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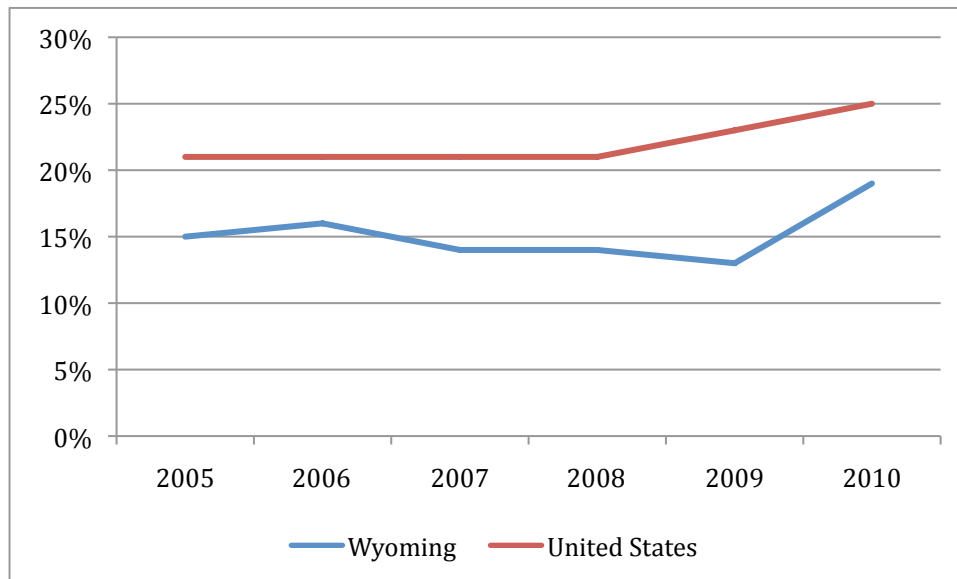
News Release

Early Childhood poverty increases in Wyoming from 2005 to 2010

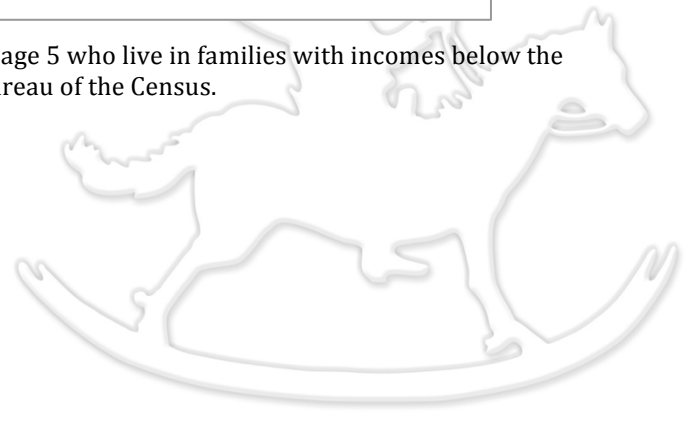
Key Findings

- 1) Among children **under five years of age**, the percentage living in poverty increased 27 percent from 2005 to 2010. In 2005, 15 percent of Wyoming children lived in poverty compared to 19 percent in 2010. The largest spike along the trend-line occurred from 2009 to 2010 when early childhood poverty hit an intra-trend nadir of 13 percent in 2009 and then shot up to 19 percent in 2010. The upshot of this development is that nearly two of ten Wyoming children under the age of five now live in households below the Federal Poverty Limit in Wyoming.

Figure 1: Percent Early Childhood Poverty: U.S. vs. WY (2005-2010)

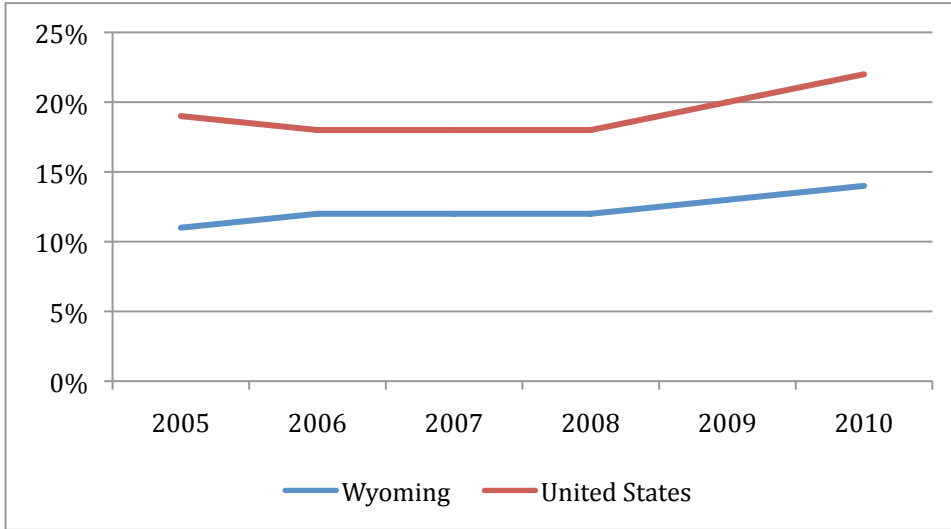


Early Childhood Poverty: Children under age 5 who live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level. Data Source: US. Bureau of the Census.



2) The percentage of children living in poverty (**children under age 18**) also increased 27 percent from 2005 to 2010. In 2005, 11 percent of Wyoming children lived in poverty compared to 14 percent in 2010.

Figure 2: Percent Child Poverty: U.S. vs. WY (2005-2010)



Childhood Poverty: Children under age 18 who live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level. Data Source: US Bureau of the Census.

Federal Poverty Guidelines

Many programs use the federal poverty guidelines or a percentage multiple of the guidelines when determining a family’s eligibility for federal programs such as WIC, free/reduced lunch, and Medicaid.

Table1: Federal poverty guidelines (2010)

Family of:	Federal Poverty Level (100% FPL)	Low-Income (below 200% FPL)
Two	\$14,570	\$29,140
Three	\$18,310	\$36,620
Four	\$22,050	\$44,100

Research indicates that families need an income equal to about two times the federal poverty level to meet their most basic needs. Families with incomes between 100 to 200 percent of the federal poverty level are considered low-income households. ⁱ

In 2010, 39 percent, or four in ten Wyoming children lived in households below 200 percent poverty, a fifteen percent increase from 34 percent in 2005.

Primary funding for the Wyoming Kids Count is provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private charitable organization dedicated to improving the lives of disadvantaged youth.

Reduced academic performance among poor and low-income children

Exam data for the Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS) can be disaggregated to show differences in exam scores between students who are eligible for the federal free and reduced lunch programs and those who are not.

Table 2: Wyoming K-12 students eligible for free/reduced lunch program: 2010 (percent)

Federal Program	Eligibility Level	Percent Eligible WY Students
Reduced Lunch Program	Below 185% poverty	10%
Free Lunch Program	Below 133% poverty	27%
Free/reduced combined	-----	37%

Data Source: Wyoming Department of Education.

The academic achievement gap in Wyoming between poor & low-income students and those from households with greater economic resources is quite pronounced. PAWS data from 2010 shows that 59 percent of 3rd graders income-eligible for free/reduced lunch scored below proficient in reading compared to 39 percent among those not eligible. In math, 27 percent of free/reduced eligible kids scored below proficient compared to 14 percent of their wealthier counterparts. The achievement gap exists for every subject across every grade level of students taking the PAWS exam.

Table 3: 3rd grade WY students below proficient on PAWS exam by subject & income category: 2010 (percent)

	Eligible for free or reduced lunch	Not eligible for lunch programs
Reading	59%	39%
Math	27%	14%

Data Source: Wyoming Department of Education.

Early Care and Education mitigates impact of poverty and improve outcomes

The risk factors associated with poverty have been shown by research to impact the health and development of infants and toddlers. Adversity associated with poverty and the resultant negative developmental impacts occurring during this critical period of rapid brain development has tremendous and lasting implications for adult outcomes. ⁱⁱ

Nobel Prize winning economist James J. Heckman points out that investing in the early years of disadvantaged children's lives is a policy that promotes both equity and economic efficiency. According to Heckman, investing in quality early care and education is, "the foundation of school readiness", and is not only a social justice imperative but also an economic imperative that has far-reaching implications for

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our society. Heckman sites the HighScope Perry Preschool study as a model for success.

The Perry study, a long-term study of the effects of high-quality early care and education on low-income three and four year olds, has documented a return to society of more than \$16 for every tax dollar invested in the early care and education program.

The researchers who carried out the Perry Preschool study recommend several key elements for a successful quality early-childhood education program. Those elements include an evidence based program model that utilizes highly qualified staff while maintaining group sizes of 1:10 teacher to child ratio. In addition, the teachers should interact with families on a regular basis via home visits. Finally in order to validate that services are supporting children and families they must engage in regular evaluation of the program and children's progress.

Based on research findings, the economist Heckman states, "Schooling after the second grade plays only a minor role in creating or reducing gaps. Conventional measures of educational inputs—class size and teacher salaries—that receive so much attention in policy debates have small effects on creating or eliminating disparities." ⁱⁱⁱ

A solid commitment to increasing the availability of quality early care and education is an essential first building block to securing improved futures for Wyoming children. Quality early care and education has been proven by research to mitigate the negative impact of poverty and ensure that more children are healthier, and school ready when they begin Kindergarten.

Definitions, Sources, and Notes

Child Poverty Definition: The share of children under age 18 who live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level, as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. **Early Childhood Poverty Definition:** The share of children under age 5 who live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level, as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. The federal poverty definition consists of a series of thresholds based on family size and composition. In calendar year 2010, a family of two adults and two children fell in the “poverty” category if their annual income fell below \$22,113. Poverty status is not determined for people in military barracks, institutional quarters, or for unrelated individuals under age 15 (such as foster children). The data are based on income received in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001 Supplementary Survey, 2002 through 2010 American Community Survey.

Footnotes: Updated September 2011.

S - Estimates suppressed when the confidence interval around the percentage is greater than or equal to 10 percentage points. N.A. – Data not available. A 90 percent confidence interval for each estimate can be found at Children in poverty by age group.

Students who scored basic or below basic on Wyoming's PAWS exam Definition.

"All income levels" includes all students who took the exam.

Eligible for free and reduced lunch programs:

To be eligible for reduced lunch, a student must live in a household with an annual income of 185% FPL or less. To be eligible for free lunch, a student must live in a household with an annual income of 133% FPL or less.

2010 = 2009-10 School Year

Data Source: Wyoming Department of Education

Endnotes

ⁱ Institute for Research on Poverty. (2010). *What are poverty thresholds and poverty guidelines?* Institute for Research on Poverty, www.irp.wisc.edu.

ⁱⁱ Duncan, G.J. & Magnuson, K. (Winter, 2011). *The long reach of early childhood poverty*. Pathways, Winter 2011, 24-27. http://stanford.edu/group/scspi-dev/media_magazines.html.

ⁱⁱⁱ Heckman, J.J. (Spring, 2011). *The economics of inequality: The value of early childhood education*.