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DECLINING SHARE OF CHILDREN LIVED WITH SINGLE MOTHERS IN THE LATE 1990s

On June 15, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities released a report, *Declining Share of Children Lived with Single Mothers in the Late 1990s*. The report analyzes data from the Census Bureau's Current

The full report can be viewed at
<http://www.cbpp.org/6-15-01wel.htm>

Population Survey, which shows that between 1995 and 2000, the proportion of children younger than 18 living with a single mother declined from 19.9 percent to 18.4 percent, a drop of 8 percent. In addition, the proportion of children living with two married parents (including step-parents) remained essentially unchanged during this period, at about 70 percent. Both trends represent changes relative to trends over the 1985–1990 period, when the share of children living with a single mother remained essentially constant and the share of children living with two married parents declined.

The report's other findings include:

- Children in lower-income families (families with income below 200 percent of the official poverty line) are more likely to live with a single mother and less likely to live with two married parents than are higher-income children. Between 1995 and 2000, however, the proportion of lower-income children living with a single mother declined significantly. This trend marks a shift from the late 1980s, when the proportion of lower-income children living with a single mother increased.
- The proportion of Black children living with two married parents rose substantially in the late 1990s, from 34.8 percent to 38.9 percent. Nevertheless, it remains below the proportions of White and Hispanic children in such families (78.2 percent and 66.2 percent, respectively).
- The proportion of Hispanic children living with a single mother fell from 24.6 percent in 1995 to 21.3 percent in 2000 — a 13 percent drop. The proportion of Black children living with a single mother also fell from 47.1 percent in 1995 to 43.1 percent in 2000, an 8 percent drop.
- In both the late 1980s and late 1990s, there was a small increase in the proportion of children living with a cohabiting mother — that is, a single mother living with one unmarried adult male.
- The proportion of children living with a single father also rose during both the late 1980s and late 1990s but remains small, at 3.9 percent in 2000.