

# NM lowest in child well-being



## Child Well-Being in New Mexico

A Discussion with Senator Tom Udall

April 14, 2014



by Dr. Veronica C. Garcia, Ed.D.  
Executive Director, NM Voices for Children



# New Mexico is Dead Last

In June 2013, New Mexico fell to **50<sup>th</sup>** in the nation for child well-being.



In June 2013, New Mexico was ranked **50<sup>th</sup>** in the nation for child well-being in the KIDS COUNT Data Book. This annual report is issued by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. New Mexico has never ranked above 40<sup>th</sup>, but this is the first year we ranked dead last.

## KIDS COUNT ranking is based on 4 domains



The Kids Count ranking is based on four domains—economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. Each domain has four indicators.



## Economic Well-Being

- Children in Poverty (31%)
- Children Whose Parents Lack Secure Employment (37%)
- Children Living in Households with a High Housing Cost Burden (36%)
- Teens Not in School and Not Working (11%)



The indicators for the economic well-being domain are: Children in poverty; children whose parents lack secure employment; children in households with a high housing cost burden; and teens who are not in school and are not working

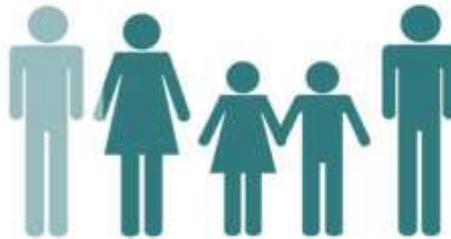
A high housing cost burden is defined as a family that spends 30% or more of their income on housing.

We have the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest poverty rate in the nation

21% of all New Mexicans live at the poverty level

That's 426,000 people

Or 1  
out of  
every 5



Source: U.S. Census, 2012 American Community Survey

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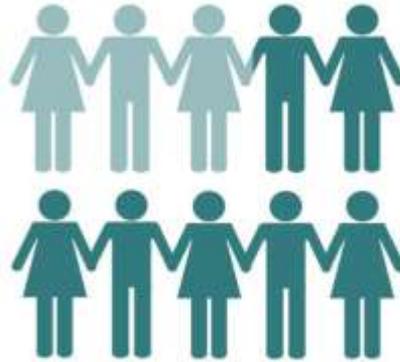
Most of our low ranking is connected with our high rates of poverty. New Mexico has the second highest poverty rate in the country. (Only Mississippi is higher.)

21% of all New Mexicans live at the poverty level. Many, many more are considered low-income.

## We have the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest child poverty rate

31% of New Mexico's children live at the poverty level

That's **3**  
out of  
every **10**



Source: 2013 KIDS COUNT Data Book, Annie E. Casey Foundation

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We also have the second highest child poverty rate in the nation. (Again, only Mississippi is higher.)



## Education

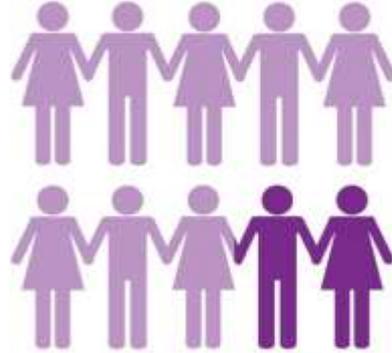
- Children Not Attending Preschool (62%)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Graders Not Proficient in Reading (79%)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Not Proficient in Math (76%)
- High School Student Not Graduating on Time (33%)



In the education domain, the indicators are: Children not attending preschool; fourth graders not reading proficiently, eighth graders not proficient in math; and high school students not graduating on time.

## We have the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest rate of 4<sup>th</sup> graders who read proficiently

79% of New Mexico's 4<sup>th</sup> graders do not read at grade level



That's almost 8  
out of 10



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We have the second lowest rate of fourth graders who read at grade level. This is important, because children who are not reading proficiently by fourth grade are more likely to fall behind in other subjects.



## Health

- Low Birth-Weight Babies (8.7%)
- Children without Health Insurance (9%)
- Child and Teen Death Rates (36 per 100,000)
- Teens Who Abuse Alcohol or Drugs (9%)



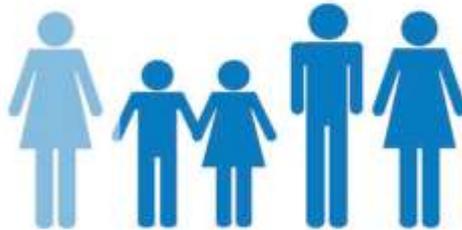
The four indicators in the health domain are: Low birth-weight babies; children without health insurance; child and teen death rates; and teens who abuse alcohol or drugs

Babies born weighing less than 5 pounds, 5 ounces are considered to have a low birth weight. This puts them at higher risk for health problems and developmental delays.

We have the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rate of people  
without insurance

21% of all New Mexicans lack health insurance

That's **1**  
out of  
every **5**



Source: The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2011

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New Mexico has the third highest rate of people without health insurance. (Only Texas and Nevada are higher.) Parents who lack health insurance are less likely to take their children to the doctor—even if their kids qualify for free health care through Medicaid. As low-income parents sign up for Medicaid or receive tax credits for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act, more eligible children will be enrolled in Medicaid.

## We have the highest child hunger rate

29% of New Mexico's children are 'food insecure'



That's 3 out of every 10



Source: Map the Meal Gap, Feeding America, 2014

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We also have the highest rate of child hunger in the U.S. More than 30% of our children live in homes where food is not always available at mealtime. Many of these children go to school hungry. 66% of our K-12 public school students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. For many children, the breakfast and lunch they get at school will be the only meals they receive all week.



## Family and Community

- Children in Single-Parent Families (43%)
- Children in Families Where Head of Household Lacks a High School Diploma (22%)
- Children Living in High-Poverty Areas (21%)
- Teen Birth Rates (53 per 1,000)



The indicators for the family and community domain are: Children in single-parent families; children whose bread-winning parent did not finish high school; children living in high poverty areas; and teen pregnancy rates—we have the second highest in the nation.

It is important for children to have parents who have at least completed high school. The level of a parent's education—especially the mother's—is the single best predictor of how well the child will do in school. The more education the parent has, the better the child does.

An area is defined as high poverty when 30% or more of the population is consistently in poverty. High-poverty areas tend to have high crime rates, and high rates of drug use and violence. They also have more sub-standard housing, more environmental hazards, and lack safe places for children to play outdoors.

## We have the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rate of children in single-parent families

43% of our children live in single-parent families



That's more than **4** out of every **10**



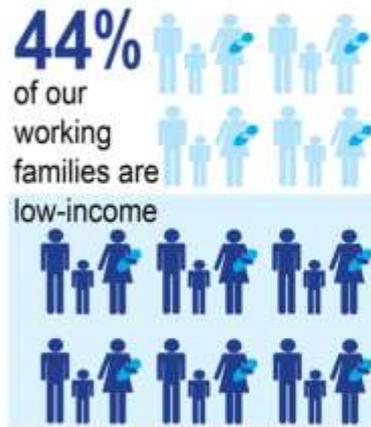
Source: 2013 KIDS COUNT Data Book, Annie E. Casey Foundation

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We have the third highest rate of children living in single-parent families. Children in single-parent families are more likely to live in poverty (as there is only one breadwinner in the home) and are less likely to have the support systems that children in two-parent families have.

## Children don't do well when their families don't do well

We have the highest rate of working families that are low-income



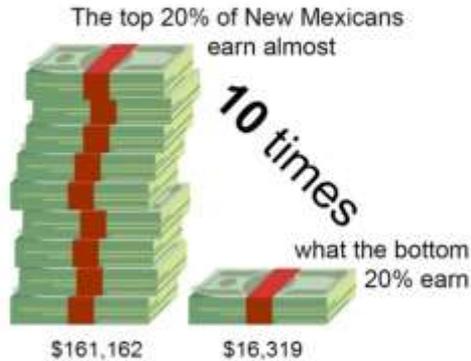
Source: Working Poor Families Project, 2013

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A child's well-being is directly related to their parent's well-being. 44% of our working families are low-income. These are parents who are stuck in low-wage jobs or can only find part-time jobs.

## Children don't do well when their families don't do well

We have the highest income inequality



Source: Pulling Apart, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities & Economic Policy Institute, 2012

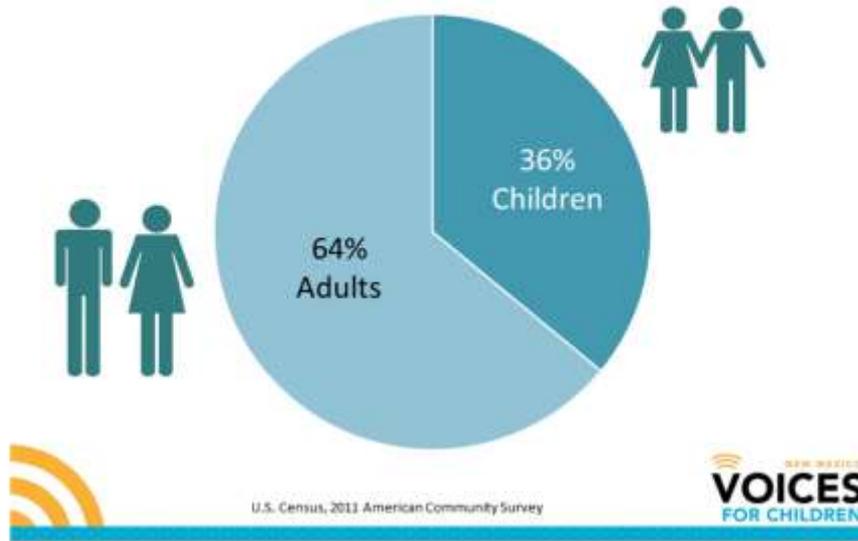


We also have the highest rate of income inequality. That means the gap between what the richest New Mexicans earn and the poorest New Mexicans earn is the highest in the nation.

The average income of the richest 20% of New Mexicans is over \$160,000 a year. That's almost ten times the average income of the lowest 20% of New Mexicans—just over \$16,000 a year.

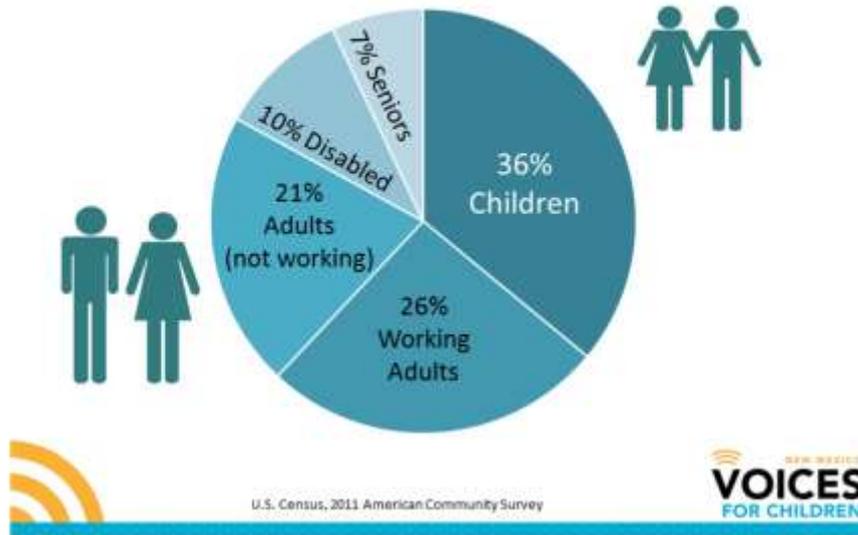
Income inequality causes our economy to be off balance. An economy is healthy when money is circulating, but extreme income inequality means too much money is in too few hands to be circulating widely enough.

## Who are the poor in New Mexico?



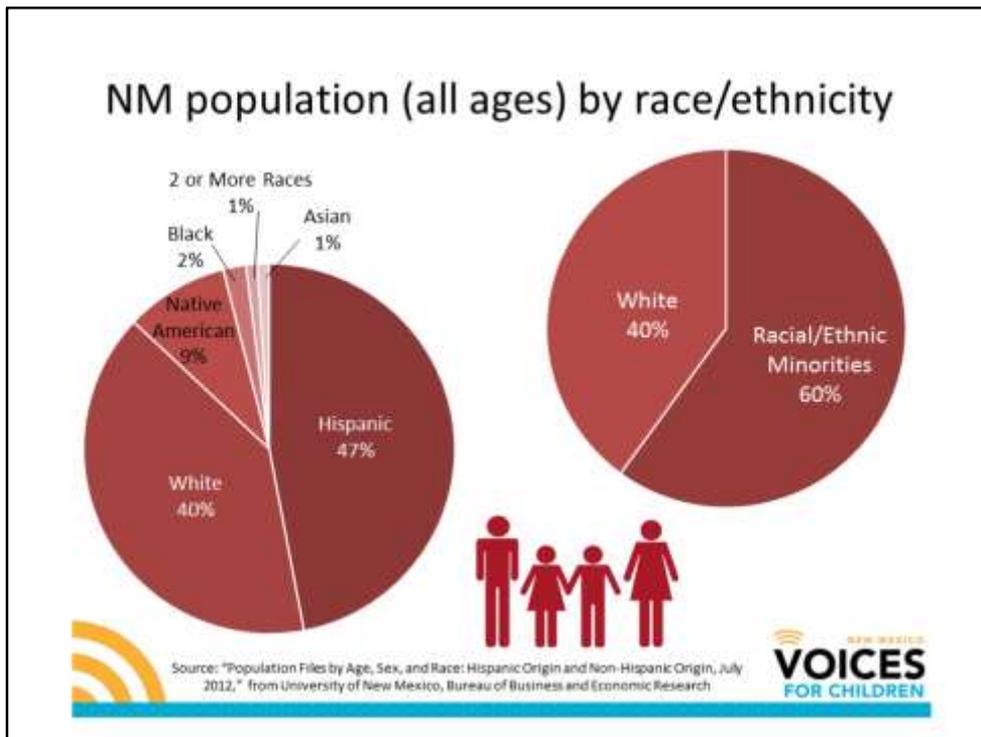
While a higher percentage of our children are poor (31%), as compared to the general population ( 21%), about two-thirds of New Mexico's poor are adults.

## Who are the poor in New Mexico?



Not all adults can work or are expected to—such as disabled adults and seniors. When we group these adults in with children we see that the majority of New Mexico’s poor—53%—either cannot work or are not expected to work.

Of the adults who can work, more than half do—but their jobs do not keep them out of poverty.

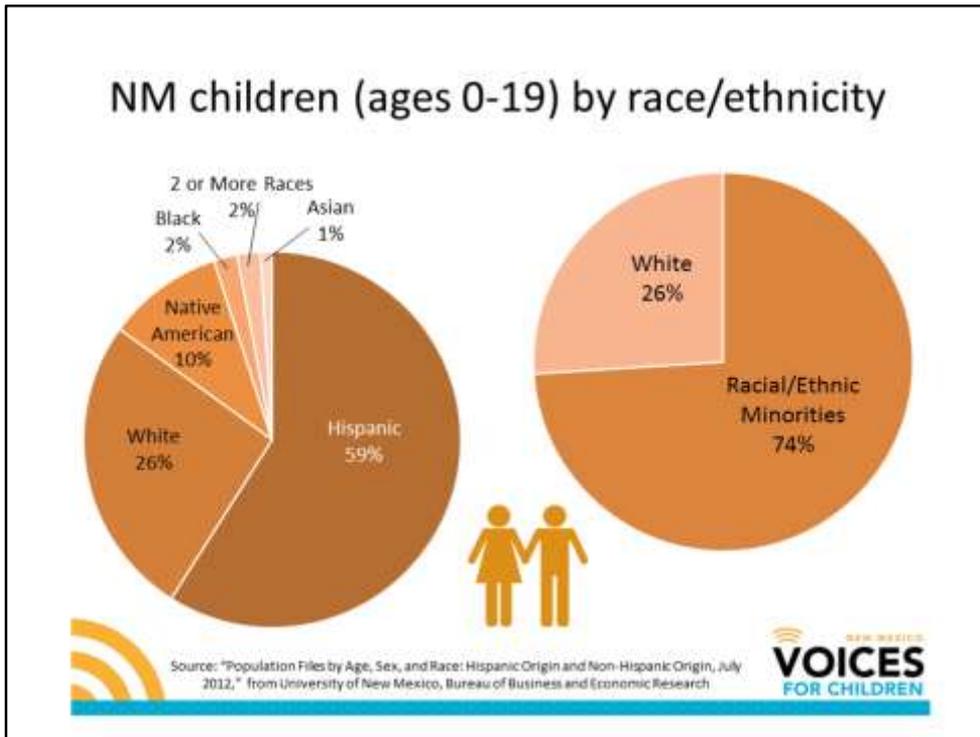


We also need to look at the role that race and ethnicity play when we look at child well-being. This is the racial/ethnic breakdown of the total state population—that includes New Mexicans of all ages.

On the pie chart on the left, you can see the largest group is Hispanic—at 47% of the total population. But the next largest group—composed of Whites—at 40% of the total population is not that much smaller.

New Mexico is a minority-majority state because when all racial and ethnic minorities are added together, they make of the majority of the state’s population. On the right, you see all racial and ethnic minorities added together for a 60-40 split.

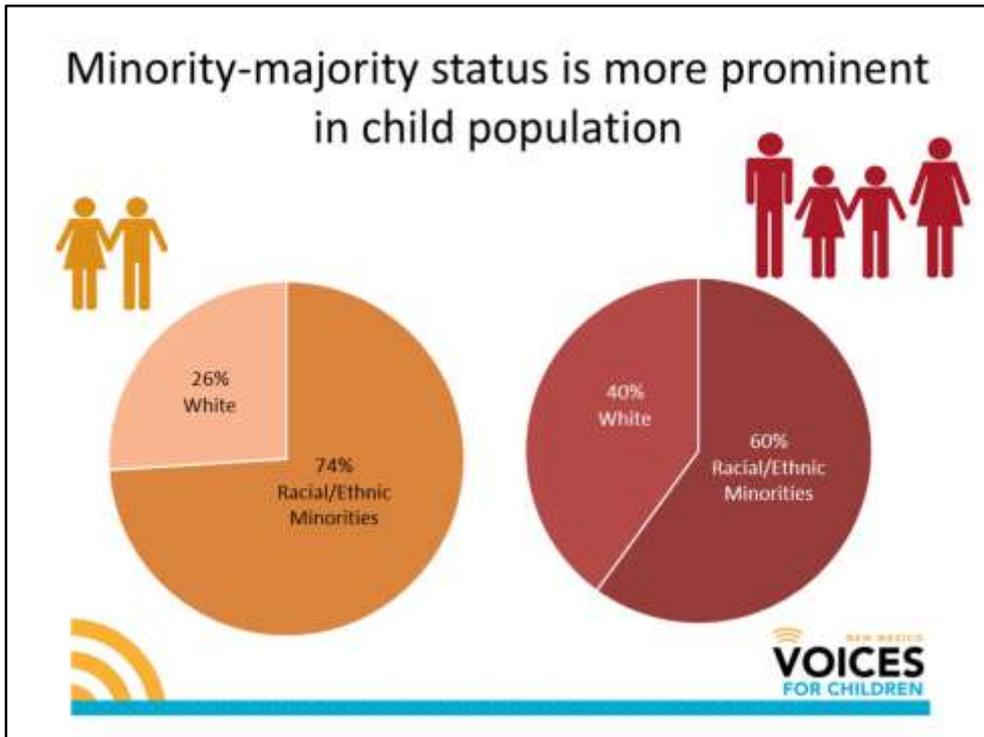
The U.S. as a whole is following this pattern and will have a minority-majority population within the next few decades.



When we look just at New Mexico’s children, however, we see a different picture.

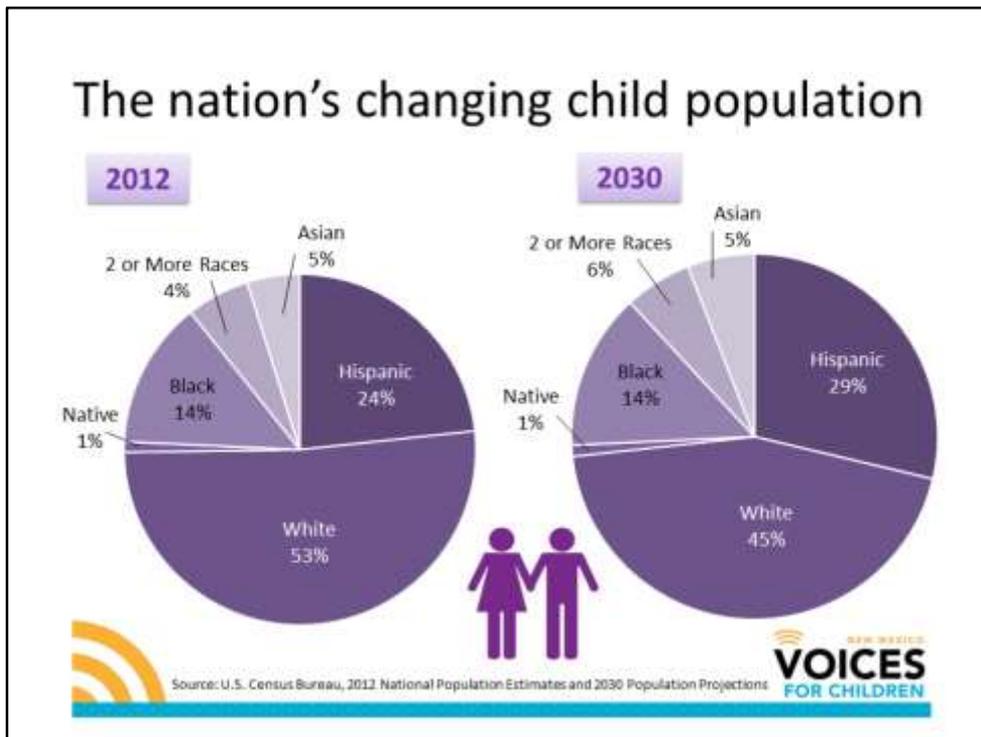
On the left we see that Hispanics are a solid majority—at 59% of the child population. Just 26% of the state’s kids are White.

On the right—when racial and ethnic minorities are added together, they are 74 percent of the child population.



Racial and ethnic minorities make up almost three-quarters of the child population. These kids are more likely to face barriers to success and will generally fall behind their White counterparts in school.

This is our future workforce. There will be very real repercussions as these children enter adulthood if we do nothing to address racial disparities.

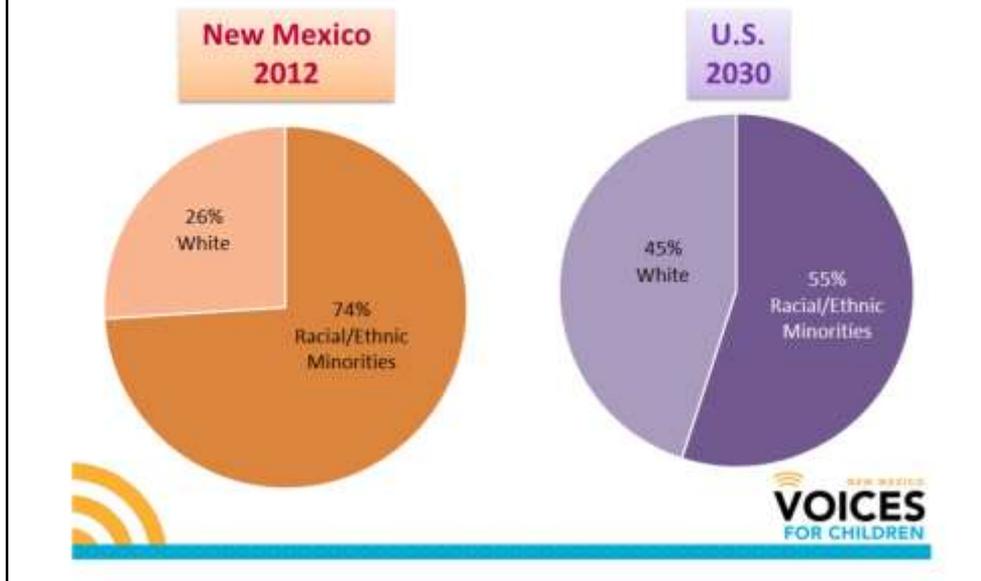


Nationally, children are expected to be a minority-majority population by 2018.

On the left is the current makeup of the U.S. child population. White children still are in the majority at 53 percent.

That changes in the pie chart on the right as the population growth rate for Hispanic children eclipses all other groups. By 2030 it's expected that 55 percent of U.S. children will be racial or ethnic minorities. Still, White kids will make up 45% of the child population in 2030.

## New Mexico is ahead of the trend



In New Mexico we're already way ahead of that trend.

While our cultural diversity is one of the things that makes New Mexico a unique and enchanting place, we must consider what kinds of barriers our children of color are facing—especially given our high rate of child poverty.

# Race for Results Index

0 = Worst Off

1,000 = Heading for Success



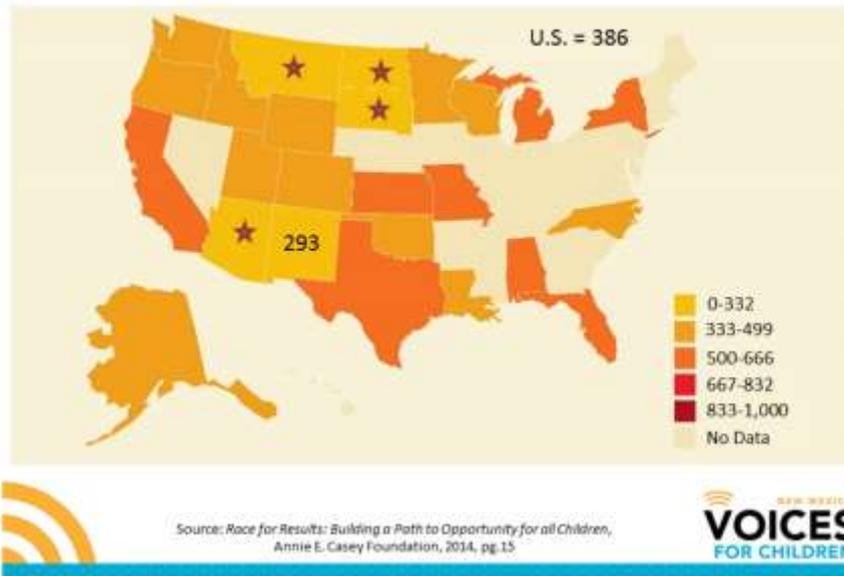
	National	New Mexico
Asian	776	728
White	704	634
Black	345	446
Hispanic	404	363
Native	387	293



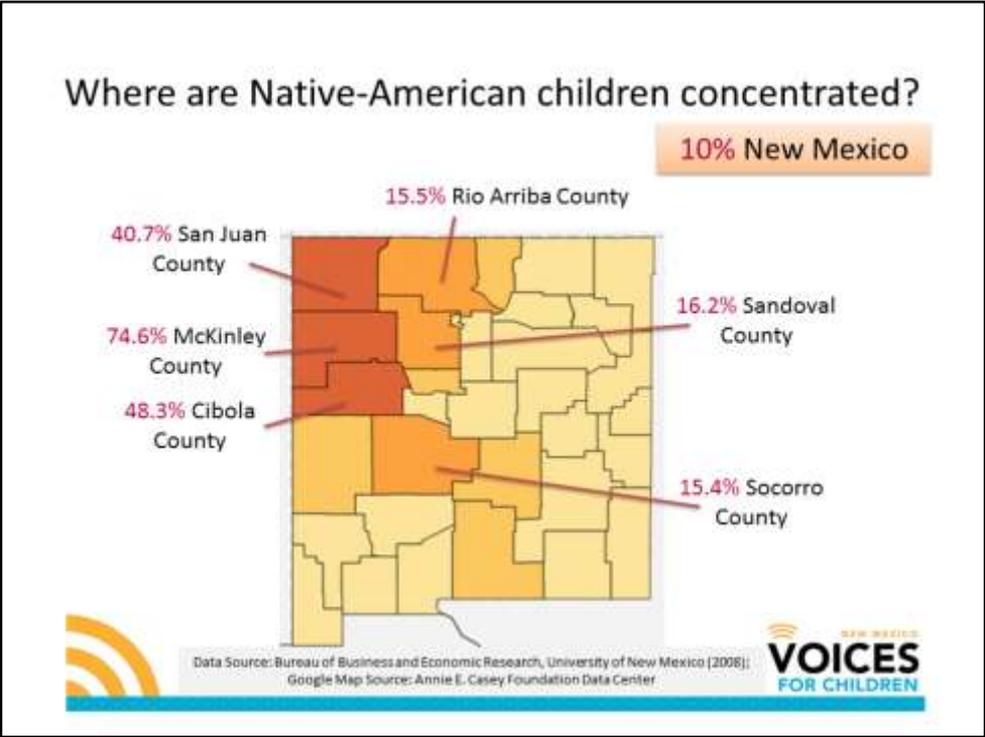
Earlier this month, the Annie E. Casey Foundation released a policy brief on the state of well-being of the nation's children in all racial and ethnic groups, *Race for Results: Building a Path to Opportunity for all Children*. The report includes their newly created Race for Results Index—based on a metric of zero to 1,000 with zero being the lowest score and 1,000 being the optimal score.

As you can see, New Mexico's scores—in red—are lower than the national average for every racial and ethnic group—except for African-American children.

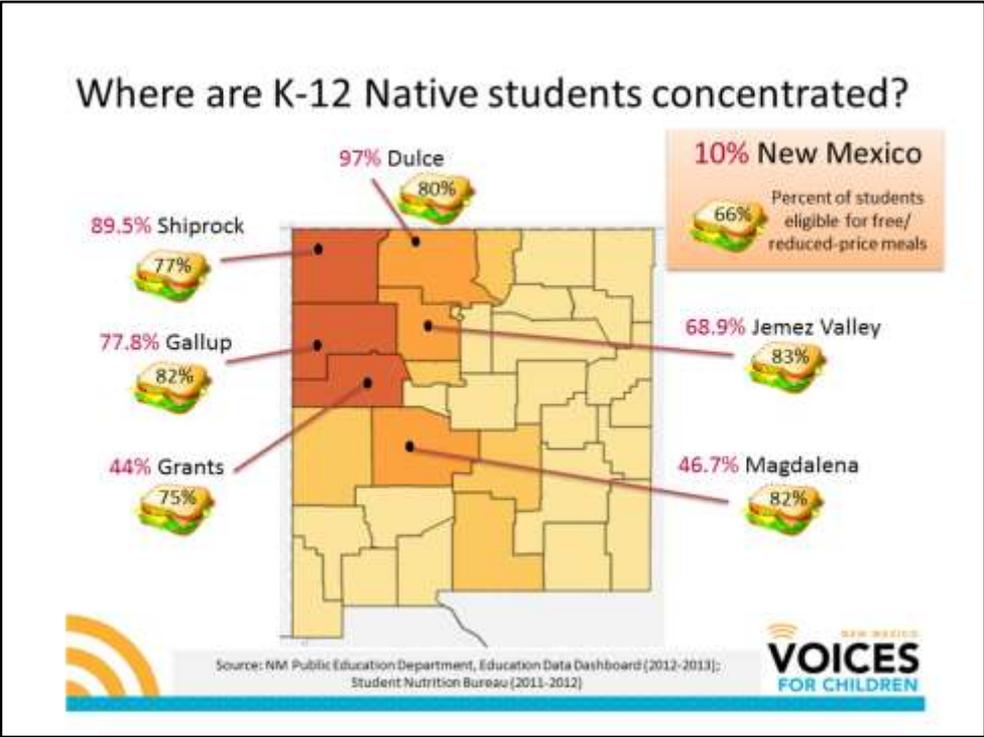
## State-by-State Index: Native-American Children



Our Native-American children do not fare well. In fact, Native children fare worse in only four other states, which are indicated by the red stars—Arizona, Montana, and North and South Dakota.



Our Native-American child population is concentrated in the western and north-central sections of the state. While just 10% of New Mexico’s children are Native American, they make up almost 75% of the child population in McKinley County.



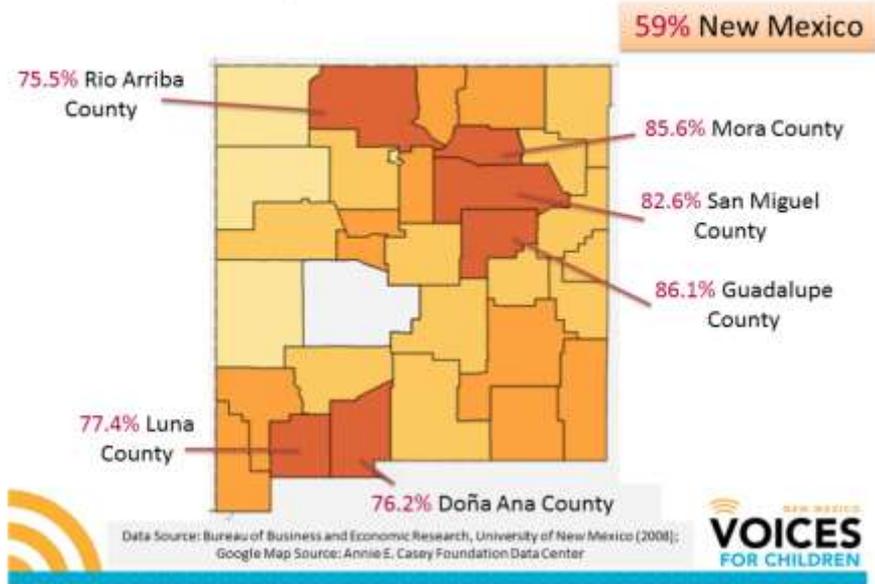
When we look at K-12 students, of course, we see a similar concentration. This map is to give you an idea of what the economic conditions are for families in these areas. The little sandwich icons indicate the percentage of children in each school district who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Even though the state average for free or reduced-price meals is a whopping 66%, the averages are significantly higher in every one of the school districts with high concentrations of Native-American children.

## State-by-State Index: Hispanic Children



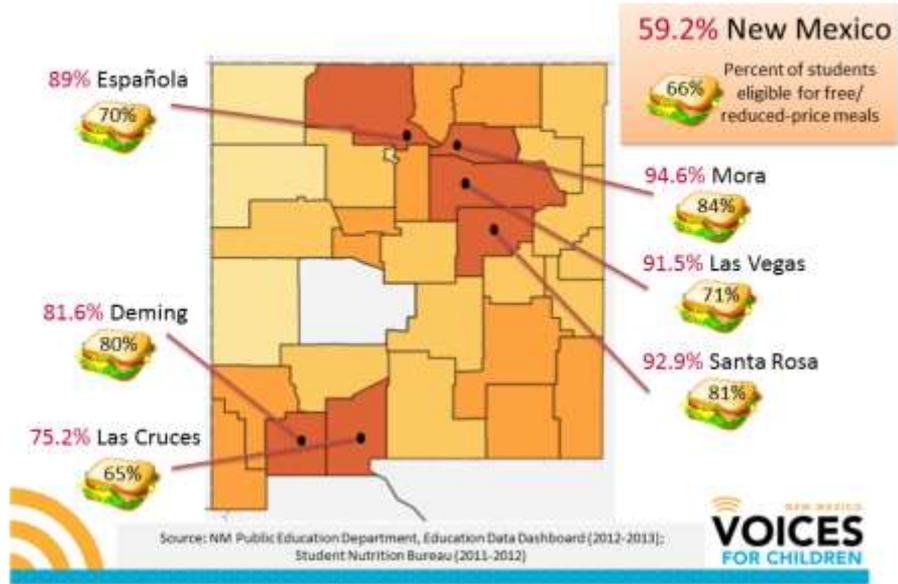
Our Hispanic kids—even though they make up a solid majority of the child population—fare better than Hispanic kids in only eight other states.

## Where are Hispanic children concentrated?

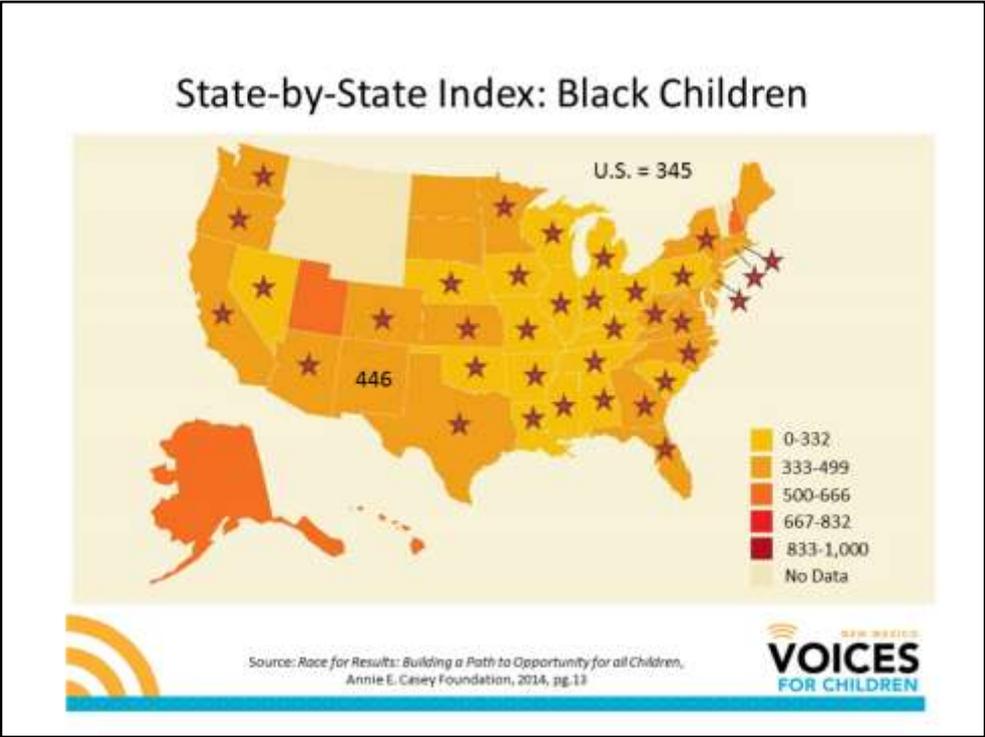


Our Hispanic children are concentrated in the southern area as well as the north-central areas of the state.

## Where are K-12 Hispanic students concentrated?



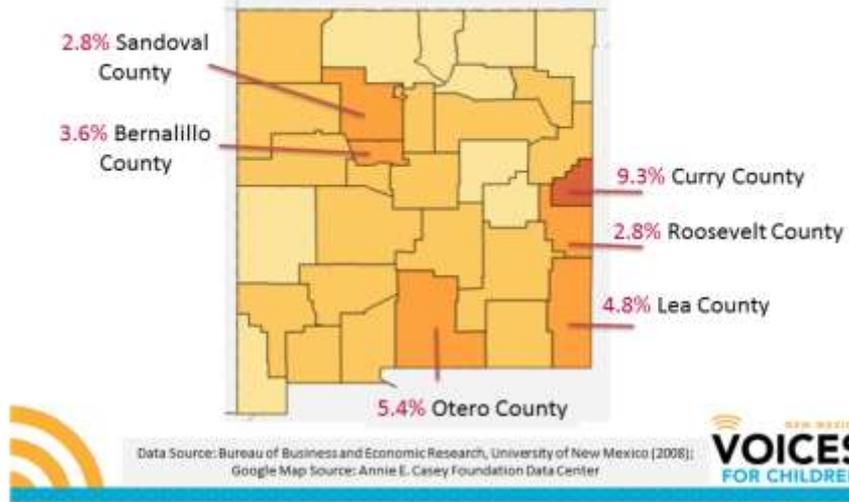
As we can see from the percentage of children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, our Hispanic kids are doing much better than the Native American kids. Still, the percentage is lower than the state average only in Las Cruces.



Here is the interesting anomaly—our African-American kids are doing better than the national average. They make up just 2% of our child population. Only in Utah, the Dakotas, and some New England states are the African-American children faring better than in New Mexico.

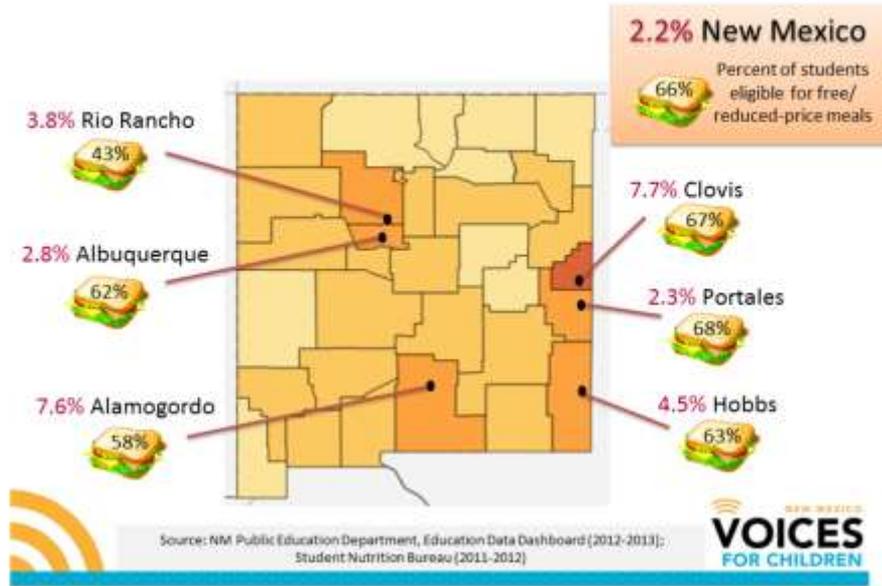
## Where are Black children concentrated?

2.2% New Mexico



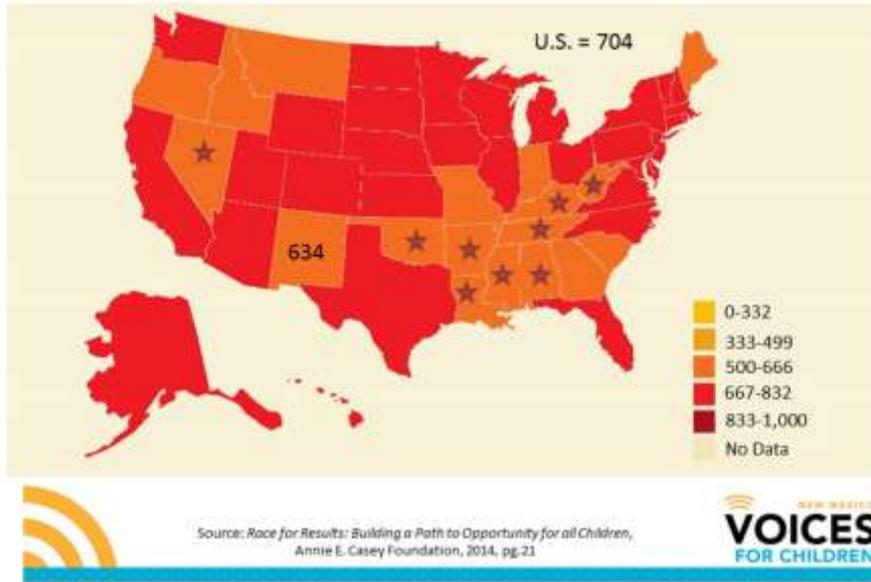
The largest concentrations of Black children are in the areas of the state with oil production and air force bases.

## Where are K-12 Black students concentrated?



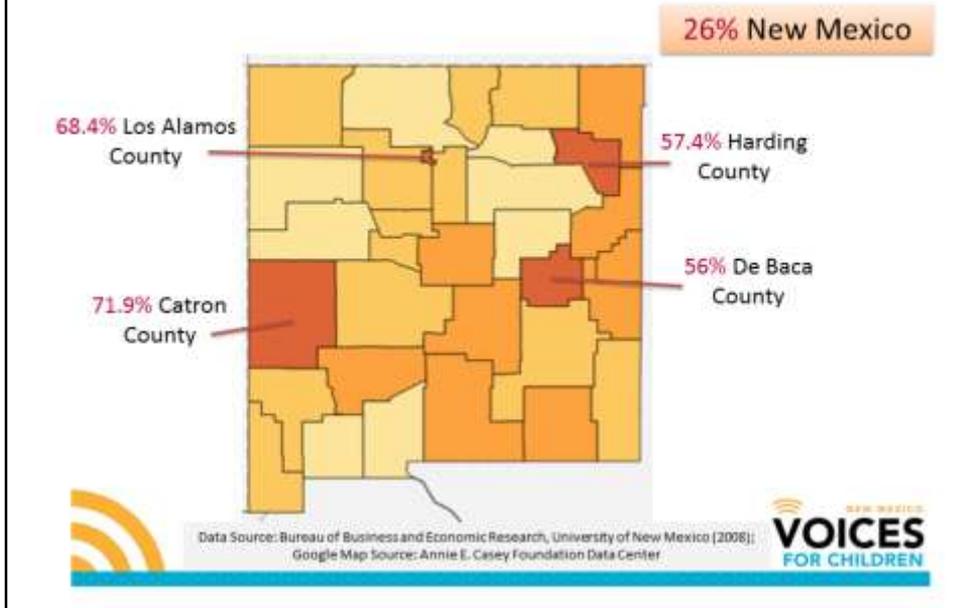
These school districts have much lower rates of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. In fact, only in two communities—Clovis and Portales—do the rates exceed the state average.

## State-by-State Index: White Children



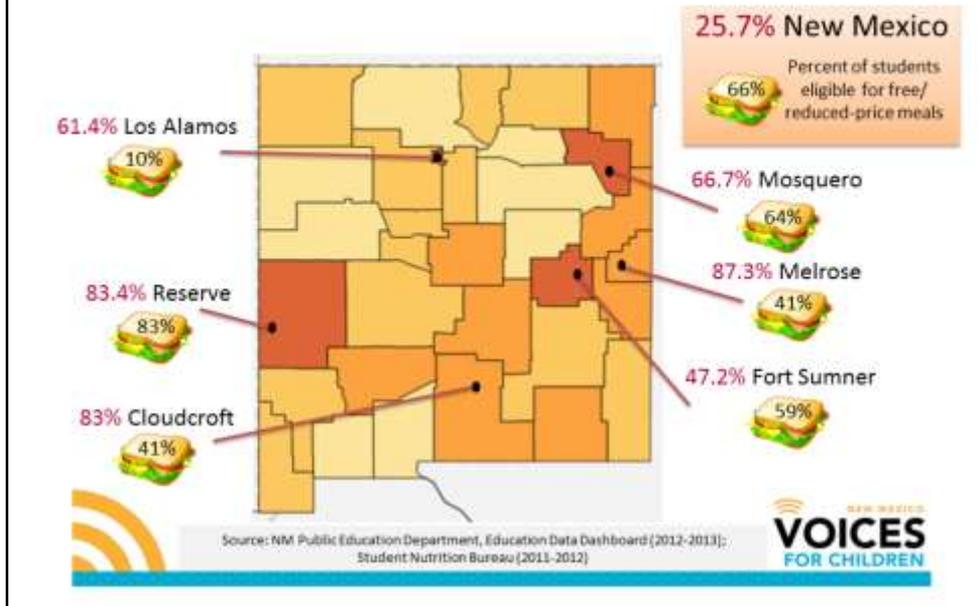
Although White children are more likely to have socio-economic advantages, our White children are still behind the national average. Only in nine states do White children do more poorly than ours—and they are all states in the south except for Nevada.

## Where are White children concentrated?



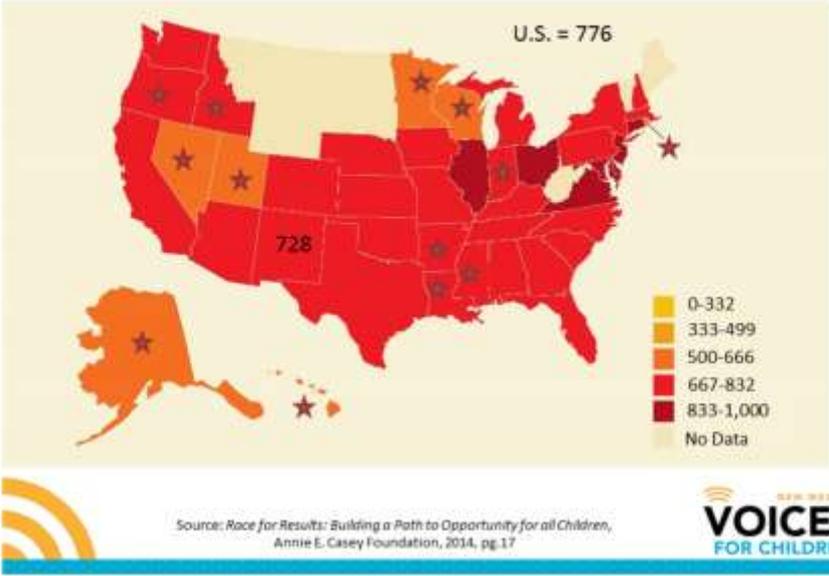
Surprisingly, the largest concentration of White children is in Catron County. There is also a high concentration in Los Alamos.

## Where are K-12 White students concentrated?



Of the school districts with high concentrations of White children only Reserve has a high rate of children eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Not surprisingly, at just 10%, Los Alamos Public Schools has the lowest rate of children eligible for free or reduced-price meals in the state.

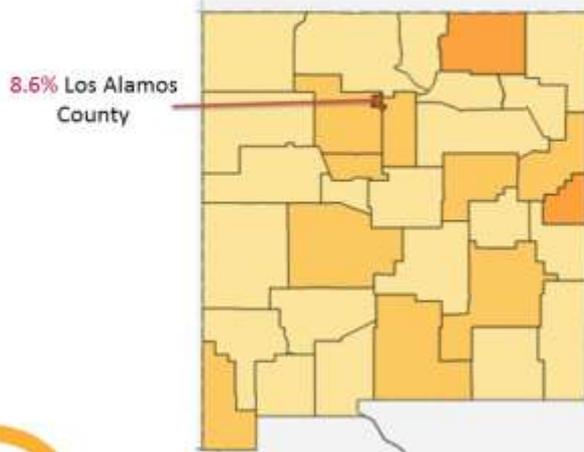
# State-by-State Index: Asian Children



As with the nation, New Mexico’s Asian children are doing the best of all racial and ethnic groups.

## Where are Asian children concentrated?

1% New Mexico



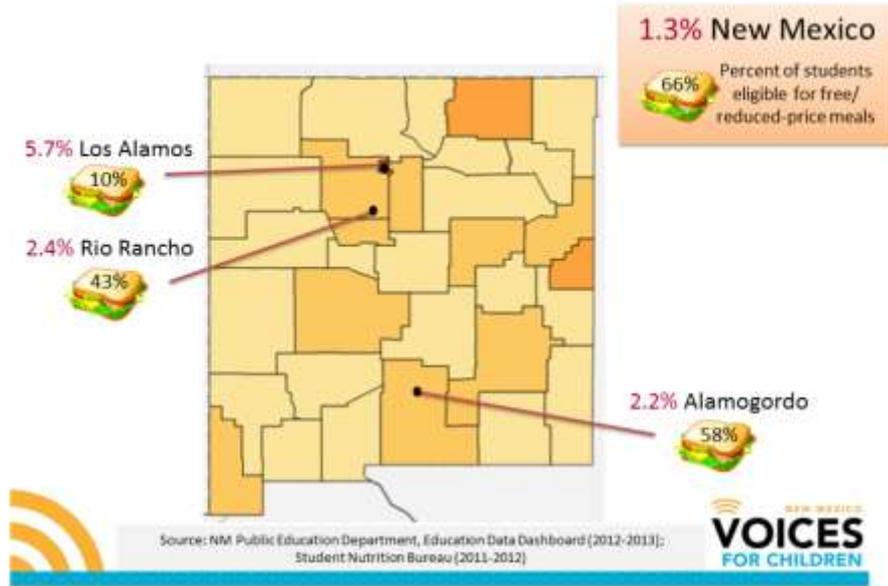
Data Source: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of New Mexico (2008);  
Google Map Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation Data Center

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When we look at where the concentration of Asian children is in New Mexico, we can very likely see why this group does so well. By far, the largest concentration is in Los Alamos.

With the National Labs as the largest employer in the area, Los Alamos County has a high median income, as well as the highest number of PhDs per capita. These two indicators—economic status of the family and the parents' level of education—will have the most impact on a child's success in school.

## Where are K-12 Asian students concentrated?



The only other school districts with a notable concentration of Asian children are Rio Rancho and Alamogordo. Again, these are areas that have good-paying jobs through Intel and Holloman Air Force Base.



For more information about **New Mexico Voices for Children** and the **NM KIDS are COUNTing on Us** policy agenda visit [www.nmvoices.org](http://www.nmvoices.org)

Thank you!



In response to New Mexico’s fall to 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation—and with input from many of our partner and ally organizations—we created and released a policy agenda last summer. The *NM Kids are Counting on Us Policy Agenda* is available on our website.