



The 2020 Census: Why We Need Specific Strategies to Count Young Children

- The 2010 Census missed more than 10 percent of all children under age 5 in the U.S.
- When we miss young children in the census, it has serious consequences for them, their families, their communities and our nation – with many of those consequences lasting for at least 10 years.
- Many children aren't counted because their parents or guardians are confused over whether to include them on the census form – our research shows 10 percent of families would leave their own young children off the forms, and 8 percent are unsure whether to count them.
- The problem is even worse for children living in certain types of households: kids living with grandparents, other relatives, or people they are not related to, kids who split their time between parents, or kids who are temporarily in one household but have no permanent home.
- Here's a crucial fact: Because people filling out the form are unsure about including children, we could count every adult in a community and still miss many children.
- There are, however, several tools that can help us ensure that more children are counted.
 1. The Hard To Count Map website will soon have information on specific tracts with lots of children at risk of being missed and why – we know young kids in communities of color are more likely to be missed, as are children in neighborhoods with lots of families who do not speak English, kids living with grandparents, or kids living with unrelated adults or more distant relatives. The website's URL is <https://www.censushardtocompmaps2020.us/>
 2. We know from the [message research](#) we've conducted that certain messages make it more likely that parents or others will fill out the census form and include the children living in their households. Here are five examples of messages that work:

Knowing "you can fill out the census on your own schedule and that it only takes about 10 minutes to complete" makes people much more likely to fill out the census and include everyone living in the household.

Highlighting the privacy guarantee makes a majority of parents or others more likely to fill out the form. It's important to say what the privacy guarantee is: Any current or former Census employee that releases individual data can go to prison for up to 5 years or pay a fine of up to \$250,000.

Counting your young children in the census means your local schools will get more funding for your children: that's one of the most persuasive messages, with 82 percent of those surveyed saying it's important.

The census happens only once every ten years, so if we don't count a two year-old, your community will have less funding for education, child care, and other services children need for a decade, most of their childhood.

Census data will help local government plan for the future and determine where \$800 billion a year in federal funding goes, including medical services, WIC, child care, public schools, public transit, and low-income housing.