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RESEARCHERS: DETROIT, CLEVELAND, CINCINNATI, BUFFALO, MILWAUKEE LEAD NATION IN CHILD POVERTY

NEW YORK CITY – More than half of all the children in Detroit and Cleveland live in poverty. Detroit, with 53.6 percent of its youngest citizens living in poverty, leads the nation, followed by Cleveland, with 52.6 percent, say researchers at the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), a research center at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health. Other cities in the top five for child poverty include Cincinnati, Buffalo, and Milwaukee. The numbers are based on U.S. Census data for 2010.

“These numbers shame our nation,” says Curtis Skinner, PhD, director of family economic security at NCCP. “They show the terrible toll of persistent high unemployment on families and children in a surprisingly wide swath of major cities, from the mid-west to the sunbelt. The prolonged fallout from the Great Recession threatens the long-term economic revival many cities were experiencing before the crisis hit.”

The 25 U.S. cities with the highest percentage of children in poverty:

1	Detroit	53.6%	14	Baltimore	37.3%
2	Cleveland	52.6%	15	Philadelphia	36.4%
3	Cincinnati	48.0%	16	St. Paul	36.3%
4	Buffalo, N.Y.	46.7%	17	Toledo	35.8%
5	Milwaukee	46.1%	18	Houston	34.7%
6	Miami	45.0%	19	Nashville	33.7%
7	Newark, N.J.	44.3%	20	Chicago	33.2%
8	Fresno, Calif.	42.9%	21	Minneapolis	33.2%
9	New Orleans	42.0%	22	Oakland	32.7%
10	St. Louis, Mo.	41.8%	23	Denver	32.6%
11	Atlanta	40.1%	24	Stockton, Calif.	32.4%
12	Memphis	39.6%	25	Corpus Christi, Tex.	32.2%
13	Dallas	37.5%			

The Census data also reveal that, at 22 percent nationwide, the child poverty rate is now the highest it has been since 1993 and almost six percentage points higher than it was in 2000. Only three years have recorded higher child poverty rates dating back to 1965.

“The Census data underscore the critical importance of strengthening our frayed social safety net,” says Skinner. “An effective national job creation program is essential to getting America’s families back to work. Given what we know about the damaging effects of poverty on children’s

prospects for school success and good health outcomes, a failure to reverse the rising child poverty trend of recent years will reduce the life opportunities of growing numbers of children. That would be a tragedy for our children and an irresponsible disinvestment in the future of our nation.”

- 30 -

NOTE TO REPORTERS: For a top-50 child poverty ranking of US cities for 2010, email: ardoin@nccp.org.

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.