ACS data sets are released as period estimates that represent the characteristics of the population and housing over a specific data collection period of 12 months (1-Year Estimates), 36 months (3-Year Estimates), or 60 months (5-Year Estimates).

The 2009-2011 3-Year Estimates data set was chosen for this report because it provides the best balance of reliability and timeliness. The 3-Year Estimates also allow the topics of disability and health insurance to be included. In 2008, the Census Bureau added information on health insurance to the ACS, as well as made changes to how disability is defined.[1]

All of the estimates presented in this report have been tested at a 90% confidence level for reliability. When direct comparisons are made in the narrative, tests have been performed for statistical significance. For more information on statistical testing, please see the Methodology section at the end of this report.

[1] The American Community Survey (ACS) Estimates for disability prior to 2008 should not be compared with those Estimates from 2008 and after. For more information on how the ACS defines and made changes to its definition of disability, please visit: http://www.census.gov/people/disability/methodology/acs.html

Universes

The universe describes the population represented in a given data set. For many of the charts and tables included in this report, the universe is children in Travis County and the population represented (N) is the approximate total number of children in Travis County (246,842). Other charts and tables represent a subset of children or represent children based on characteristics of the parent or family. It is important to pay close attention to the universe when using or comparing the data in the charts and tables.

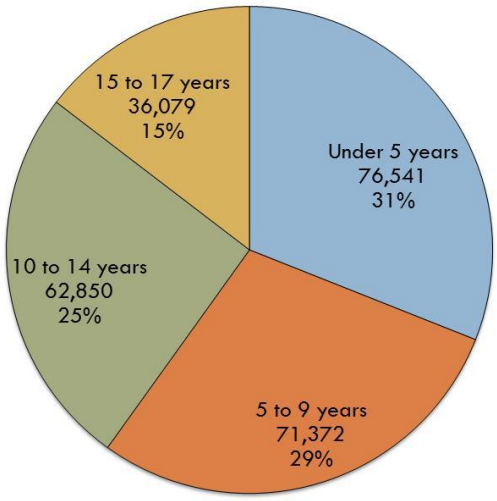
Age Breakdowns

For the purposes of this report, children are defined as being less than 18 years of age. Depending on the topic, the American Community Survey (ACS) detailed tables present data using a variety of age breakdowns within that 0-17 age range. It was our intention to keep age breakdowns consistent within this report; however, the variety of age breakdowns the Census Bureau utilizes in presenting data made this difficult. One table may include children under 5 years, while another includes children under 6 years. In an effort to provide the most robust information, we chose to include the breakdowns, albeit inconsistent, whenever possible. In many cases, detailed age breakdowns were not possible. Similarly, there are instances where there are no estimates available for a particular age group; for example, there is no information on cognitive difficulties or language spoken at home for children under the age of 5.

AGE & SEX

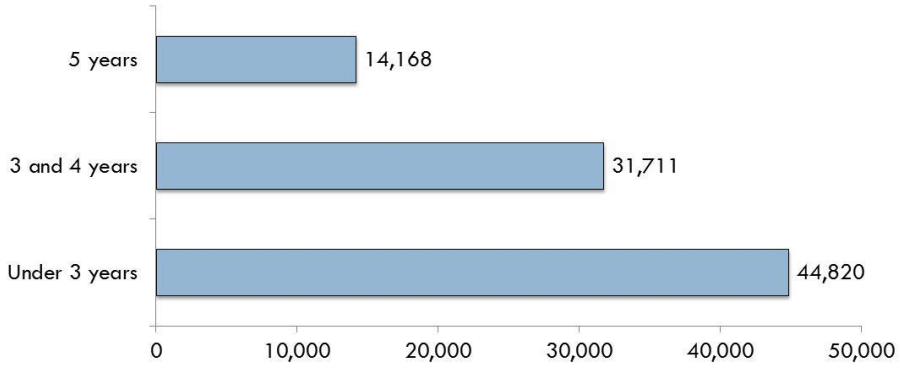
An estimated 246,842 children live in Travis County, comprising almost one-quarter (24%) of the total county population.[2] The majority of children (60%) are under the age of 10, with almost one-third under the age of 5. Slightly fewer than 32,000 children are preschool-age, ranging from 3 to 4 years.

Child Population by Age
Total Population Under 18, Travis County, 2009-2011
N= 246,842



Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2013
Source data: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, B01001

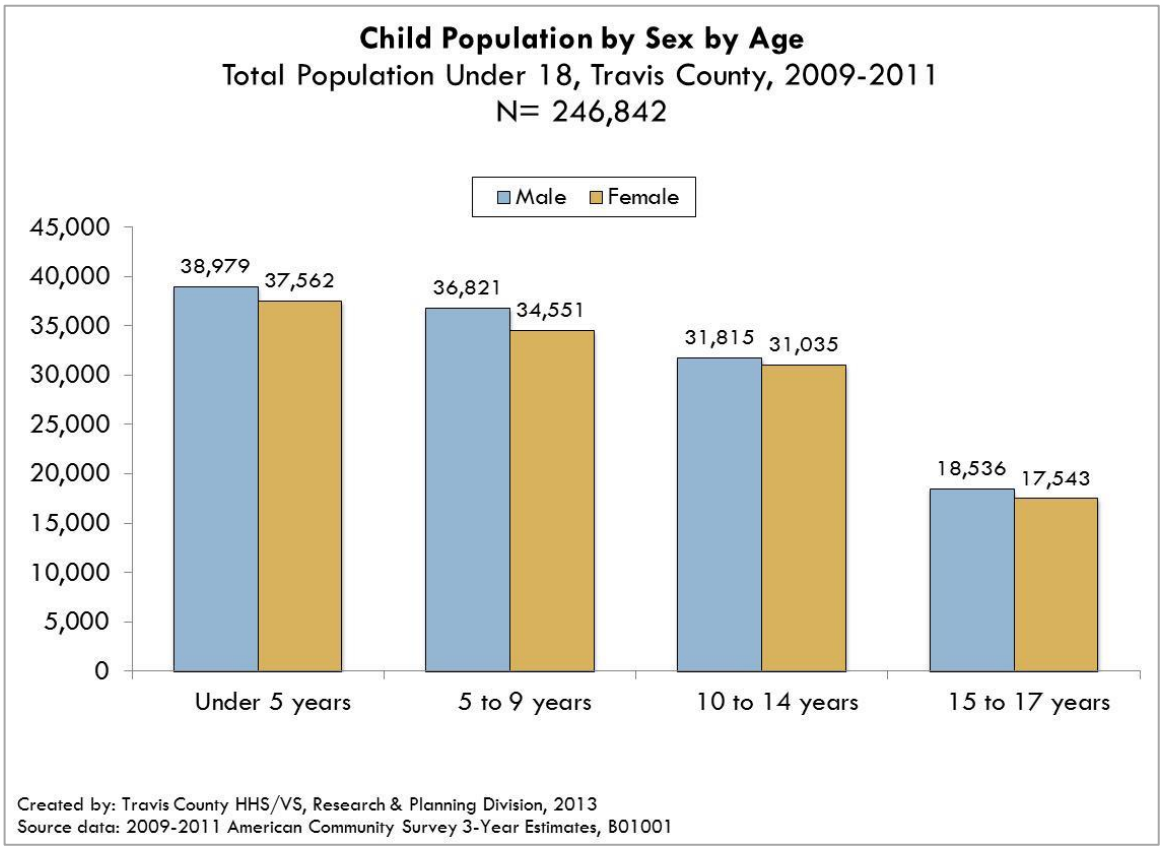
Child Population by Selected Age Groups
Children 0 to 5 Years Living in Households, Travis County, 2009-2011
N=90,699



Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2013
Source data: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, B09001

[2] An estimated 1,033,407 people comprise the total population in Travis County.

Among the child population in Travis County, there are more males (51%) than females (49%). Males also comprise a larger share of the population across the various age groups except among the 10 to14 year old group where the difference is not statistically significant.



RACE & HISPANIC ORIGIN

The U.S. Census Bureau considers race and Hispanic origin as two separate and distinct concepts; therefore the data in the table below are presented as such. Because children of Hispanic origin may be of any race, the total child population is represented in both the race and Hispanic origin categories. In Travis County, the majority of children (64%) identify as White, and almost one-half (47%) are of Hispanic origin. Approximately 39,000 children identify as "Some Other Race" making it the second-largest race category in Travis County. More than one-half (53%) are of Non-Hispanic origin.

Race and Hispanic Origin
Total Population Under 18, Travis County, 2009-2011
N=246,842

Child Population	Under 5 Years	5 to 17 years	Total Estimate	Total Percent
Children Under 18 Years	76,541	170,301	246,842	100%
Child Population by Race				
White Alone	49,562	109,315	158,877	64%
Black Alone	6901	17,719	24,620	10%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	239*	1,493	1,732	1%
Asian Alone	3,910	8,470	12,380	5%
Some Other Race Alone	12,582	26,345	38,927	16%
Two or More Races	3,347	6,959	10,306	4%
Child Population by Hispanic Origin				
Hispanic or Latino	37,839	77,963	115,802	47%
Not Hispanic or Latino	38,702	92,338	131,040	53%

*This estimate is not reliable at a 90% confidence level.
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2013
Source data: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, B01001, B01001A-B01001I

Definition of Race and Hispanic Origin

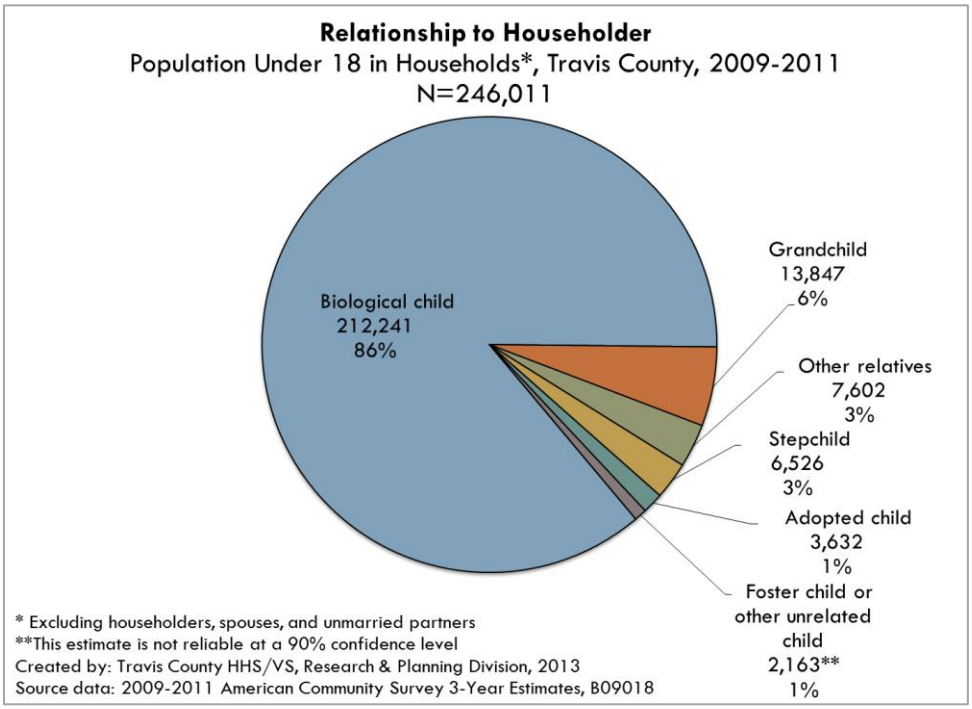
The racial categories included in the American Community Survey (ACS) questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. Origin is viewed by the ACS as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person, the person's parents, or ancestors before their arrival in the United States.

The racial categories that include "alone" as part of the category include individuals who report in the ACS that they identify as being one race and no other race (i.e. someone who considers themselves only African-American). Also included in this category are individuals who identify with two races within one larger race category (i.e. someone who identifies as being Korean and Vietnamese are part of the larger "Asian Alone" race group).

In addition to the categories listed in the table above, the American Community Survey also identifies "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone" as a race category; however there was no data available for those children in Travis County for years 2009-2011.

FAMILY COMPOSITION

There are roughly 128,000 households with children in Travis County, comprising 32% of the total number of households in Travis County.[3] Approximately, 246,000 children live in these households. The majority of children (86%) are a biological child of the householder. Nearly 14,000 children live with a grandparent, and of these children, the majority (60%) are the responsibility of the grandparent.



Household & Family Type Concepts

The Census Bureau categorizes a household as all the people who occupy a housing unit. People not living in households are classified as living in group quarters. One person in each household is designated as the householder. This is usually the person listed on the first line of the American Community Survey (ACS) questionnaire.

According to the Census Bureau, a family household consists of a householder and at least one other person who is related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. A married-couple family consists of the householder and the householder's spouse. Family households and married-couple families do not include same-sex married couples even if the marriage was performed in a state issuing marriage certificates for same-sex couples. Same sex couple households are included in the family household's category if there is at least one additional person related to the householder by birth or adoption.

The Census Bureau defines "own child" as a never-married child under 18 years who is a child by birth, a stepchild, or an adopted child of the householder. Own children living with two parents are by definition found only in married-couple families.

Responsibility for a child, as defined by the Census Bureau, refers to financial responsibility for the basic needs of a child in the household. It is possible that in cases where a grandparent holds that responsibility, a parent of the child may also live in the household but not assume responsibility for the child.

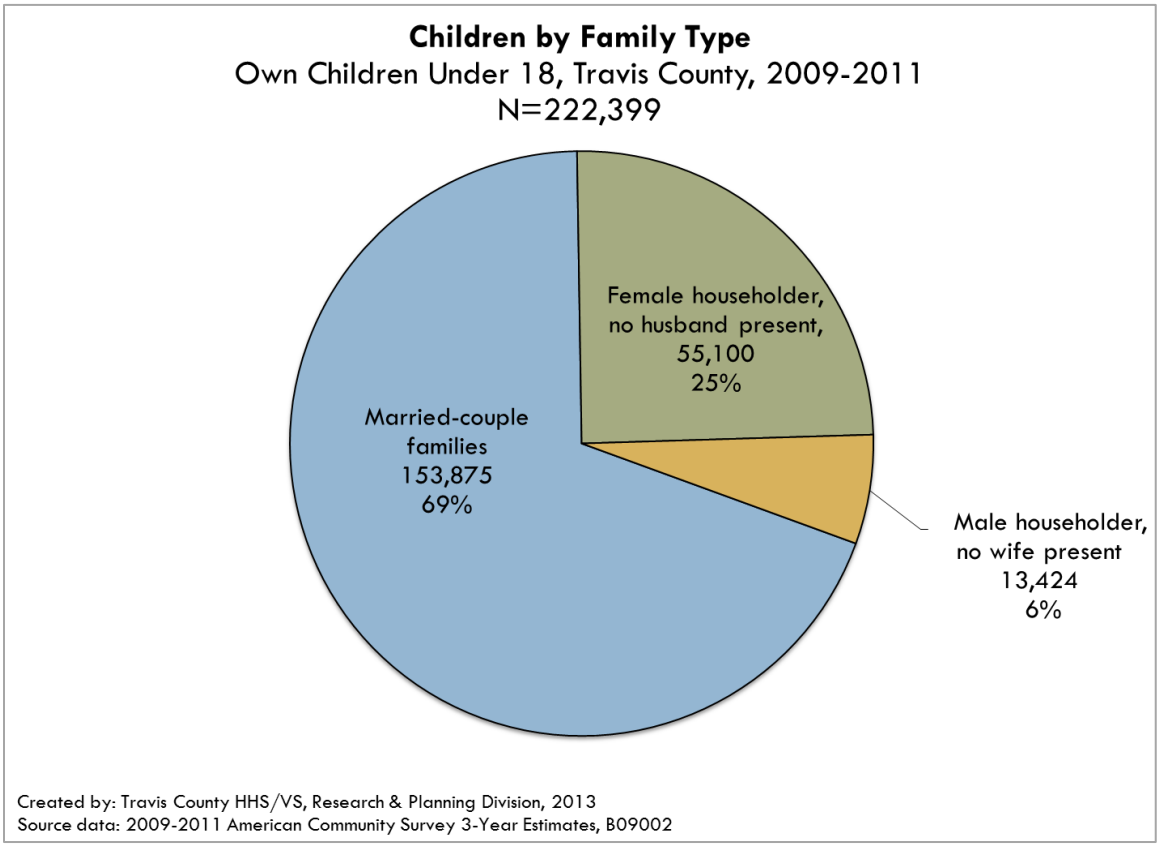
[3] 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, DP02

Of the 222,399 Travis County children living with a biological, step or adoptive parent ("own children"), the majority (69%) live in married-couple families, which amounts to 80,918 families.[4] One-quarter live in female-headed households with no husband present, and 6% live in male-headed households with no wife present. Of the 46,844 households headed by females with no husband present, 29,126 include children, and of the 19,108 households headed by males with no wife present, 8,277 include children.[5]

Children by Age and Family Type
Own Children Under 18, Travis County, 2009-2011
N=222,399

Age	Married-Couple Families	Male Householder, No Wife Present	Female Householder, No Husband Present
Under 3 Years	27,721	3,433	7,830
3 to 5 Years	29,987	2,163	9,164
6 to 11 Years	52,773	3,880	19,984
12 to 17 Years	43,394	3,948	18,122
Total	**153,875**	**13,424**	**55,100**

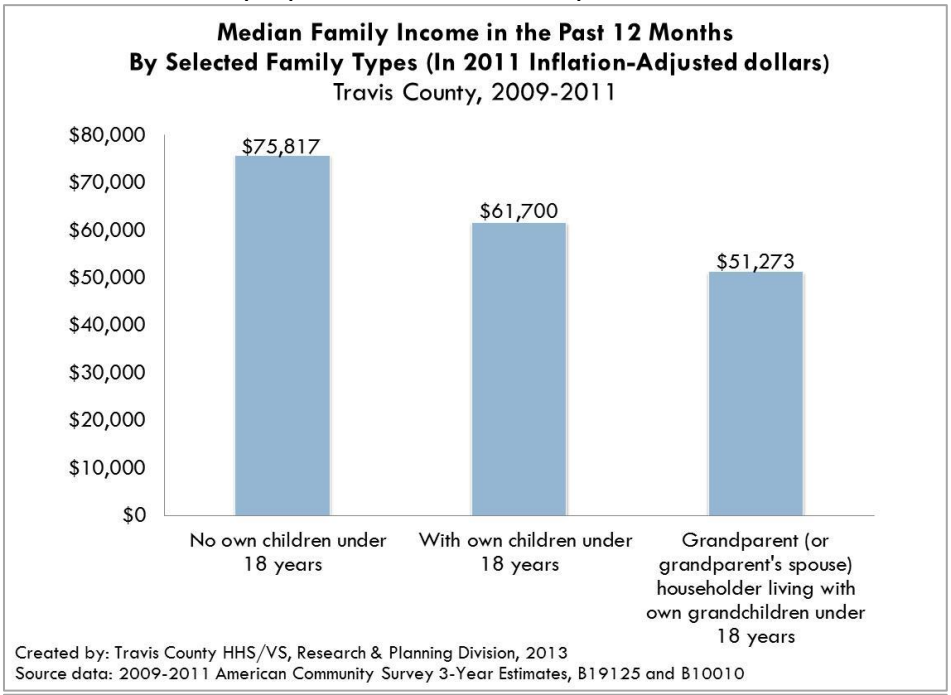
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2013
Source data: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, B09002

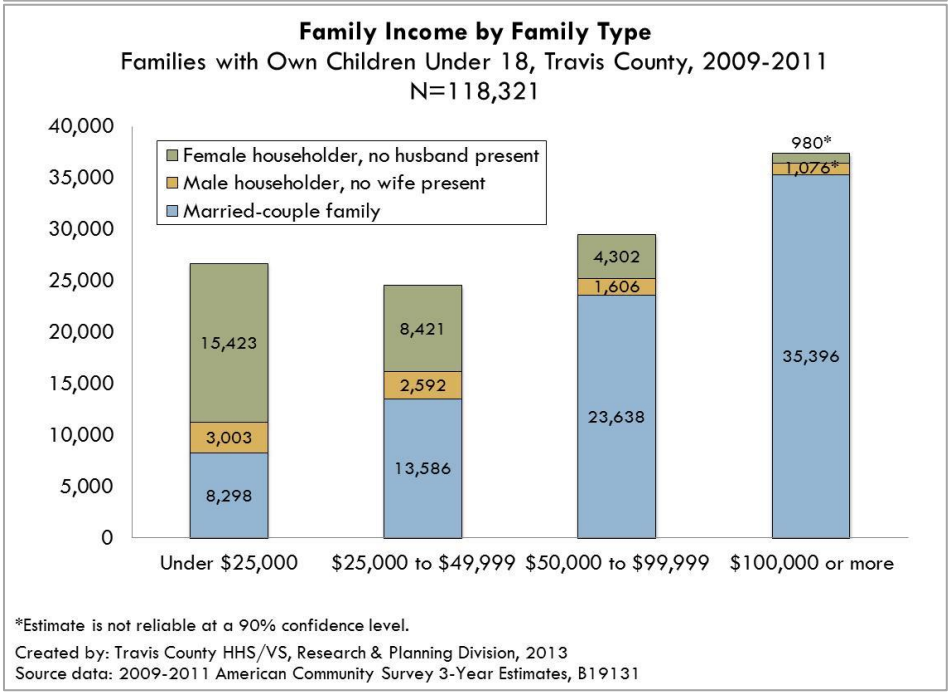


[4] Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, DP02
[5] Ibid.

FAMILY INCOME

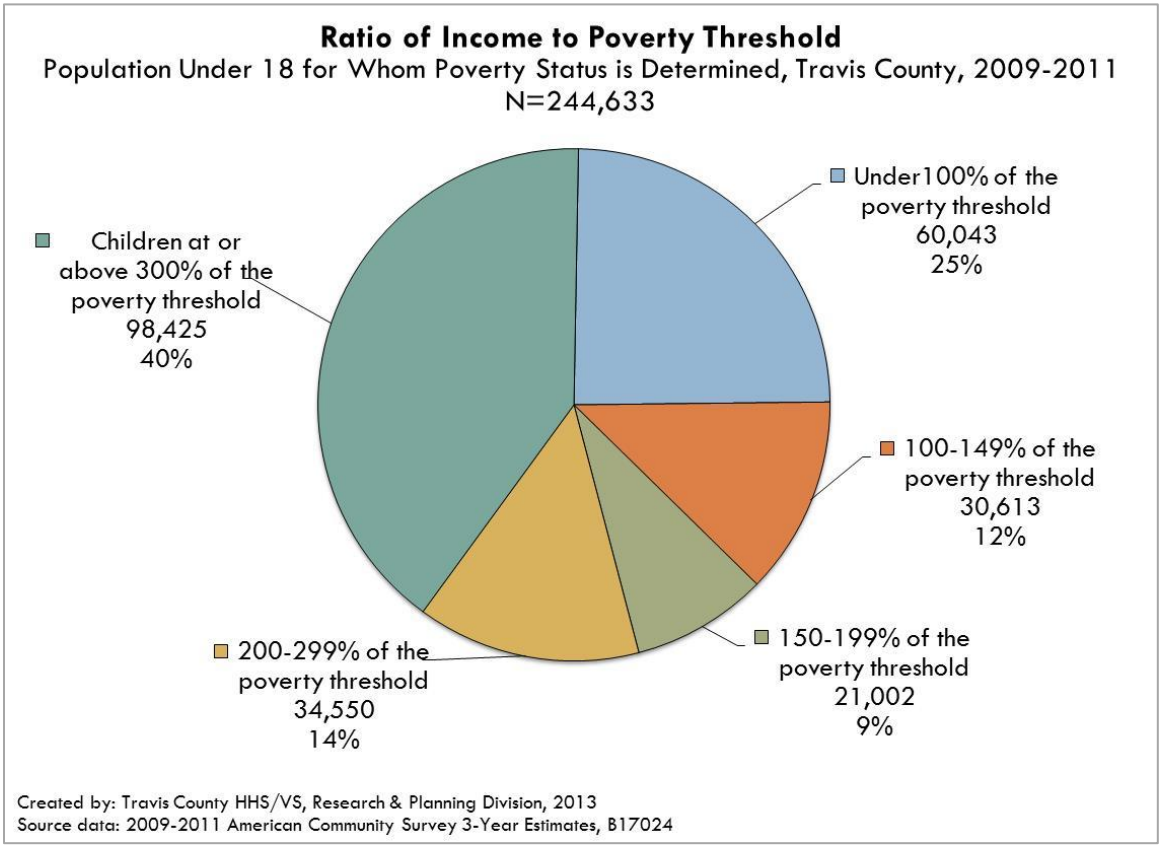
The median family income for families with their own children is $61,700. This is approximately $14,000 less than the median income of about $75,800 for families with no children. For families headed by a grandparent (or grandparent's spouse), the median family income is roughly $51,000, which is approximately $10,000 less than the median family income for families with their own children and nearly $24,000 less than families with no children. Among families earning less than $25,000 a year, female-headed families with no husband present comprise the greatest share. As the income categories increase, the number and proportion of single-parent families decrease and the number and proportion of married-couple families increase.





POVERTY

Of the roughly one million people living in Travis County, 181,765 (18%) live in poverty. However, the poverty rate is higher among children. Approximately, one-quarter of Travis County children (60,043) live below the poverty threshold, and almost one-half (46%) of all children in Travis County (111,658) are below 200% of the poverty threshold. Children account for 30% of the total Travis County population below 200% of the poverty threshold.



Understanding Poverty Status

In determining the poverty status of families and unrelated individuals, the Census Bureau uses income thresholds that look at family size cross-classified by presence and number of family members under 18 years old.

Because the American Community Survey is a continuous, rolling monthly sample of housing units, the appropriate Poverty Thresholds are determined by multiplying the base-year Poverty Thresholds (1982) by the average of the monthly inflation factors for the 12 months preceding the data collection. In 2011, the weighted Poverty Threshold was $11,702 for a single adult. For a single parent or grandparent with two children it was $18,123, and for a family of four, including two children, it was $22,811.

Poverty status was determined for all people except institutionalized people, people in military group quarters, people in college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under 15 years old.

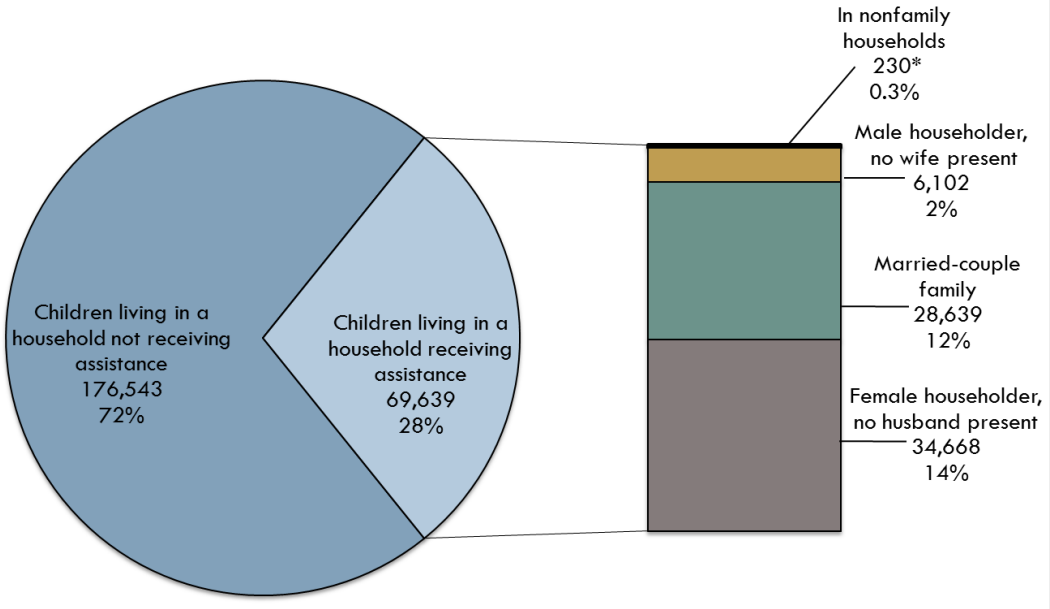
Out of the selected age groups, children under 6 years are represented in highest number among children living in poverty (under100% of the poverty threshold) and in the under 150%, under 185% and under 200% of the poverty threshold categories. The table below provides detailed data according to age group and poverty threshold category. Children living in households with incomes below or near the poverty threshold may receive public assistance. More than one-quarter (28%) of children in Travis County (69,639 children) live in a household receiving public assistance, which includes Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Cash Public Assistance Income, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and/or Food Stamps/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. One-half of those children live in female-headed households with no husband present, while 41% live in married-couple families.

Ratio of Income to Poverty Threshold by Selected Age Groups
Travis County, 2009-2011

	Under 6 Years	6 to 11 Years	12 to 17 Years	All Children
Under 100% Poverty Threshold	24,188	21,845	14,010	60,043
Under 150% Poverty Threshold	36,553	31,041	23,062	90,656
Under 185% Poverty Threshold	41,811	36,984	27,648	106,443
Under 200% Poverty Threshold	43,641	38,896	29,121	111,658

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2013
Source data: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, B17024

Receipt of Public Assistance in the Past 12 Months by Family Type
Population Under 18 in Households, Travis County, 2009-2011
N=246,182

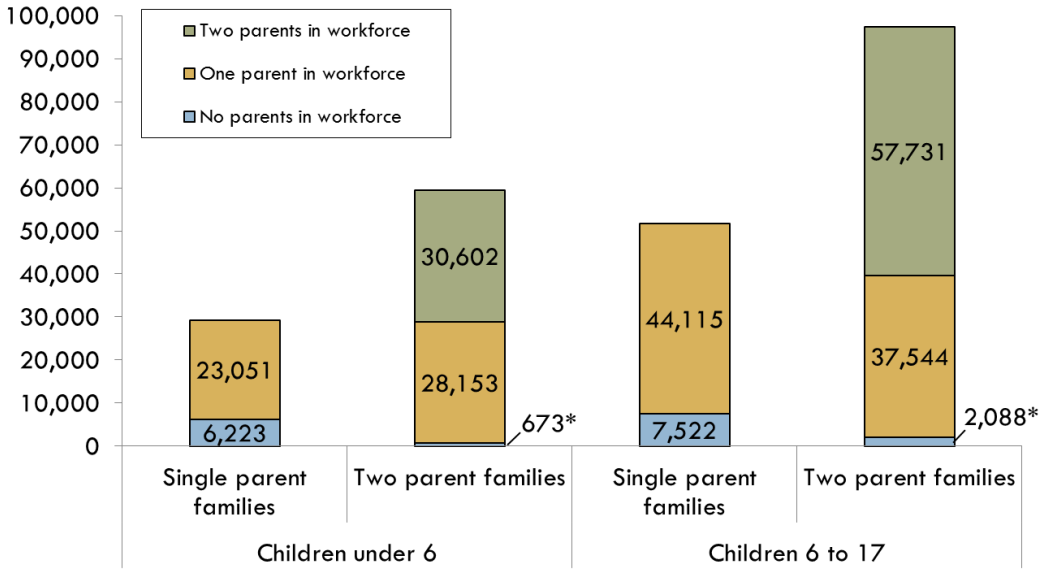


*Estimate is not reliable at a 90% confidence level.
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2013
Source data: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, B09010

PARENT EMPLOYMENT

Parent employment status is determined for 237,702 children in Travis County and categorized for two types of households: single-parent households and two-parent households.[6] About 7% of children have no parents in the workforce, 56% have one parent in the workforce, and 37% have two parents in the workforce.

Parent Employment Status by Selected Family Types
Own Children Under 18 in Families & Subfamilies, Travis County, 2009-2011
N = 237,702

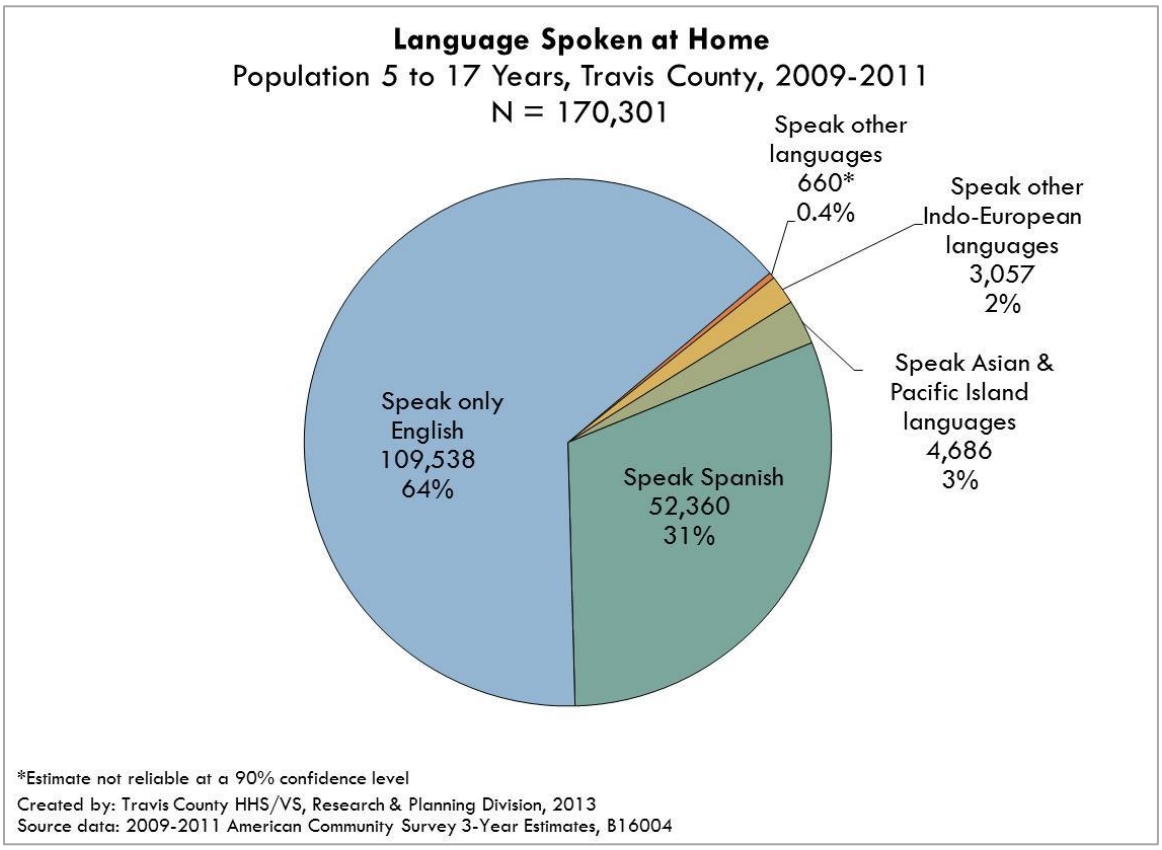


*Estimate is not reliable at a 90% confidence level
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2013
Source data: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, B23008

[6] Parent employment estimates include "subfamilies," which are families who do not maintain their own household but live with a relative or a relative's spouse who maintains a household.

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME

Of the 170,301 children between the ages of 5 and 17 years in Travis County, 64% speak only English at home and 36% speak a foreign language in the home. Among the 60,763 children living in foreign language-speaking homes, Spanish is the most common (86%), followed by Asian and Pacific Island (8%) and other Indo-European languages (5%). Additionally, more than two-thirds (67%) of children living in foreign language-speaking homes speak English "very well."

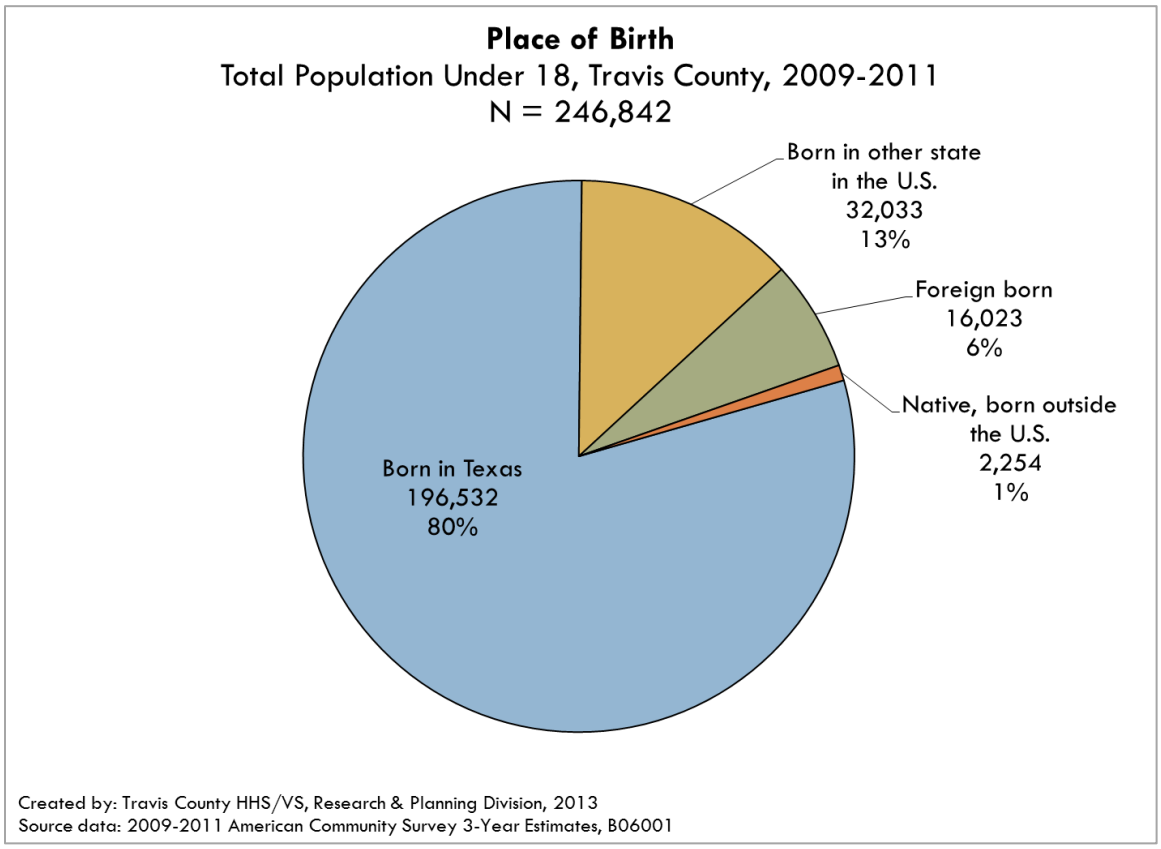


About Language Estimates

The Census Bureau codes 381 detailed languages and collapses these into "language groups," which include English, Spanish, other Indo-European languages, Asian or Pacific Island languages, and all other languages. Language data are estimated for children between the ages of 5 and 17 years; children under 5 years of age are presumed to have limited language skills for developmental reasons.

PLACE OF BIRTH

Of the 246,842 children in Travis County, about 80% were born in Texas, 13% were born in another state in the U.S., and 6% were born in another country. Less than 1% of all Travis County children were born in another country but are native to the U.S., meaning they have at least one parent who is a U.S. citizen.

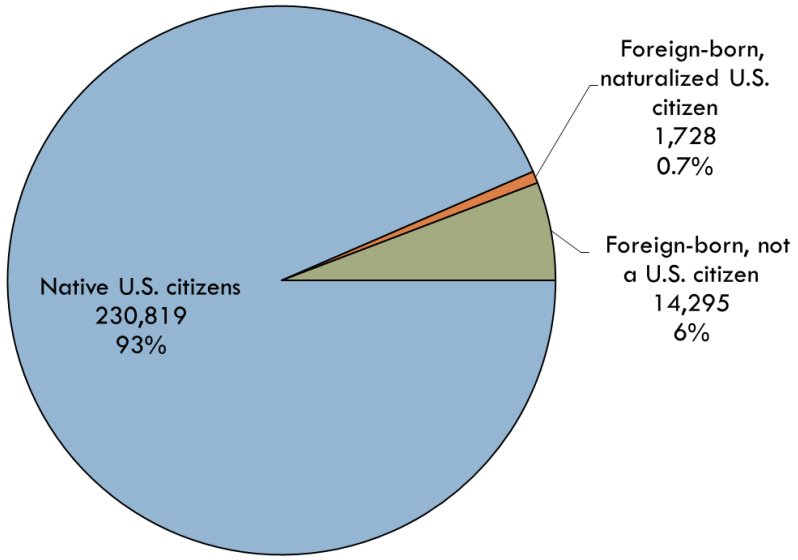


CITIZENSHIP & NATIVITY

Citizenship and nativity are related concepts with important distinctions. Nativity is a natural status determined by an individual's birthplace, whereas citizenship is a legal status determined by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, a bureau of the Department of Homeland Security. Citizenship status entails many legal rights and privileges, such as eligibility for certain public assistance programs.

About 94% of all Travis County children under 18 were born in the U.S. and are U.S. citizens, while 6% of all children were born in another country and are not U.S. citizens. Fewer than 1,800 children, or less than 1% of all children in Travis County, are naturalized U.S. citizens.

Citizenship Status
Total Population Under 18, Travis County, 2009-2011
N = 246,842



Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2013
Source data: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, B05003

About Citizenship & Nativity

Children are "native U.S. citizens" if they are born in the U.S., Puerto Rico, a U.S. island area such as Guam or the Virgin Islands, or if they gain birthright citizenship through parents who are U.S. citizens. "Foreign-born" children were born in another country outside the U.S., and foreign-born children can be "naturalized U.S. citizens," meaning they conferred U.S. citizenship after birth, or "not U.S. citizens" if they do not have U.S. citizenship status.

A topic closely related to a child's own nativity is the nativity status of the parent(s) with whom the child lives. About 63% of all Travis County children live with two native parents or a single native parent, and these children are native to the U.S., either because they were born in the U.S. or had at least one parent who was a U.S. citizen. Over 74,000 children, or 31% of all children in Travis County, live with two foreign-born parents or a single foreign-born parent, and 82% of those children are native to the U.S. More than a quarter (26%) of Travis County children are native-born but live with foreign-born parents. Lastly, 7% of all children live with one native parent and one foreign-born parent, and 96% of those children are native to the U.S.

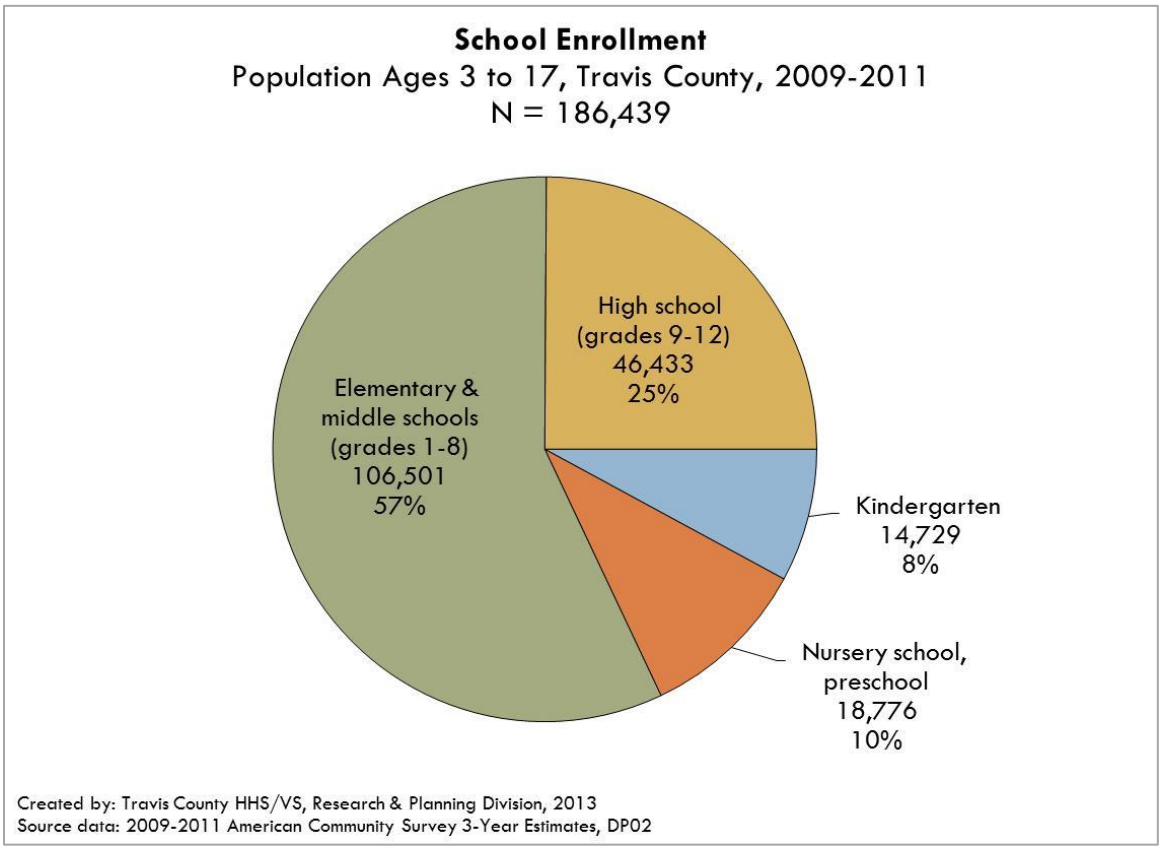
Child Nativity by Parent Nativity
Own Children Under 18 in Families and Subfamilies, Travis County, 2009-2011
N = 237,702

Own Children Under 18	Living With Native Parent(s)	Living With Foreign-Born Parent(s)	Living With One Native & One Foreign-Born Parent	Total
Children Native to the U.S.	147,719	61,029	15,105	**223,853**
Children Foreign-Born	--	13,255	594*	**13,849**
Total	**147,719**	**74,284**	**15,699**	**237,702**

*Estimate is not reliable at a 90% confidence level
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2013
Source data: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, B05009

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Of the 186,439 children 3 years and older who are enrolled in Travis County schools, about 10% are in nursery schools and preschools, 8% are in kindergarten, 57% are in elementary schools and middle schools (grades 1 to 8), and 25% are enrolled in high school (grades 9 to 12).



DISABILITY

Of the 246,422 noninstitutionalized children under 18 in Travis County, 8,007, or about 3%, have a disability.[7] Of the 3% of children with disabilities, 81% (6,487 children) have one disability and 19% (1,520 children)[8] have two or more disabilities. Examples of different types of disabilities impacting the lives of children include vision, hearing, cognitive, ambulatory, and self-care difficulties.[9] Cognitive difficulties are the most common type of disability identified among children. Approximately 3% of noninstitutionalized children aged 5 to 17 years (5,709 children) have a cognitive disability, or a serious difficulty in cognitive/mental functioning, including learning, remembering, and making decisions.

About Disability

The American Community Survey (ACS) defines disability as a long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition which may inhibit a person's abilities to perform certain activities, such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing, bathing, learning, and remembering.[10]

Disabilities may also impede a person from being able to work or go outside the home alone. Respondents of the ACS questionnaire are asked about the presence of "serious, long-term difficulties" with specific types of functional activities related to daily living. In 2008, the Census Bureau introduced a new set of questions designed to identify persons with disabilities; for this reason, the data herein should not be compared with data from 2008 or prior.[11]

The ACS defines the noninstitutionalized population as those persons who do not reside in institutional group quarters facilities such as correctional institutions, group homes, residential treatment centers, nursing facilities, college student housing, emergency and transitional shelters, and other long-term care living arrangements

It should be noted that there are instances where there are no estimates available for a particular age group; for example, there is no information on cognitive difficulties for children under the age of 5. Disability status for children under 5 years old, as determined by the Census Bureau, is solely based on hearing and vision difficulties.

[7] 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, DP02

[8] Estimate not reliable at a 90% confidence level

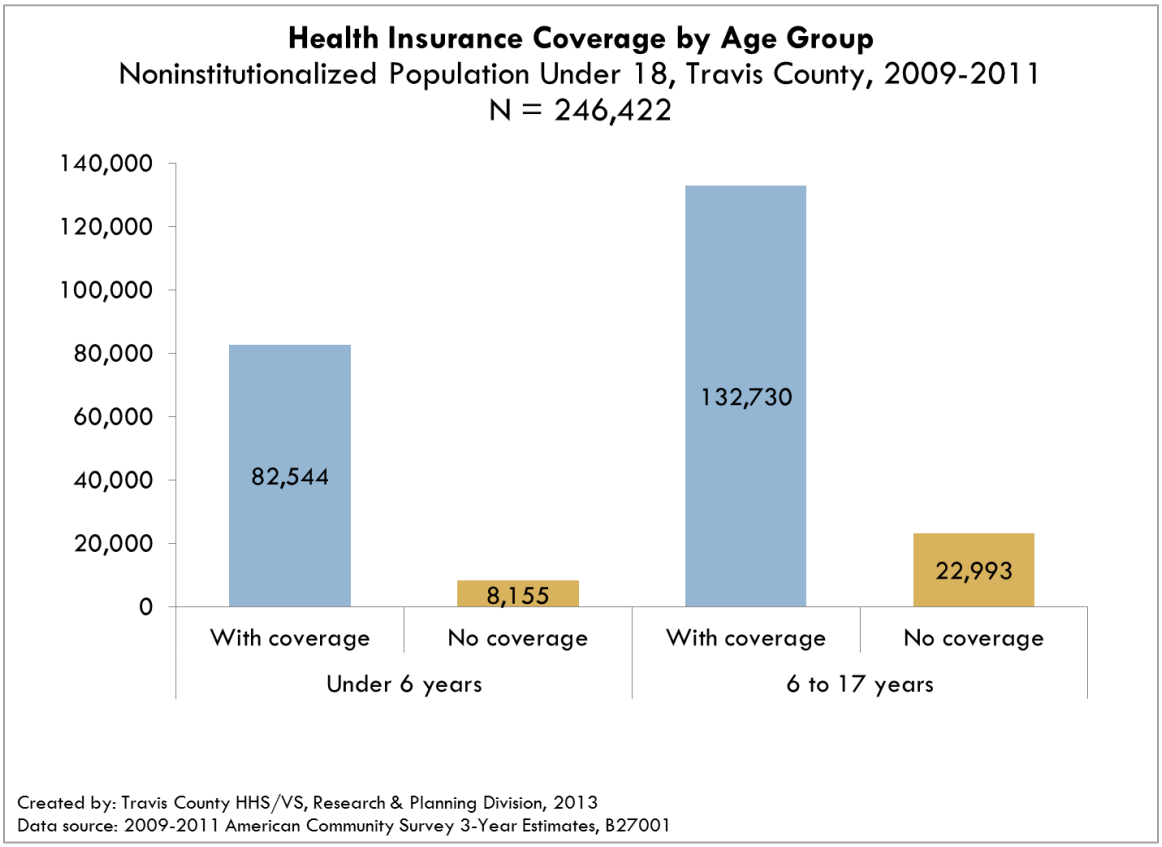
[9] Data on disability type can be found in the 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, tables B18102-B1806, and B18108. However because estimates of vision, hearing, ambulatory and self-care difficulties among Travis County children are not reliable at a 90% confidence level, this data has not been included in the report.

[10] U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *How Disability Data are Collected – American Community Survey*. Available at http://www.census.gov/people/disability/methodology/acs.html

[11] Brault, M., Shern, S., & Raglin, D. (2007). *2006 American Community Survey Content Test Report P.4: Evaluation Report Covering Disability*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Approximately 31,000 Travis County children, or 13% of all children under 18 years, do not have insurance coverage. Moreover, coverage is disproportionate between children under 6 years and children 6 to 17 years old. Out of all children under 6 years old, just 8,155 or 9% do not have insurance coverage, while 22,993 or 15% of children 6 to 17 years old do not have coverage.



About Health Insurance Coverage

The Census Bureau broadly classifies health insurance coverage as private or public. Private insurance is a plan provided through an employer, purchased by an individual from a private company, or TRICARE/military health care. Public insurance includes federal or public programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, VA health care, and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Means-tested insurance, like Medicaid and CHIP, requires the income and/or assets of an individual or family to fall below specified thresholds in order to qualify for benefits. Individuals are considered uninsured ("no coverage") if they are only covered by Indian Health service or if they did not report coverage to the American Community Survey.

In Travis County, approximately 215,274 children have health insurance coverage. Over 133,500 children have private insurance, the majority of whom are covered by employer-based health insurance plans (87%). Of the 86,714 children with public insurance plans, about 99% have means-tested insurance, including Medicaid and CHIP. The following table shows the number of children covered by employer-based, direct-purchase, Medicare, means-tested, TRICARE/military, and VA health insurance coverage.

Types of Insurance Coverage
Noninstitutionalized Population Under 18, Travis County, 2009-2011
N = 246,422

Type of Insurance Coverage	Children Under 18
With Coverage	**215,274**
Private	**133,551**
Employer-Based	115,830
Direct-Purchase	18,288
TRICARE/Military	1,721
Public	**86,714**
Means-Tested (including Medicaid and CHIP)	85,840
Medicare	1,046*
VA Health Care	134*
No Coverage	**31,148**

Children can be covered by more than one type of insurance and by both private and public insurers.
*Estimate is not reliable at a 90% confidence level
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2013
Data source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, B27002-B27009

Higher levels of family income correlate with greater rates of health insurance coverage among children. Specifically, the risk of lacking coverage decreases at a family income level of 300% of poverty threshold or higher ($68,433 for a family of four). 96% of Travis County children living in families with incomes at 300% of the poverty threshold or higher are covered by health insurance, compared with 82% of children living in families with incomes below 300% of the poverty threshold. The table below provides more detailed estimates of health insurance coverage in relationship to poverty status.

Health Insurance Coverage Status by Ratio of Income to Poverty Threshold
Population Under 18 for Whom Poverty Status is Determined, Travis County, 2009-2011
N = 244,633

Ratio of Income to Poverty Threshold	Total Children	Health Insurance	Percent of Total	No Health Insurance	Percent of Total
Under 100% of the Poverty Threshold	60,043	48,576	81%	11,467	19%
100% to 199% of the Poverty Threshold	51,615	42,137	82%	9,478	18%
200% to 299% of the Poverty Threshold	34,550	29,131	84%	5,419	16%
300% and Above the Poverty Threshold	98,425	94,197	96%	4,228*	4%
Total Children	**244,633**	**214,041**	**87%**	**30,592**	**13%**

2011 Poverty Threshold for family of four, including two children under 18:
100%: $22,811 *200%: $45,622* *300%: $68,433*

*Estimate is not reliable at a 90% confidence level
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2013
Data source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, B27016

METHODOLOGY

The U.S. Census Bureau's 2009-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 3-Year Estimates data set is the primary data source for this report.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

The ACS replaces the long form of the 10-year U.S. Census and collects information on an ongoing basis rather than once every 10 years. The survey includes questions about demographic, housing, social and economic characteristics.[12] The survey is available in English and Spanish.

The ACS employs continuous data collection, with annual results produced at the national, state, city, and county levels as well as smaller geographic areas with a population of 65,000 or greater. In 2008, data based on a 3-year sample became available for all areas of 20,000 or more. In 2010, data based on a 5-year sample became available for many small areas (state, county, city, town, place, census tracts and block groups).

In general, the ACS Estimates are period estimates that describe the average characteristics of population and housing over a period of data collection. The 2009-2011, the ACS 3-Year Estimates are averages over the period from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011.[13]

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Sample: The ACS consists of two separate samples: one for persons living in a housing unit (HU) and one for persons living in group quarters (GQ). Examples of this include people living in nursing homes, correctional facilities, college/university housing and military barracks. Each year, approximately 3 million housing unit (HU) addresses and approximately 200,000 residents in group quarters facilities are selected among each of the 3,142 counties and county-equivalents in the U.S. An address will not be included in the ACS more than once in a 5 year period.[14]

For Travis County, the original 2009-2011 (entire 36 month) sample of initial addresses selected was 24,734, and the final number of housing unit interviews (actual sample used to produce results) was 16,135.[15] The group quarters population sample is not available at the county level, but for the entire state of Texas, the initial sample selected was 38,816, and the final number of group quarters person interviews was 30,439.[16]

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[12] A sample questionnaire can be found at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/questionnaires/2013/Quest13.pdf

[13] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Multiyear Accuracy of the Data (2009-2011 ACS 3-year and 2007-2011 ACS 5-year). Available at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/MultiyearACSAccuracyofData2011.pdf

[14] More information on American Community Survey (ACS) methodology is available at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/survey_methodology/Chapter_4_RevisedDec2010.pdf

[15] U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table B98001: Unweighted Housing Unit Sample

[16] U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2011 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table B98002: Unweighted Group Quarters Population Sample

Data collection: The ACS is conducted primarily through self-response. Data is collected from 12 monthly, independent samples. The ACS employs two distinct data collection methodologies: one for individuals residing in housing units and another for those residing in group quarters. For participants residing in housing units, three attempts are made to administer the survey: (1) by mail, which includes separate mailings of a pre-notice letter, the ACS questionnaire, reminder postcard, and replacement questionnaire if needed; (2) by phone, on a sample of addresses that have not returned the completed paper questionnaire and for which a telephone number is known; and finally (3) by personal interviews with a sample of remaining addresses. For persons in group quarters (GQ), data collection occurs first through Census Bureau contact with a group quarters (GQ) facility administrator and then through an interview with a sample of individuals from the facility. Sampling and data collection for group quarters (GQ) varies by group quarters size.[17]

LIMITATIONS

Sampling error: Because the findings are based on a sample, rather than the entire population, the results would differ slightly if another sample were drawn or if the entire population were surveyed. This reduces the reliability of the results. A certain amount of variability (called sampling error) is associated with any estimate based on a sample. In general, the larger the sample size, the smaller the sampling error.[18] For this report, the authors have attempted to minimize this variability by using the 3-Year Estimates and by using the published margins of error to test all estimates and derived estimates for reliability at a 90% confidence level. Estimates with coefficients of variation[19] of more than 15.49% were footnoted as being unreliable.

Statistical significance: Data in this report is tested for statistical significance at a 90% confidence level. In some cases, various age breakdowns produced data that is not reliable; however, in many cases this data was aggregated into larger age breakdowns, which were then tested and shown to be reliable. Some notable exceptions where statistical significance was not found or not possible to determine were footnoted.

For more information and instruction on testing for reliability and statistical significance, as well as general guidance on how to use American Community Survey data, please see the Compass guides published by the U.S. Census Bureau:
www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/handbooks/

[17] U.S. Census Bureau, ACS Design and Methodology (Ch.4), available at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/survey_methodology/Chapter_4_RevisedDec2010.pdf

[18] U.S. Census Bureau, A Compass for Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What State and Local Governments Need to Know. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2009. Available at: www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/handbooks/

[19] Coefficient of variation is a measure used to discern the level of reliability of an estimate. It is calculated using the estimate and its standard error. For more information on calculating and using coefficients of variation, see: A Compass for Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What State and Local Governments Need to Know, available at www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/handbooks/

Non-response error: If certain individuals do not respond to the survey, the strength of the findings will be weakened. Additionally, those who respond to the survey may possess certain traits that skew the results differently than if everyone in the sample responds; this is known as selection bias. However, while surveys are often voluntary, response to the American Community Survey (ACS) is required by law (Title 13, United States Code, Sections 141 and 193) and those who refuse or willfully neglect to respond to the survey are subject to a fine of up to $5,000.[20] Thus the response rate for the ACS is high (the 2011 response rate for Texas was 96.6% for housing units and 98.5% for group quarters).[21]

[20] U.S. Census Bureau, Frequently Asked Questions, available at: https://ask.census.gov/faq.php?id=5000&faqId=7455

[21] Response rate information is available on the Census Bureau's website, available at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/response_rates_data/index.php

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Because we recognize the limitations in using a single data set to explore the characteristics of the child population in our community, following are some additional data resources related to this topic. Please note that this list is not intended to be a comprehensive list of data sources.

R&P DATA Service

The Research & Planning Division of Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service offers a *Data Access and Technical Assistance Service*. This service provides direct assistance accessing data or offers suggested data sources and technical assistance in using them. Requests must relate to social service delivery or planning, fall within the geographic scope of Travis County, and relate to one of the following issue areas: general demographics and community trends, aging, basic needs, education, early childhood, housing, immigrant issues, poverty, workforce, and veterans. All requests are considered on a case-by-case basis, according to the complexity of the request and the staff time available. A lead time of two weeks is preferred.
To learn more about the DATA Service or to submit a request send an email to **HHS_R&P@co.travis.tx.us**.

Current Population Survey (CPS), U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

http://www.census.gov/cps/

A major U.S. survey used to provide official government estimates of the health insurance coverage, as well as numerous other economic statistics (unemployment rate, earnings).

The National Vital Statistics System of the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

http://www.cdc.gov/NCHS/nvss.htm

County and age-based data relating to births, infant deaths, and miscarriages, obtained through the Texas Department of State Health Services vital registration systems. This data is also accessible via Kids Count and PRAMS at a state-level analysis.

The Center for Health Statistics at the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)

http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/chs/datalist.shtm

County data relating to child injuries (2003-2007) and births. Travis County data includes birth defects by type (1999-2006) and births to teen mothers (2005-2009). Indicators related to birth conditions (delivery type, prenatal care, birth weight, number of births to the mother, and spacing of births) are available, based on the Texas Certificate of Live Birth (2005-2009).

Research & Analysis Division of the Texas Education Agency (TEA)

http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/adhocrpt

Provides annual reports on school data for public schools in Travis County, including enrollment, poverty status, graduation rates, college acceptance, and ESL/LEP.

Texas Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS) Data Book

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/Data_Books_and_Annual_Reports/

Provides comprehensive annual reports of DFPS services, including statistics related to childcare licensing, child abuse and neglect, foster care, adoption, and other child welfare interventions.

Texas Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)

http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mch/#PRAMS2

Sponsored by the CDC and administered by the Texas Department of State Health Services, PRAMS is a statewide survey (2002-2010) of births, maternal behaviors (prenatal care, smoking and alcohol use), psychosocial factors, and medical conditions before, during, and after pregnancy, including postpartum depression, pregnancy intendedness, and contraceptive use.

The Ray Marshall Center

http://www.utexas.edu/research/cshr/rmc1/

Based out of the University of Texas at Austin, this research center produces program evaluations, design and development on issues such as education, early childcare, and juvenile probation.

Children's Optimal Health

http://childrensoptimalhealth.org/COH/

A local nonprofit providing mapping services with the purpose of visually identifying child health status, such as childhood obesity and mobility.

Kids Count by the Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP)

http://datacenter.kidscount.org/

National and state-by-state effort to track more than 70 measures of child wellbeing, including school data (enrollment, test scores, special education, ESL, drop outs), public assistance data, poverty, child abuse and neglect, juvenile violent crime, DFPS and foster care data, and family violence shelter data.

Better Texas Family Budgets by the CPPP

http://familybudgets.org/

Statewide initiative using Census data and other government sources to estimate family budgets that measure and detail the costs of living, including the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos metropolitan area.

Resource Library by E3 Alliance

http://e3alliance.wpengine.com/resource-library-full/

A regional education collaborative based in Austin. The Resource Library provides information on education, which can be filtered by topic and content type.

Success by 6 by United Way

http://www.unitedwayaustin.org/strategic-programs/success-by-6/

A strategic initiative aimed to ensure school readiness by improving childcare services, parent education, and advocating for public policy in Central Texas.

Texans Care for Children

http://txchildren.org/

A local advocacy organization that provides information regarding public policies that impact Texas children.