

Undercount of Young Children in the Census

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Outline of Presentation

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- Background information on Census and counting young children in the Census
 - Data on the undercount of young children in the Census
 - Ideas and data about why young children are missed so often in the Census
 - Underscore why the net undercount of young children is important
 - What can be done to reduce undercount of young kids in 2020 Census



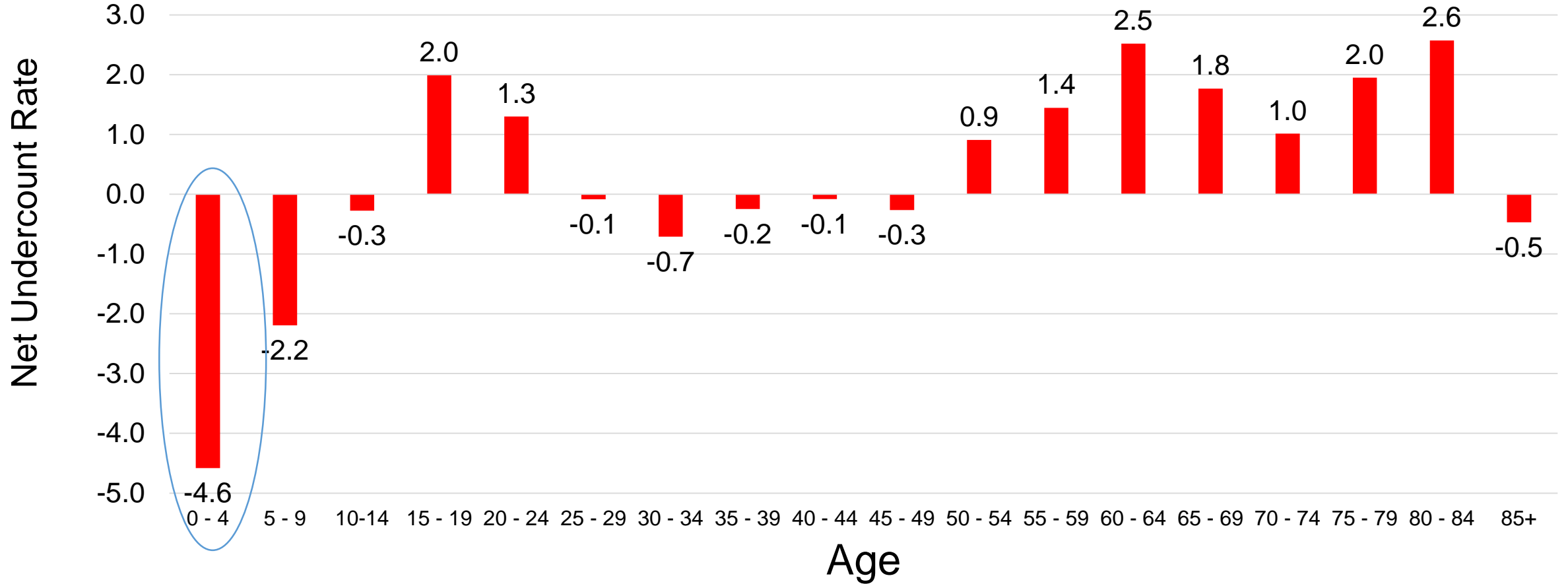
Why the Census is Important: The 5 P's of the U.S. Census

1. Political Power- Census data are used to;
 1. Allocate seats in Congress
 2. Draw more than 10,000 single member districts
2. Programs – Census data are used to;
 1. Distribute more than \$850 billion in FY 2106
 2. Data from the 2020 Census will be used to distribute \$25 trillion dollars 2021-2030
3. Planning – Census Data are used to plan day care centers, health centers, schools, hospitals, highways and more
4. Perceptions - Places that are perceived to be stagnant or declining because of Census undercounts are less likely to get public and private sector investments
5. Phounding Phathers – Census is mentioned in the sixth sentence of the Constitution

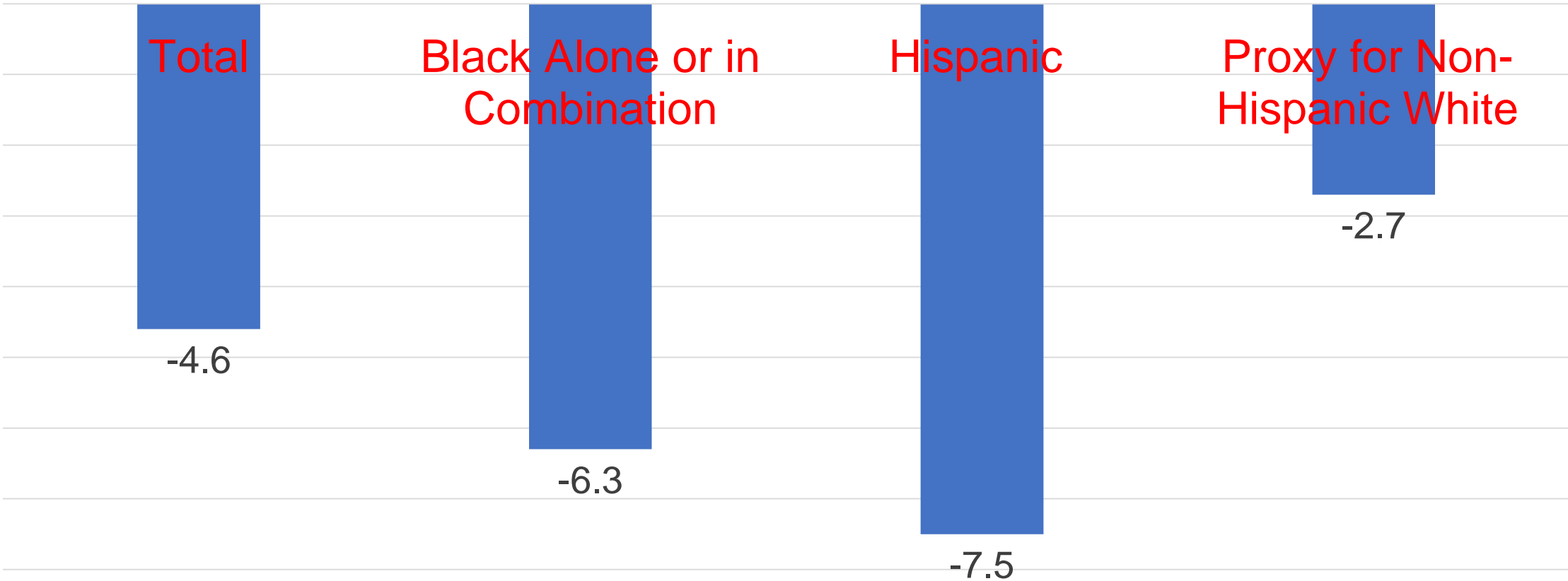
Why counting young children in the Census is different than counting other populations

- They don't fit into the normal paradigm for hard-to-count populations
- They have a higher net undercount than other groups
- The net undercount for young children has been growing while net undercount for other groups improved
- Increased per household expenditure in the census 1990 to 2010 didn't improve count of young children like it did for other HTC groups
- Households with young children have been overlooked in Census Bureau's communication plans
- Young children are more likely to be left off returned census questionnaires, so increasing response rates won't improve count of young children

Young Children Had a Higher Net Undercount (by far) Than Any Other Age Group in the 2010 Census



Blacks and Hispanic Young Children Have Higher Net Undercount



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, May 2012 DA Release

Net undercount rate in New Jersey for population age 0 to 4 in 2010 Census

-5.2 percent,
27,000 people

- 1,350 Kindergarten Classes

2010 Census Net Undercount Rates for Population Age 0 to 4 in Large New Jersey Counties

County Name	Net Undercount Rate for Age 0 to 4
Atlantic County	-9.0
Bergen County	-3.8
Burlington County	-3.8
Camden County	-5.2
Essex County	-7.1
Gloucester County	-2.8
Hudson County	-0.9
Mercer County	-7.7
Middlesex County	-6.5
Monmouth County	-5.4
Morris County	-4.9
Ocean County	-2.2
Passaic County	-7.3
Somerset County	-7.5
Union County	-6.1

Source: Count All Kids website

https://countallkids.org/resources_cat/data-on-the-undercount/



Why are young children missed in the Census?

3 Questions About Why Young Children are Missed

- 1) Why do young children have a much higher net undercount than older children and adults?
- 2) What characteristics of young children make them more likely to be undercounted in the Census?
- 3) Which characteristics are more powerful predictors?

Young Children Are More Concentrated in Hard-to-Count Situations Than Older Children

	Age 0-4	Age 10-17	Difference (0 to 4 minus 10 to 17)
Age of householder is 18-29	29	3	26
Living in rental housing unit	44	32	12
Living in a multi-unit structure	38	26	12
Different address one year ago	15	8	7
Living in a complex household	40	33	7
Below poverty	25	19	6
Enumerator completed response	31	27	4
Grandparent responsible for grandchild	5	3	2
Living with one parent or two unmarried parents	36	34	2

Source: U. S. Census Bureau

Most young children are missed because they are left off a returned Census questionnaire.

About 80-85% of young children missed in the 2010 Census were living in households that returned a Census questionnaire.



What are Complex Families

- Any family other than a married-couple family with their biological and adopted children or a single-parent family with their biological or adopted children
- Young children other than biological or adopted children are most likely to be missed (i.e. step child, foster children, grandchild, niece/nephew, etc.)
- Examples,
 - Young child living with a grandparent
 - Two (or more families) sharing a housing unit
 - Young child and mother (or father) living in someone else's household
 - grandparent
 - cohabitation

Which Predictors are Most Powerful?

Statistically Significant

- Child lives in a racial/Hispanic minority household
- Child lives in a household where no one speaks English
- Child lives with a grandparent(s)
- Child lives in a complex household

Not Statistically Significant

- Child lives with young parent(s) (age 15-34)
- Child lives in a household that recently moved
- Child lives with parents with low education attainment
- Child lives in a low-income household
- Child lives in neighborhoods with a low mail return rate
- Child lives in a hard-to-count neighborhood (based on mail return rates)



Why the net undercount of young children is important

Census Directed funds to New Jersey in FY 2016 for 54 Programs = \$22.7 billion

Selected Child and Youth Programs Where Funding is Related to Census Counts	
Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid)	Title IV-E Foster Care
Federal Direct Student Loans	Health Care Centers
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	School Breakfast Program
Federal Pell Grant Program	Child and Adult Care Food Program
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Child Care
Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies	Child Care and Development Block Grant
State Children's Health Insurance Program	Adoption Assistance
National School Lunch Program	Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants
Special Education Grants	Social Services Block Grant
Head Start	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth Activities
Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children	Community Services Block Grant

What can be done to reduce the net undercount of young children in the 2020 Census?

- What the Census Bureau can do.
- What the state can do.
- What child advocates can do.

What the Census Bureau can do?

- Identify areas with high numbers of HTC young children and send an extra post card urging parents to make sure young children are included in their census questionnaire (similar to bilingual questionnaire approach used in the 2010 Census)
- Based on Administrative Data (IRS, Social Security etc.) the Census Bureau has a file identifying which households have young children... Ask Census Bureau to send those households a postcard in March 2020 urging parents to make sure young children are included in their census questionnaire
- Since young children had a higher net undercount than any other age group in the 2010 Census, the outreach component of the 2020 Census should focus more on households with young children

What state government can do

- Establish a Census complete count committee and make sure the interests of young children are represented.
- Send out information about the importance of counting every young children in the Census to:
 - All WIC recipients
 - All TANF recipients
 - All Medicaid recipients
 - All households with foster children

What can be done by Advocates?

- Educate everyone to make sure young children are included in the 2020 census
 - Newsletters
 - Newspapers (Op Eds) (use this event to plant story in local papers—take a photo today)
 - Social media
 - Sessions at conferences
 - State and local complete count committees (make sure someone is there to represent the interests of young children)

Some Specific Activities

- At Hospitals – make sure every mother of a newborn in first quarter of 2020 (or 12 months before census) gets material (or a hat for baby?) reminding her to make sure babies is included in the Census
- Preschools
 - – send materials home with children reminding parents to include young children in the Census
 - – set up a computer at the preschool where parents can respond online
- Grocery stores – put a poster by baby food and diapers sections reminding parents to make sure young child in included in the Census.
- Work with local libraries to make sure libraries give respondents access to computers and librarians know where to get answers to census questions.

Summary

- Counting young children in the Census is different than counting others
- Young children have a higher net undercount than any other age group in the 2010 Census
- Black and Hispanic young children are undercounted at a higher rate
- The net undercount of young children has been increasing since 1980 (opposite of adults)
- There are many reasons why young children are missed in the Census
- There are many uses of census data – including distribution of trillions of dollars over a decade
- There is a role for the
 - Census Bureau
 - State and local Government
 - Child advocates

THANKS

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