

Tools to Help Count Foster Children and Homeless Children

Children in foster care and homeless children are at particularly high risk of being missed in the 2020 census. We have therefore prepared a fact sheet on counting foster children and a fact sheet on counting homeless children.

The best way to get the foster care fact sheet in the hands of foster parents may be to ask your state child welfare agency to have all its contractors that manage foster families to send their families this fact sheet. Accordingly, we have drafted a letter for you to send your state agency asking them to do this. Alternatively, you could send this request and the fact sheet directly to major service agencies managing foster care caseloads.

Similarly, the best way to make sure that homeless families are counted is probably to get the homeless fact sheet to organizations that serve homeless families. Please consider sharing this letter with your state's agency serving the homeless, with homeless advocates, and [with your state's schools' homeless coordinators](#).

Your organization's name

(insert logo/letterhead)

Date

Addressee name

Address

Dear (insert name),

Every 10 years our country counts everyone living in the United States. This census of the population will take place in 2020. Everyone is asked to complete a simple questionnaire that asks for basic information about the people who live or stay in their home. Children under the age of five, however, are often missed, and foster children are particularly likely to be missed.

We are writing to ask your assistance in helping us get the best possible count of children in the 2020 Census. Research has found that respondents often neglect to include young children, especially foster children, when they respond to the census. When young children are missed their communities lose critical resources that children and their families depend on for the next 10 years—basically, an entire childhood. Knowing how many children there are and where they live is essential to getting their fair share of funds for services such as foster care and adoption assistance, child care, schools, food assistance, Head Start, housing support, children's health insurance and more.

Some respondents may not understand that children are a critical part of the census. It may not be clear to foster families that they should be including all foster children living or staying with them on April 1st on their household's census questionnaire. To help improve the 2020 Census count, we would like you to distribute the attached fact sheet to all foster care parents in your area, reminding them to include their foster children when they respond to the 2020 Census.

If you have questions about counting children in the 2020 Census, visit 2020census.gov or contact Deborah Stein, Partnership for America's Children, at (202) 290-1816.

Regards,

[name]

Count Everyone Living In Your Home In The 2020 Census, Including Foster Children

What is the 2020 Census?

Every 10 years everyone living in the United States gets counted in the census. In March of 2020 all households across the country will receive an invitation to respond to the 2020 Census. Your response helps make sure that more than \$675 billion in federal funds is directed each year to the right places to support education, health care, firefighting services and more.

Who is included in the census?

The census counts every person living in the United States regardless of their age or immigration status. When you respond to the census you should include all persons living or staying with you as of April 1, 2020. This includes any foster children living with you, even briefly, as well as infants, children, and newborn babies, grandparents, and persons who aren't related to you. It is important to remember that everyone living in a household, temporarily or permanently, relative or friend, needs to be included in the 2020 Census. When everyone is counted in the census, our communities are accurately funded and represented for the next decade.

Does the census really count children?

Yes, it is critical to count all children living in the United States. Babies, infants, and the very youngest children are often missed in the census. Some people think the census is only for adults. But census numbers determine which areas qualify for critical resources that these young children and their families need including foster care and adoption assistance, food assistance programs, Head Start, childcare, housing support, public schools, early intervention services for children with special needs, children's health insurance, and more. Knowing how many children there are and where they live is essential to getting those services and programs to them.

What about foster children?

Research found that a high proportion of young children living with foster families were missed in the 2010 Census. If you have a foster child living with you on April 1, 2020, you should include them on your census form. It is important for foster children to be counted where they were living on April 1, 2020. *If the foster child is also a relative of the person filling out the form, you should identify them as the relative, not as a foster child. For example, if your foster child is your grandchild, identify them as your grandchild.*

Where can I learn more about the 2020 Census?

You can learn more about the 2020 Census by visiting 2020census.gov.