

# Years after the Great Recession began, America's children are finally emerging from its shadow, new report says

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America's children are starting to recover from the worst effects of the Great Recession, although some ill effects still linger, says a comprehensive new report on child well-being from Duke University.

"Overall child and youth well-being has returned to levels near those attained in 2007 and 2008, before the Great Recession had its negative impacts," said the [report](#)'s lead author, Kenneth Land, an emeritus professor of sociology at Duke.

The Duke Child Well-Being Index Report looks at how U.S. [children](#) fared in seven areas: family economic well-being, risky behaviors, social relationships, emotional/spiritual well-being, community engagement, educational attainment and health. The report, produced annually each year since 2004, tracks child welfare trends over recent decades starting with a benchmark year of 1975.

The report draws upon the U.S. Census as well as data from the Center for Disease Control's National Center for Health Statistics, the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice, the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the national Monitoring the Future study.

The newest results suggest the Great Recession cast a lingering shadow over child well-being for several years after it ended. The economic

downturn lasted for 18 months, from December 2007 through June 2009, but the [recession](#)'s effect on children continued from 2009 through 2012. Overall child well-being began showing improvement in 2013, six years after the recession started.

Not surprisingly, the recession's biggest effect on children was economic. Parental employment and income dropped and remained depressed through the end of 2012 before showing some improvement. Child poverty rates, which worsened immediately after the recession, have been slower to improve and remained high in 2014.

The recession also had some less obvious indirect effects.

For instance, preschool enrollment dropped during and just after the recession years. The dip was likely due to cutbacks in funding of public preschool programs, the report states.

And while the overall effect of the recession on children was negative, there were also a few surprising bright spots. During and immediately after the recession, fewer [young people](#) reported committing or being victimized by violent crimes. Young people may have been less involved in crime in those years in part because they spent more time at home, the authors suggest.

Also, despite the recession, the numbers of people aged 25-29 who have earned a bachelor's degree continued to climb.

Health insurance coverage for children provided another bright spot, the report states. The numbers of children living in families with [health insurance](#) climbed steadily beginning in 2007. By 2013, nearly 93 percent of children lived in families with health insurance. The increase in coverage can be traced to the expansion of the state Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, and to the 2010 implementation of the

Affordable Care Act, the report states. The availability of health insurance for families helped to cushion the recession's effects on children, the authors state.

Provided by Duke University

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