

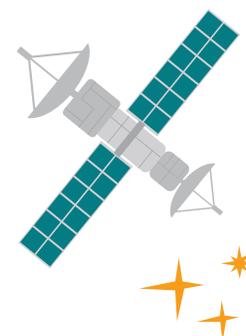
# State of Texas Children 2016

## ★ Race and Equity in Fort Worth ★

We all want a bright future for our children, and we want Fort Worth to be a place that makes that bright future possible. As the area's economy and population grow, its future depends on the health, education and financial security of all its children—across gender, neighborhood, income, race and ethnicity.<sup>1</sup>

Fort Worth is a city that prides itself on its heritage, resiliency and growth, from its birth as a small military outpost to the global city it is today. Despite the area's economic resources, the data also show gaps in children's health, education and financial security across race and ethnicity. In order to "raise the bar" in child well-being for all Fort Worth area kids, we have to "close the gaps" by intentionally breaking down obstacles and creating equitable opportunities for good health, an excellent education and economic security for every child. This is the only way to ensure Fort Worth's economic future stays strong.

This Fort Worth report is part of a larger series of reports in the Texas Kids Count project that focuses on equity in child well-being across Texas and in several of its major metro areas. See more at [CPPP.org/kidscount](http://CPPP.org/kidscount).



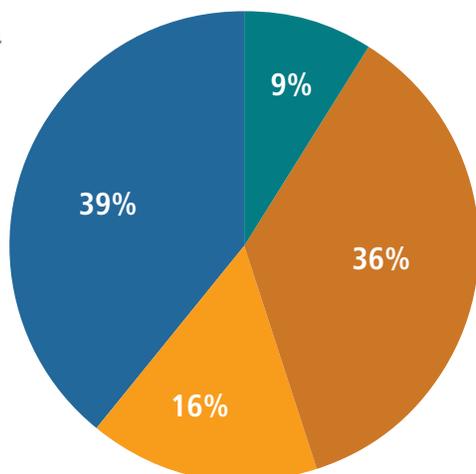
## DEMOGRAPHICS

More than 600,000 kids live in the Fort Worth-Arlington metro area, which is made up of six counties: Tarrant, Hood, Johnson, Parker, Somervell and Wise.<sup>2</sup> Eighty-four percent of children in the Fort Worth-Arlington metro area live in Tarrant County. Demographic data are provided on the Fort Worth metro area to give a comprehensive regional look at child population change. However, we focus on Tarrant County as the metro area's core in our analysis of children's financial security, health and education.

**THE PRESENT: Children of color represent the majority of the child population in the Fort Worth area.<sup>3</sup>**

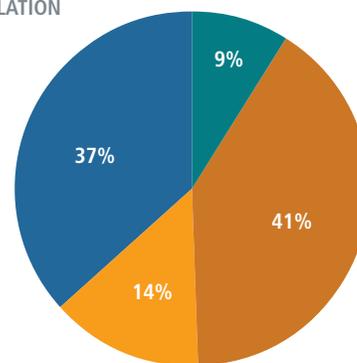
**TARRANT COUNTY, 2014**  
TOTAL CHILD POPULATION  
**526,083**

- HISPANIC
- WHITE
- BLACK
- ASIAN, MULTIRACIAL OR OTHER RACE

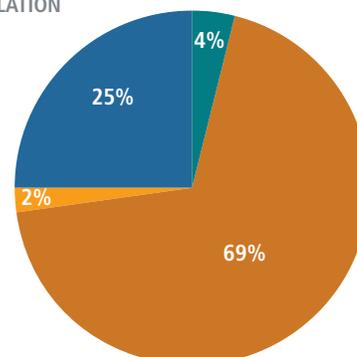


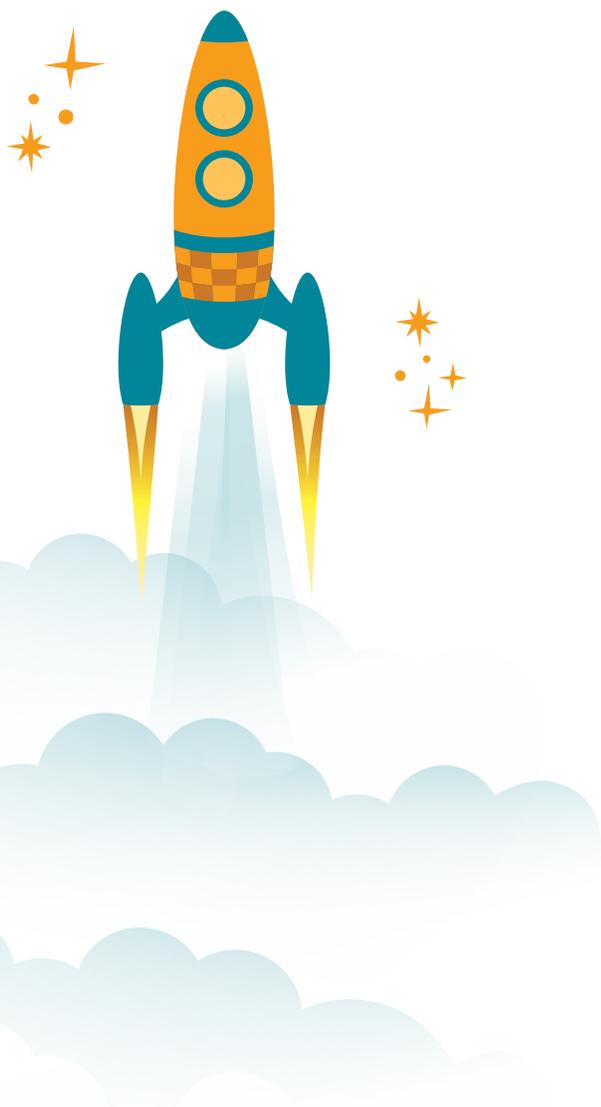
*\*In this report, "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably.*

**FORT WORTH METRO AREA, 2014**  
TOTAL CHILD POPULATION  
**626,319**



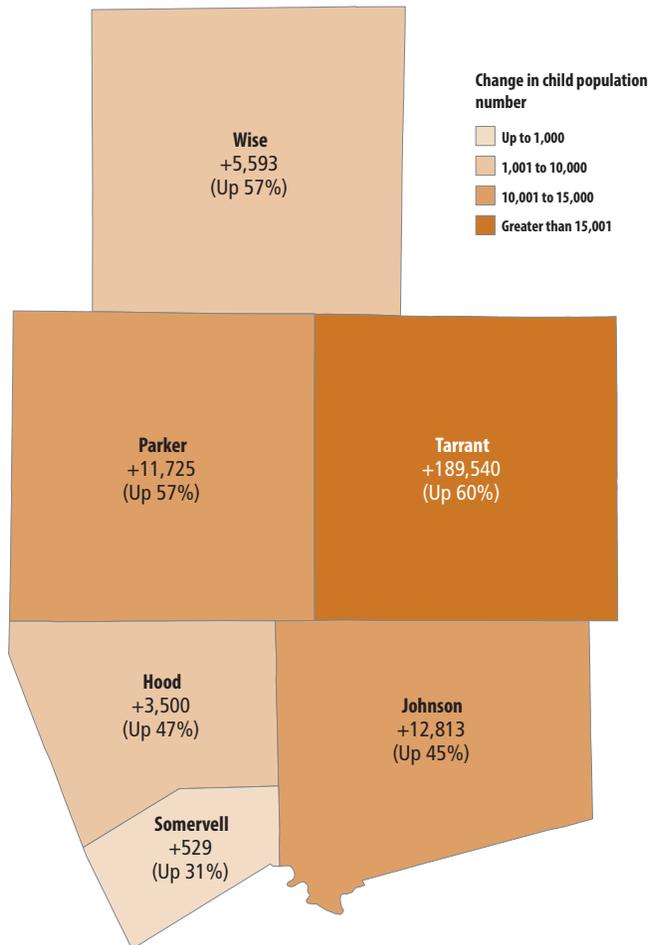
**OUTLYING COUNTIES (HOOD, JOHNSON, PARKER, SOMERVELL, WISE), 2014**  
TOTAL CHILD POPULATION  
**100,236**





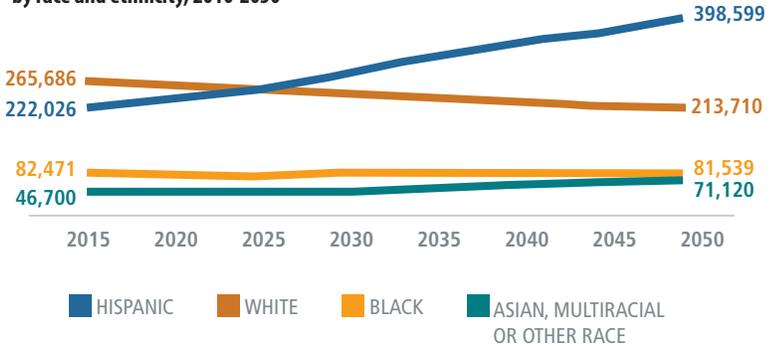
**THE PAST:** Tarrant county has experienced the *largest* growth in child population in the Fort Worth area (number), while Parker county has experienced the *fastest* growth (percent).

Fort Worth metro area growth in the child population from 1990-2010<sup>4</sup>



**THE FUTURE:** Across the eight-county metro area, children of color will represent the future workforce of Fort Worth.

Fort Worth metro area child population projections by race and ethnicity, 2010-2050<sup>5</sup>



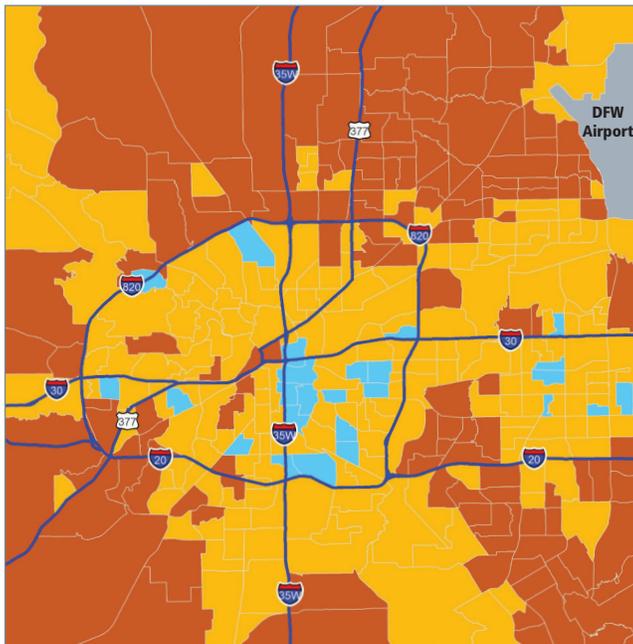
# PLACE, RACE & POVERTY

Like many Texas cities, Fort Worth has a history of segregating places where children live, play and learn. During the 1950s, when Black families tried to purchase homes in all-White neighborhoods, they experienced violence, intimidation and threats. Officials built highways through Black neighborhoods, destroying homes, decreasing property values and isolating neighborhoods. Public spaces like the Fort Worth Zoo, municipal golf courses and parks were available to Black residents only one day a year, for Juneteenth celebrations. When Black residents advocated for access to municipal pools, public outcry was so great that the city council offered to build additional pools for Black residents in exchange for their agreement to not use "White" pools.<sup>6</sup>

The Fort Worth area is also home to early resistance against school desegregation efforts. When the Mansfield School District outside the city was ordered by a federal court to allow Black students to enroll, groups of White citizens violently protested and prevented the students from enrolling.<sup>7</sup> Schools remained segregated long after Brown vs Board of Education, with conflicts around the implementation of busing, magnet programs and other integration efforts continuing for decades.<sup>8</sup>

This history has had cumulative effects, in both the educational and economic benefits and disadvantages that can be passed on from generation to

**Fort Worth has areas of racial, ethnic and income diversity, but children of color are more likely to live in the highest-poverty areas.<sup>13</sup>**



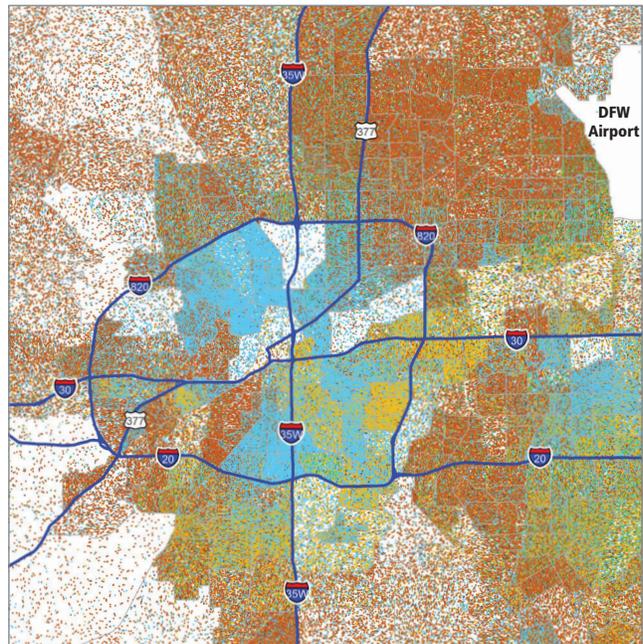
**Tarrant County Total Poverty Rate by Census Tract, 2010-2014**



generation. These policies and practices may be from Fort Worth's past, but they still have a profound effect on the present. Current policies and practices do not undo past injustices, and barriers in housing, employment and education contribute to far too many children living in poverty and troubling disparities by race and ethnicity. Today, one of every three Hispanic and Black children in Tarrant County lives in poverty.<sup>9</sup>

Despite its past, Fort Worth is relatively more integrated and prosperous than several peer cities. For example, Fort Worth has lower levels of racial and income segregation than Dallas. Research shows that having less racial and income segregation in a place is better for the economic mobility of its residents, and having more racial and income segregation is worse for the chances of escaping poverty. In fact, the data show that children in Fort Worth have slightly improved prospects of moving up the income ladder than their peers in Dallas.<sup>10</sup>

However, worrying trends present themselves when analyzing the share of children who live in high-poverty neighborhoods. Research has found that living in a high-poverty area during childhood isolates children from resources and opportunities and can have lifelong effects.<sup>11</sup> Twenty-six percent of children in Fort Worth live in high-poverty neighborhoods, up nine percentage points in just five years, and 19 percent of children in Arlington live in high-poverty neighborhoods, up 12 percentage points over the same time period. **Although the share of Fort Worth children living in high-poverty neighborhoods is still lower than cities like Dallas, Houston and Austin, the rates have increased faster in Fort Worth and Arlington than in other Texas cities.<sup>12</sup>**



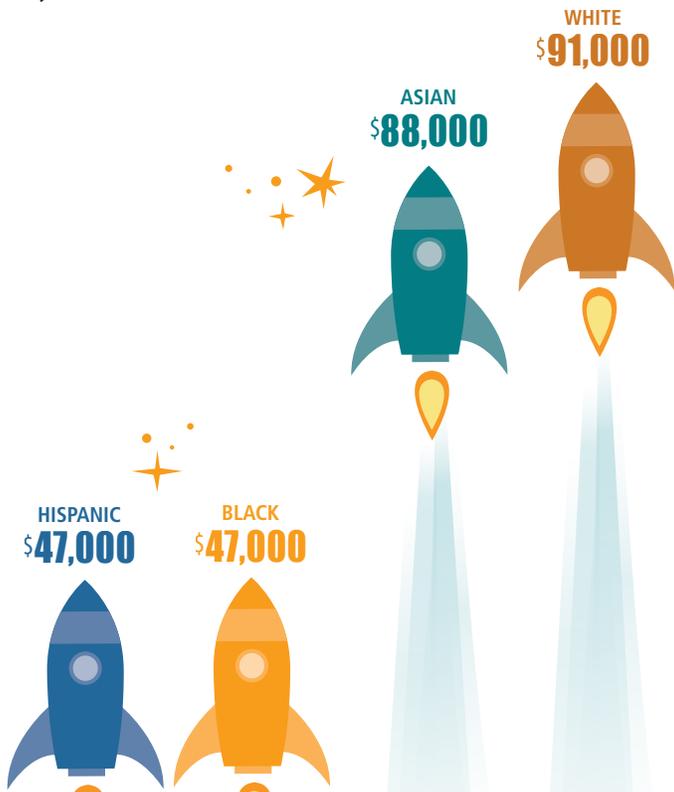
**Tarrant County Child Population by Race/Ethnicity Census Tracts, 2010 (dot = 1 child)**



Other factors like family structure and gender also influence the likelihood of living in poverty. Tarrant County's single-parent families are more likely to live in poverty than married-couple families, and those poverty rates for single parents differ by gender and race. Single-mother families in Tarrant County are nearly twice as likely to live in poverty as single-father families. Nearly half of single-mother families who are Hispanic live in poverty, compared to 22 percent of single-mother families who are White.<sup>14</sup> Nearly one in three children in Tarrant County lives with a single parent.<sup>15</sup>

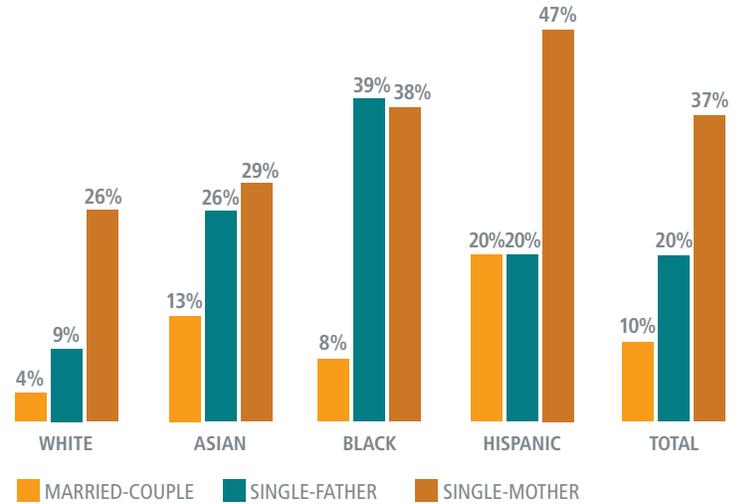
### Asian and White households with children in Tarrant County generally have much greater financial resources.

Median income of Tarrant County households with children, by race of household head, 2014<sup>17</sup>



### Poverty is most likely to affect children in families headed by Hispanic single mothers, but one in five Hispanic married-couple families live in poverty.

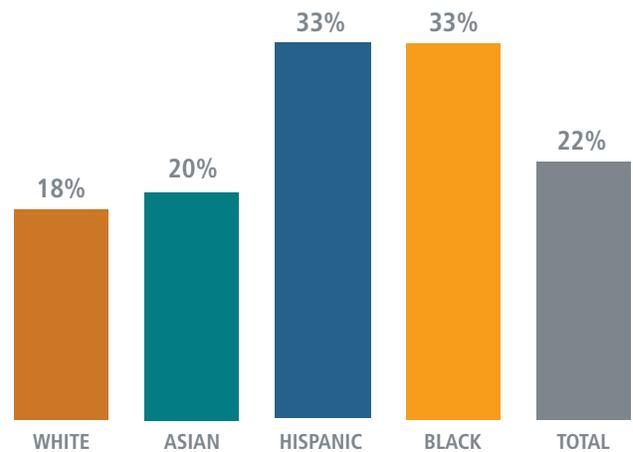
Poverty rate, by family type and race/ethnicity, Tarrant County, 2014<sup>16</sup>



Note: Differences between single-father and single-mother poverty rates for Asian and Black families are not statistically significant. Differences between White, Asian and Black single-mother family poverty rates are not statistically significant.

### Tarrant County's child poverty rates are far too high, with wide disparities by race and ethnicity.

Tarrant County child poverty rates, 2014<sup>18</sup>



Note: Differences between White and Asian child poverty rates are not statistically significant.

# HEALTH

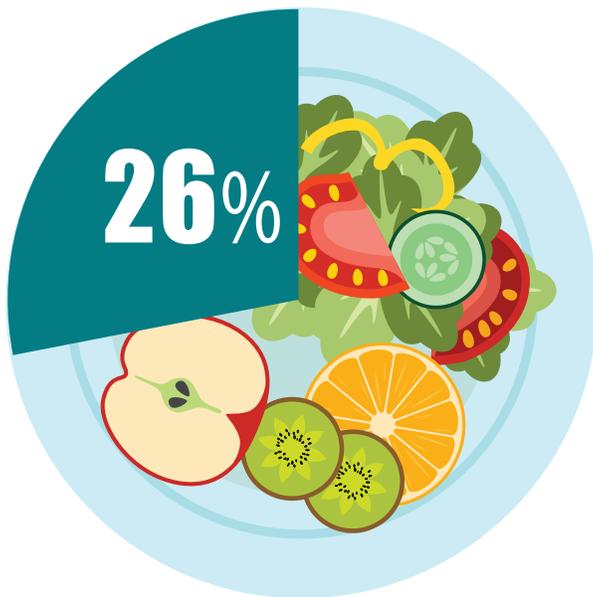
Race, place and poverty also affect children’s health. Raising healthy children is about more than just encouraging kids to eat vegetables and exercise. Health is also about making sure all kids, across race, ethnicity, language or family income, can access healthy meals regularly, live in safe environments, receive preventive health care, and see a doctor when they need to.

## Food insecurity

An estimated 26 percent of children (or 130,880 children) in Tarrant County are food-insecure, meaning they lack consistent access to enough food for a healthy diet.<sup>19</sup> Food insecurity is a symptom of economic instability. When families struggle financially, too often little money is left for food, increasing the chance that kids go hungry. When growing children lack essential nutrients, they can experience delays in physical, intellectual and emotional growth.<sup>20</sup> Hungry children have a harder time focusing in school and are more likely to have social and behavioral problems.<sup>21</sup> Research shows Black and Hispanic children in Texas have rates of food insecurity exceeding 30 percent.<sup>22</sup>

### Twenty-six percent of children in Tarrant County lack consistent access to adequate food.

Rate of child food insecurity in Tarrant County, 2013<sup>23</sup>

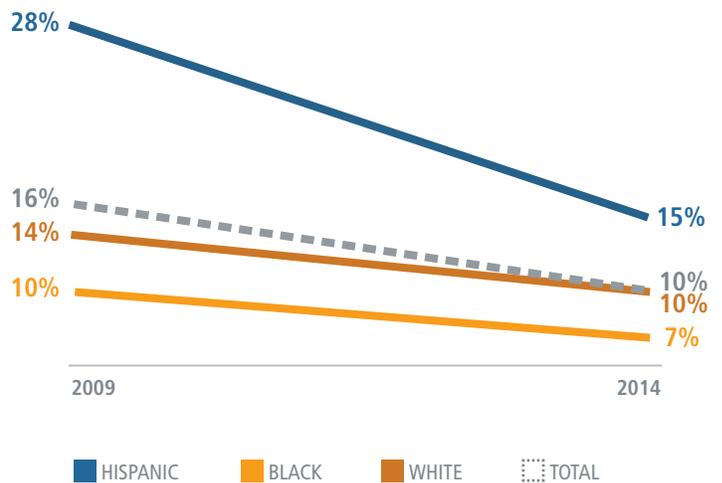


## Access to health care

Consistent access to health care begins with adequate health insurance coverage. Health coverage for children has improved in Tarrant County and improved the most for Hispanic children.<sup>24</sup> However, Hispanic children are still the most likely to be uninsured.<sup>25</sup> One barrier is jobs that do not offer affordable insurance to families.<sup>26</sup> Hispanic children are the least likely to be covered through their parents’ employers even though their parents have employment rates similar to, or even higher than other racial/ethnic groups.<sup>27</sup> Research shows that expanding coverage to low-income parents could improve rates even more.<sup>28</sup>

### Uninsured rates for Latino children in Tarrant County have improved markedly, but they remain the least likely to have health insurance.

Tarrant County child uninsured rates by race/ethnicity, 2009-2014<sup>29</sup>



*Note: Data on uninsured rates for Asian children were not statistically reliable and therefore not reported. Difference between 2009 and 2014 uninsured rates for Black children is not statistically significant.*

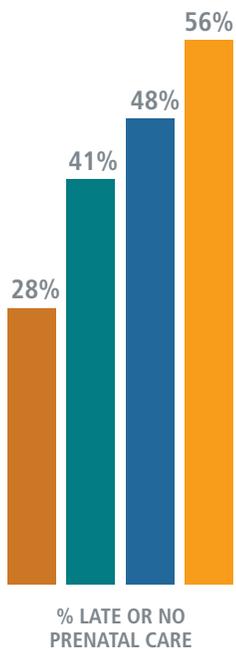
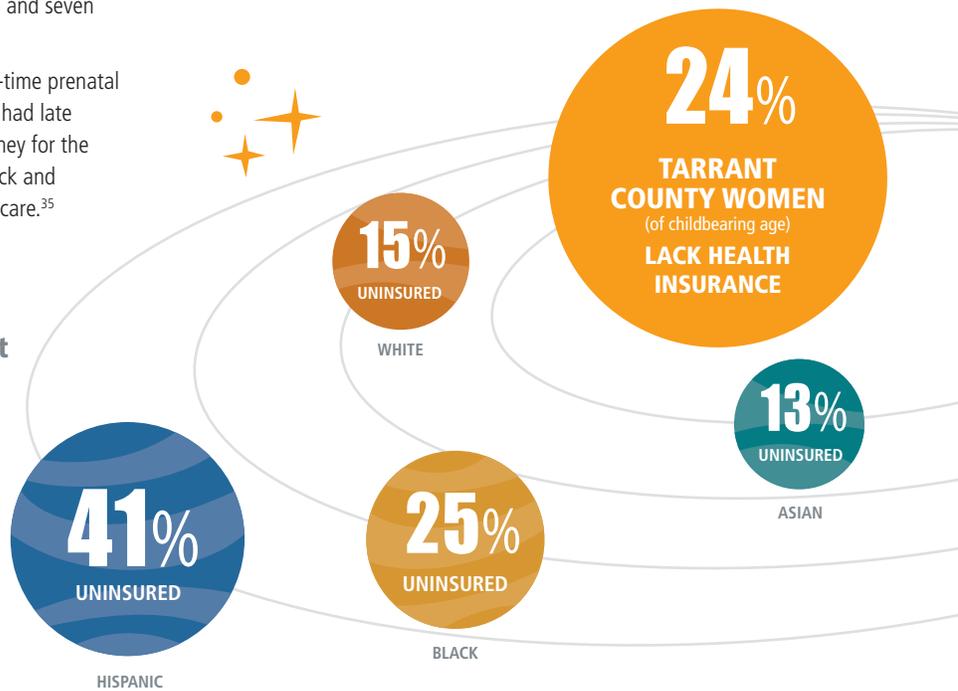
## Maternal and infant health

**Overall health and health care access for women before, during and after pregnancy is critical to babies' health.** Nearly one of every four women (100,000+) in Tarrant County between the ages of 15 and 44 lacks health insurance.<sup>30</sup> The likelihood of being uninsured as a woman of childbearing age differs based on race and ethnicity<sup>31</sup> and can lead to delayed or inconsistent care should a woman become pregnant.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, many women who are most vulnerable – the homeless – are women of childbearing age. Most recent data show at least 409 women of childbearing age (14-46) in Tarrant County are living in shelters or transitional housing programs, many caring for children and living with both physical and mental health conditions. Fifty-nine percent of these women were Black, 40 percent White and seven percent Hispanic.<sup>33</sup>

The lack of insurance is one factor in whether women access on-time prenatal care. The most common barriers reported by Texas mothers who had late or no prenatal care are being uninsured, not having enough money for the appointment, and not being able to book an appointment.<sup>34</sup> Black and Hispanic mothers are most likely to have late access to prenatal care.<sup>35</sup>

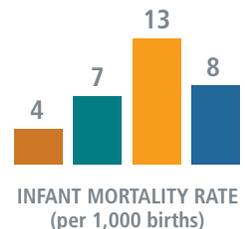
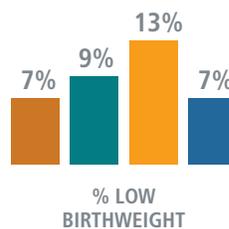
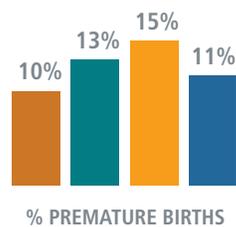
The likelihood of being born preterm or at low birthweight also differs by race and ethnicity. Although many infants born preterm or at low birthweight grow up to be healthy, these two risk factors can both increase the risk of physical and cognitive developmental delays.<sup>36</sup> In Tarrant County, Black infants are most likely to be born prematurely or at low birthweight.<sup>37</sup> Research shows that chronic stress experienced by mothers increases the risk of low birthweight and preterm births,<sup>38</sup> and that even very young children can experience high levels of stress that affect their development.<sup>39</sup> Prematurity and low birthweight can increase the risk of physical and cognitive development delays and are also a risk factor in infant mortality.<sup>40</sup>

**Many women in Tarrant County of childbearing age (ages 15-44) are uninsured and lack access to important preconception and prenatal care.<sup>41</sup>**



**Black infants in Tarrant County are at higher risk for premature births, low birthweight and death.**

**Tarrant County Infant Health Indicators, 2013<sup>42</sup>**  
(Percentage or rate out of total live births in each racial/ethnic category)



WHITE ASIAN, MULTIRACIAL OR OTHER RACE BLACK HISPANIC

# EDUCATION

Every kid in Fort Worth deserves an education that helps her reach her full potential. And we know that different students need different resources and supports to be successful. However, today our education system often struggles to provide equitable opportunities for all children, threatening their futures and our collective economic security.

Race, ethnicity and economic need in schools are strongly connected and tend to follow patterns of residential segregation and poverty concentration constructed by decades of policy choices and individual behaviors.<sup>43</sup>

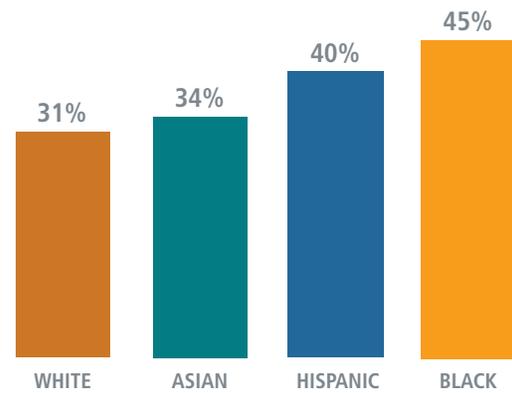
## School funding matters for Fort Worth kids.

Texas' school finance does not adequately fund public education. **The majority of school funding comes from local property taxes that are generated based on the value of property within school districts.** That means school districts that include homes or businesses with high property values can generate more tax money than school districts that include homes or businesses with lower property values. More financial resources mean better compensation, development and support of teachers and staff, and better access to materials and equipment like books, science labs, art, music and technology. And because property values are lower in poorer neighborhoods, tax rates are often higher, in order to make up the difference. The three ISDs with the highest property wealth in Tarrant County serve a student population that is 52 percent White, 24 percent Latino and 11 percent Black, while the three ISDs with the lowest property wealth serve a student population that is 63 percent Latino, 20 percent Black and 15 percent White.<sup>44</sup>

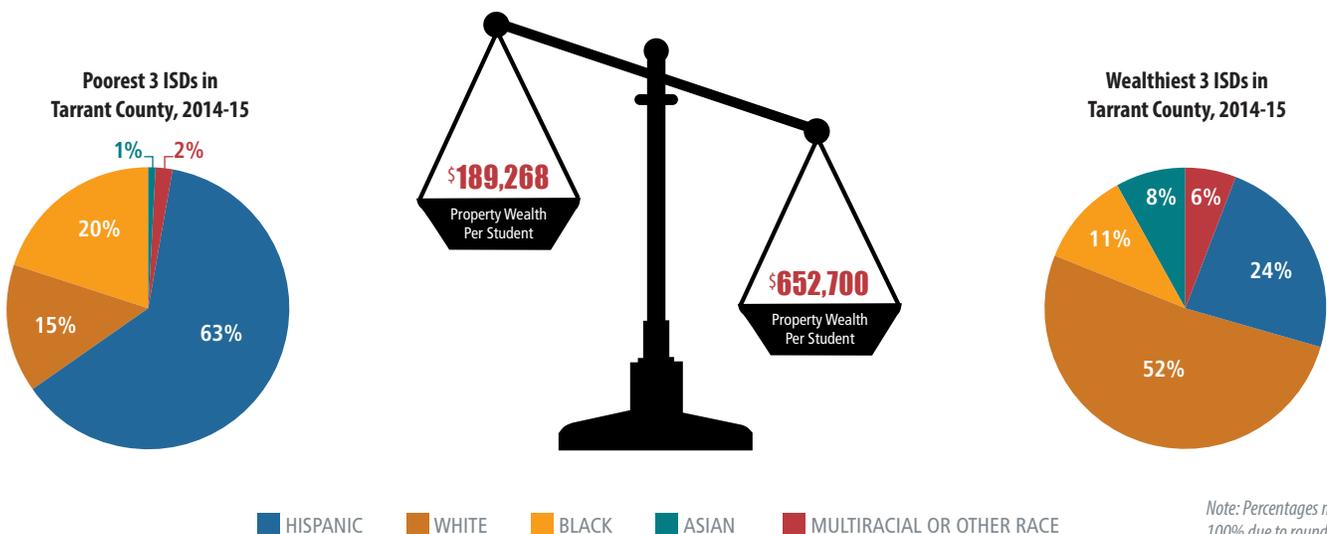
Two issues related to school funding tend to disproportionately affect Black and Hispanic students: instability in a school's teacher workforce and teacher experience. Unstable staffing can negatively affect school climate,<sup>45</sup> educational performance,<sup>46</sup> and school finances.<sup>47</sup> Schools with high turnover rates result in a larger share of first-year teachers.<sup>48</sup> Although first-year teachers may be effective, they tend to be less effective than non-first-year teachers in increasing student achievement in math and reading.<sup>49</sup>

## Teacher instability is most likely to affect Black students in Tarrant County.

**Tarrant County students attending schools with more than 20 percent teacher turnover, 2014-15<sup>50</sup>**



## Property wealth varies among Tarrant County's school districts, so the state must help provide more equitable funding.<sup>51</sup>



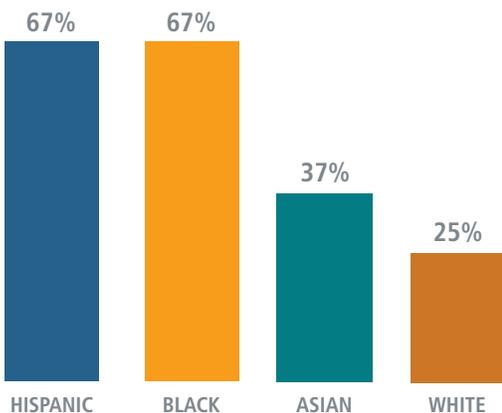
*Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.*

## Race, Ethnicity and economic need are connected in Tarrant County's public schools.

Race, ethnicity and economic need in schools are strongly connected and tend to follow patterns of residential segregation and poverty concentration constructed by decades of policy choices and individual behaviors.<sup>52</sup> Racial and income segregation are connected to inequitable school resources and academic opportunities.<sup>53</sup> Although teachers of varying levels of experience and effectiveness teach across schools,<sup>54</sup> research shows that, in general, students in high-poverty schools have worse access to consistently effective teaching throughout their schools. High-poverty schools also serve more students who are more likely to face out-of-school challenges that create barriers to learning, such as housing instability,<sup>55</sup> food insecurity,<sup>56</sup> and lack of access to health care.<sup>57</sup> Hispanic and Black students are still more likely to be enrolled in districts that are disproportionately low-income, where more than 60 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch.<sup>58</sup>

### Hispanic and Black students in Tarrant County are more likely to be enrolled in disproportionately low-income school districts.

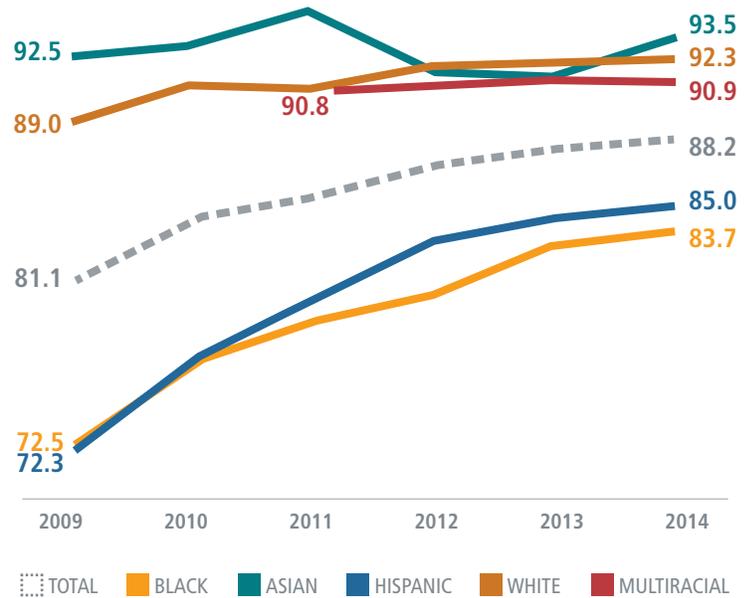
Share of Tarrant County students enrolled in disproportionately low-income school districts, 2014-15<sup>60</sup>  
(Districts with >60% students qualifying for free/reduced lunch)



Although low-income students face additional barriers, high-poverty districts can and do perform well for low-income, Latino and Black students. One important indicator of educational achievement is high school graduation. There are many measures of high school success but under any measure, districts in Tarrant County have improved graduation rates for nearly all racial and ethnic groups of students. But as the data show, we can still do more to support the success of Hispanic and Black students throughout Tarrant County.<sup>59</sup>

### Districts in Tarrant County have made progress on supporting high school graduation but still need to close the gaps for Hispanic and Black students.

Tarrant County High School Completion Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2009-2014<sup>61</sup>



\*Note: In 2009 and 2010, data are for "Asian/Pacific Islander"

## CONCLUSION

The Fort Worth area can be a place where every child has the basic building blocks—health, education and financial security—to reach his or her full potential. Accomplishing this depends on enacting smart public policies and practices that develop the capabilities in all kids.

Equity in child well-being—by race, ethnicity, income and gender—should be a value reflected by our decisions and a common goal. Fort Worth has long reflected an ability to adapt and create opportunities as the city grows: from its founding as a military outpost, to its development as a transportation center for the cattle industry, and its status as a world-class city today.

Fort Worth can continue to create opportunity by not only creating strong, equity-focused policies at the local level, but also using its experience and influence to ensure that legislators support policies that promote equity for children and families at the state level.

By raising the bar and closing the gaps in child well-being across race, ethnicity, income and gender, Fort Worth can capitalize on the strengths of its diverse child population, keeping it one of the most dynamic cities in the U.S.

*This report was authored by Jennifer Lee, Research Associate, and Bo La Sohn, Research and Planning Intern, as part of Texas Kids Count, a project of the Center for Public Policy Priorities. Maps created by Kate Vickery. The research was funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Boone Family Foundation, North Texas Community Foundation and Early Learning Alliance. For endnotes and sources, visit CPPP.org/kidscount.*



# ENDNOTES

1. We generally use the term "White" for "Non-Hispanic White" or "Anglo" and "Black" for "Black" or "African-American." "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably as a separate category, mutually exclusive of the racial categories "White" and "Black."
2. Center for Public Policy Priorities analysis of child population data. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>. Total Child Population. <http://bit.ly/1pFYUu4> Metropolitan areas are defined by the Office of Management and Budget and contain a core urban area of at least 50,000 population and adjacent counties with a high degree of social and economic integration with the urban core. For more information and current delineations, visit <http://www.census.gov/population/metro/>
3. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center. Child Population by race/ethnicity. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6417-child-population-by-race-ethnicity?loc=45&loct=5#detailed/2/any/false/36,868,867,133,38/2728,2159,2157,2663,2161/13312>
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5. Texas State Data Center. (2014). 2014 Population projections data downloads. [Data file]. <http://osd.texas.gov/Data/TPEPP/Projections/>
6. Selker, R.F. (2016). A history of Fort Worth in Black and White: 165 years of African-American life. Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press. See also Cannon, T. N. (2009). *Cowtown and the color line* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Texas Christian University, Fort Worth.
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9. Center for Public Policy Priorities analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates). Table C17001B and C17001I.
10. Chetty, R., Hendren, N., Kline, P., & Saez, E. (Jan 2014). Where is the land of opportunity? The geography of intergenerational mobility in the U.S. Full study: Quarterly Journal of Economics 129(4): 1553-1623, 2014 Executive Summary: <http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/images/Geography%20Executive%20Summary%20and%20Memo%20January%202014.pdf>
11. Galster, G. (2010). The mechanism(s) of neighborhood effects. [http://clas.wayne.edu/multimedia/usercontent/File/Geography%20and%20Urban%20Planning/G.Galster\\_St\\_AndrewsSeminar-Mechanisms\\_of\\_neigh\\_effects-Galster\\_2-23-10.pdf](http://clas.wayne.edu/multimedia/usercontent/File/Geography%20and%20Urban%20Planning/G.Galster_St_AndrewsSeminar-Mechanisms_of_neigh_effects-Galster_2-23-10.pdf)
12. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center. Children living in high poverty areas. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6795-children-living-in-high-poverty-areas?loc=45&loct=2#detailed/3/55,59-60,64,89,107,9429/false/1485,1376,1201,1074,880/any/13891,13892>. This indicator defines "high-poverty" as census tracts with overall poverty rates of 30 percent or more.
13. Center for Public Policy Priorities analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates) Table DP03 (poverty rates) and 2010 Decennial Census, Summary File 1, Table PCT12H – PCT12O (child population data by race/ethnicity). "Lower-poverty" refers to poverty rates less than ten percent; "moderate-to-high poverty" refers to poverty rates between ten and 40 percent; "highest-poverty" refers to poverty rates higher than 40 percent.
14. Center for Public Policy Priorities analysis of 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B17010, B17010I, B17010H, B17010D, B17010B.
15. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center. Children in single-parent families. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/3059-children-in-single-parent-families?loc=45&loct=5#detailed/5/6515-6768/false/1485,1376,1201,1074,1000/any/8192,8193>
16. Center for Public Policy Priorities analysis of 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B17010, B17010I, B17010H, B17010D, B17010B.
17. Center for Public Policy Priorities analysis of 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample.
18. Center for Public Policy Priorities analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates). Table C17001, C17001A, C17001B, C17001D and C17001I.
19. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center. Child food insecurity. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7889-child-food-insecurity?loc=45&loct=5#detailed/2/any/false/36,868,867,133/any/15218,15219>
20. Child Trends Databank. (2014). Food Insecurity. <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=foodinsecurity>
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22. Population Reference Bureau analysis of Census, CPS, 3-year average from 2012, 2013, 2014 Food Security Supplements.
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25. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center. Children without health insurance by race and ethnicity. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7757-children-without-health-insurance-by-race-and-ethnicity?loc=45&loct=2#detailed/2/45/false/869,36,868,867,133/10,11,9,12,1,185,13/14951,14952>
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