Poor Hispanic, Black Children Have Greater Health Hurdles Than White Children
Examining Health Disparities by Race, Ethnicity

New York City – Among poor children in America, race and ethnicity are significant indicators for outcomes regarding a host of health-related issues, including birth weight, exposure to lead, and access to adequate food and medical care.

A new report from the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), a policy research center at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health, examines how the health of poor children varies by race and ethnicity. For example, say the NCCP researchers, “Hispanic households are significantly more likely to be food insecure (51 percent versus 36 percent for non-Hispanic whites and 35 percent for non-Hispanic blacks).”

Some other findings:

- Poor black children are twice as likely as poor Hispanic and white children to have levels of lead in their blood of at least 2.5 micrograms per deciliter (33 percent versus 17 and 13 percent).
- Twice as many poor Hispanic children have no place to go for healthcare when sick, compared to poor black and white children (10 versus six and five percent).
- Low birth-weight births are highest among poor black children (20 percent), followed by white (15 percent) and Hispanic (12 percent) children.
- Poor black children are more likely than poor white or Hispanic children to have been diagnosed with asthma (25 percent versus 16 percent and 13 percent).
- Among children ages 2 to 17, Hispanic children are most likely to be overweight (19 versus 13 percent for whites and 14 for blacks) and obese (21 versus 17 and 18 percent).

There are some exceptions. For example, second-hand smoke exposure is higher among poor white children:

- Mothers of poor white children from birth to 15 years old are much more likely to smoke when pregnant than mothers of poor black and Hispanic children (41 versus 18 and eight percent) so their children or substantially more likely to be exposed to cigarette smoke.


-30-

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) is the nation’s leading public policy center dedicated to promoting the economic security, health and well-being of America’s low-income families and children. Part of Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health, NCCP uses research to inform policy and practice with the goal of ensuring positive outcomes for the next generation.