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Child Well-Being Improves in Chicago, But Work Remains, Report Says

"Chicago Kids Count" highlights education, family support, health data

CHICAGO – Chicago's neighborhoods and the children who live in them have seen improvements in recent years. But far too many children do not have equal opportunities when it comes to education, safe and healthy environments and secure families with adequate incomes, according to the new "Chicago Kids Count 2004: Building Strong Communities" report released Tuesday, Jan. 20, by Voices for Illinois Children.

More than 150 people representing neighborhood organizations, service providers, advocacy groups, educators and state and local government attended the report's release at National-Louis University, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago.

The report and companion web site at www.voices4kids.org/chicagokidscount.htm examine data in Chicago's 77 community areas and highlight solutions and innovative programs that are making a difference. The web site features data profiles for each community area and a searchable database of statistics.

"While the quality of life for many Chicago children is improving, there are challenges ahead," Voices' President Jerry Stermer said. "Not all children are progressing at the same pace and accessing the same opportunities. There are disparities by race and ethnicity, income and geography that need to be addressed."

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"Chicago Kids Count" highlights include:

- **Thousands of children struggle to finish school.** Communities that experienced the highest dropout rate – where more than 30 percent of the class did not graduate – are scattered through the southern half of the city. One way to help ensure academic success is to provide high-quality early childhood education for young children. Chicago's under-5 population has shifted from 1996 to 2000, with growth in the Southeast, Southwest and Northwest sides.
- **Welfare dependence has fallen dramatically, but more families are relying on income supports such as Medicaid, food stamps and subsidized child care.** The number of children receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families has fallen 75 percent citywide, while use of subsidized child care increased 76 percent, with the biggest jumps on the South and West sides.
- **Shifts in child population have significant implications for service providers.** Communities on the Southwest and Northwest sides saw the biggest booms in child population from 1990 to 2000. Since 2000, three communities that have been most affected by the Chicago Housing Authority's elimination of public housing high-rises – Douglas, Grand Boulevard and Washington Park – have seen a 30 percent decrease in the number of 6-year-olds.

"We have to be constantly mindful of shifts in community dynamics and how we respond," said Reginald Jones, executive director of the Steans Family Foundation, which targets its funding to North Lawndale and is profiled in the report. "We look prospectively at future challenges and

how we can create funding challenges that will be responsive."

"Chicago Kids Count 2004" also examines childhood lead poisoning, exposure to violence, family poverty and the use of Medicaid and food stamps, among other statistics.

"We need to make our communities strong for kids," Stermer said. "If we believe each child deserves to reach his or her full potential, then it will take all of us – parents, relatives, teachers, neighbors, doctors, coaches – working together to support families and their children. And that will bring a better future for us all."

"Chicago Kids Count 2004" was funded by the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. It is a companion to Voices for Illinois Children's annual "Illinois Kids Count" report that examines data at the county level. Voices produced its first "Chicago Kids Count" report 10 years ago.

"Chicago Kids Count 2004" – featuring a searchable database of statistics and individual data pages for all 77 community areas – is available at www.voices4kids.org/chicagokidscount.htm. To receive a printed copy, contact Belia Ortega at 312-516-5567 or bortega@voices4kids.org.

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Overview and Key Findings

"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

There are more than 750,000 children in Chicago, or one out of every four children in Illinois

Chicago is known as a city of neighborhoods. These local communities weave a fabric of support for the families who make their homes there. They are places where children grow and learn, parents work and neighbors come together to solve problems. Chicago's neighborhoods are home to more than 750,000 children under 18 or one out of every four children in Illinois. The role that communities and the people who live in them play in providing all children the opportunity to succeed cannot be underestimated.

Like the entire city, Chicago's child population is changing. This brings new challenges and new opportunities to broaden support of innovative programs that are working for kids. This report, coupled with the searchable online database of statistics at www.voices4kids.org/chicagokidscount.htm, attempts to capture the quality of life for children in each of the city's 77 community areas and highlights solutions that can be replicated.

As the data shows, Chicago's neighborhoods and the children who live in them have seen improvements. But far too many children do not have equal opportunities when it comes to education, safe and healthy environments and secure families with adequate incomes. Every child deserves to reach his or her full potential. For this to happen, their fundamental needs must be met. Parents certainly shoulder this responsibility, but relatives, neighbors, teachers, doctors, coaches, grandparents and many others all influence children and can help support parents so that they can do their job well. Data in this report and online are a resource to help Chicagoans respond to needs and changes, and to do what we can to improve the lives of all children.

Changes in Child Population

Chicago's child population held fairly steady from 1990 to 2000, but has started to shrink slightly. The city's birth rate of around 50,000 babies a year fell 1 percent from 2000 to 2001. And the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey reported Chicago experienced a 2 percent decline in children age 19 and younger from 2000 to 2002, a drop of 17,000. At the same time, the city gained 38,000 45- to 59-year-olds. Families with children are leaving the city—most likely for the suburbs, where suburban Cook County and the collar counties are seeing an increase in families with young children—while "empty nesters" are moving in.

Chicago's collar counties are seeing rapid growth in both the child population and the number of families with children. From 1990 to 2000, McHenry and Will counties reported more than 40 percent growth in both the child population and families with children. Kane and Lake counties experienced around 30 percent growth in both populations. The rate of growth was slower in DuPage County, which saw its child and family populations increase around 15 percent, and Cook County, which experienced less than 10 percent growth in both children and families, largely outside of Chicago.

Changes in child population also are occurring at the community level in Chicago. From 1990 to 2000, communities experiencing the biggest booms in total child population were largely clustered on the Southwest and Northwest sides, while the North Side, near West Side and South Sides experienced a decline (see map on page 29).

About 50,000 babies are born every year in Chicago

Service providers and policy-makers need to be aware of cultural differences among Chicago's diverse population, and to appreciate and build upon the strengths of the many different cultures represented

Since 2000, the handful of communities that have been most affected by the Chicago Housing Authority's elimination of public housing high-rises have seen significant drops in child population. For example, the Douglas, Grand Boulevard and Washington Park communities have seen a 30 percent or greater decrease in the number of 6-year-olds attending Chicago Public Schools from 2000 to 2002 (see map on page 30). Those children are largely moving to the Englewood, West Englewood and South Shore communities.

These shifts in child population have implications for the provision of services. As families move, their needs follow them—but service providers can't always respond as quickly. Population increases in a community will be accompanied by growth in the demand for services, while sudden drops in population can leave programs with a shrinking pool of clients who still need services. Organizations like the Chicago Youth Centers have had to close programs, including its site at Cabrini-Green, which had served families for 40 years.

Nearly half of Chicago children are African-American, more than a third are Hispanic and less than a fifth are white

These changes mean communities, service providers, policymakers and those who fund services must be mindful of demographic changes and responsive to the ebb and flow of needs. "We have to constantly be mindful of shifts in community dynamics and how we respond," said Reginald Jones, executive director of the Steans Family Foundation, which targets its funding to build assets in the North Lawndale community. "So we constantly look strategically at the types of programs we have implemented and the outcomes, but we also look prospectively at future challenges and how we can create funding strategies that will be responsive."

Like the city's neighborhoods, Chicago kids are a diverse bunch and are becoming even more so. According to the last Census, nearly half are African-American, more than a third are Hispanic and less than a fifth are white. The city's Hispanic child population grew 35 percent since 1990, reaching more than 290,000 children in 2000. Communities on the Northwest, Southwest and West sides have the highest concentrations of Hispanic children (see map on page 31). The rapid growth in the Hispanic child population has significant implications for service providers.

The Gage Park neighborhood on the city's Southwest Side saw its Hispanic population boom over the past decade. Rachel Carson Elementary School—whose students are 92 percent Hispanic—created a bilingual education program that helps students develop speaking, reading and writing competence in both English and Spanish.

"We have to constantly be mindful of shifts in community dynamics and how we respond."

–Reginald Jones, executive director of the Steans Family Foundation

About half of the staff is bilingual, including Principal Kathleen Mayer, who switches between the languages when talking with students, parents and staff.

"Cultural understanding facilitates communication and builds trust," Mayer said. "It's about relationships. All staff members—even those who don't speak Spanish—are culturally sensitive and make sure that they treat family members with respect."

These changes underscore the need to pay close attention to the needs of the growing population of Hispanic children and families. Service providers and policymakers need to be aware of cultural differences among Chicago's diverse population, and to appreciate and build upon the strengths of the many different cultures represented. And all children—no matter their racial or ethnic background—deserve the opportunity to succeed.

The three communities that have been most affected by the Chicago Housing Authority's elimination of public housing high-rises—Douglas, Grand Boulevard and Washington Park—have seen significant drops in child population

Meeting Children's Educational Needs

A good education—one that starts early, provides enriching learning opportunities and challenges young minds—is a key factor in helping children succeed. Children need to be active participants in the learning process, parents need to be involved in their child's learning beginning at birth and policymakers need to create and adequately fund an educational system that addresses all children's needs.

The years before a child enters kindergarten are a crucial time for development and learning. Babies develop learning skills in their first months and years by interacting with parents and caregivers. High-quality early childhood programs such as preschool, child care and Head Start provide children under 5 with the skills they need to do well in school. But shifts in the population of young children affect the demand for these services.

Chicago's under-5 population is holding fairly steady citywide, falling less than 1 percent from 1990 to 2000. But significant shifts have occurred within the city. Several South, West and North side communities reported a decline in the number of young children from 1996 to 2000. Growth occurred in the Southeast, Southwest and Northwest sides (see map on page 35).

"You have to believe kids can do better, and find the critical mass of adults—teachers, parents—who believe that, too."

–Kathleen Mayer, principal, Rachel Carson Elementary School

"Given the rapid population changes, programs need to be ready to make adjustments," said Tom Layman, executive director of the Metro Chicago Association for the Education of Young Children. "They need to be ready to move their locations, or at least start new sites more quickly than they used to. We can't establish sites with the idea that it's forever."

In 2001, Chicago Commons opened a fifth site for its early childhood education programs—the Paulo Freire Family Center in New City—just five blocks from another New City site to better meet the growing demand for infant and toddler care. Chicago Commons targets neighborhoods with the fewest resources where families need support. Each center reflects its community: photos of local children decorate the walls, most of the staff lives nearby and educational projects incorporate what's in the neighborhood.

Chicago's under-5 population is holding fairly steady citywide, but significant shifts have occurred within the city

"The children will do studies of animals they see in the neighborhood instead of taking a field trip far away to look at animals. Or they'll do a study of how hands work, and go through the neighborhood getting pictures of hands—working at a pizzeria, handling money in a store," said Karen Haigh, Chicago Commons' senior vice president/director of programs. "It's about making connections to the community."

Providing access to high-quality early childhood education lays a foundation for academic success. It's important that throughout their academic career children receive the skills and support they need to graduate from high school. Communities that experienced the highest dropout rate for the class of 2002—areas where more than 30 percent of the class did not complete school—are scattered through the southern half of the city (see map on page 36). The citywide dropout rate for the class of 2002 was 24.2 percent.

> High-quality early childhood programs such as preschool, child care and Head Start provide children under 5 with the skills they need to do well in school

Rachel Carson Elementary School's recipe for success is based on high expectations of students, dedicated faculty and staff and involved parents. The school is 99 percent low-income and 92 percent Hispanic; two-thirds of students start school speaking little or no English. Yet the school's standardized test results meet or exceed national averages. One key factor is that the school is a resource for parents, helping them find the services they need.

"You have to believe kids can do better, and find the critical mass of adults—teachers, parents—who believe that, too," Principal Mayer said. "But if your families don't have medical services and a child needs glasses, we cannot be successful. The family needs jobs and support services. Social issues definitely affect students."

Chicago teens who are pregnant or have a baby can get support for staying in school through Christopher House's "Partners in Progress" program, offered in several North and West side communities. Seventy percent of participants are enrolled in an educational program or have graduated, program Director Sara Manewith said. The program also offers onsite G.E.D. classes and provides free transportation and child care for young moms who participate.

"This high-risk population continues to need community-based supports such as prenatal care and birthing assistance, home visits, peer support groups and academic assistance," she said.

> The citywide dropout rate for the class of 2002 was 24.2 percent for the entire City of Chicago

Keeping Children Safe and Healthy

Providing a safe environment—at home, at school, in parks and neighborhoods—not only allows children to lead happy and healthy lives, it contributes to success in school. Exposure to violence and environmental hazards are among the factors that negatively impact the safety of children.

Lead-based paint often found in old homes poses a threat to children if they breathe or ingest lead dust. Lead poisoning can have a severe effect on children's developing brains—learning disabilities, behavioral problems, lowered intelligence, stunted growth and hearing loss. Illinois law requires children to be assessed for lead poisoning at least once before they begin school, although screening is highly recommended between ages 1 and 2 since early detection is the key to preventing damage (see map on page 37).

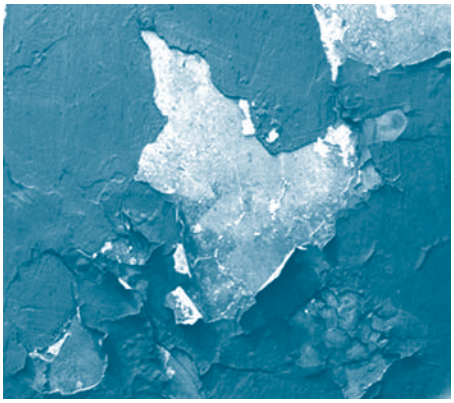
> Children exposed to violence, even as infants, can suffer from stress and develop aggressive behavior

Neighborhoods on Chicago's West and South sides have the greatest prevalence of children with elevated levels of lead in their blood (see map on page 38). Those neighborhoods are most affected because the housing tends to be deteriorated, said Anne Evens, director of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program for the Chicago Department of Public Health.

"Even if lead-based paint has been painted over, it can become exposed," she said. "When older windows open and close, friction deteriorates the paint and lead dust appears on the sills. If kids pull themselves up by the sills and then put their hands in their mouths, they can get lead poisoning. And when the windows are open, lead dust blows everywhere."

The Chicago Department of Public Health works to ensure children are tested for lead and parents and property owners are educated on the dangers of lead and ways to remove the hazard. The program provides grants to help low-income property owners make their homes lead safe.

Community based organizations, such as the Westside Health Authority's Lead Awareness and Prevention Project, also are addressing lead poisoning. The project trains residents to be lead sampling technicians who go door-to-door identifying homes with young children and determining the level of lead dust. Technicians provide information on cleaning and lead abatement and refer children under 6 for blood lead screenings, program Coordinator Casandra Alexander said.



> Neighborhoods on Chicago's West and South sides—where housing tends to be deteriorated—have the greatest prevalence of children with elevated levels of lead in their blood

Witnessing violence at home or in a neighborhood also has a harmful effect on growing children. Children exposed to violence, even as infants, can suffer from stress and develop aggressive behavior. Communities experiencing the greatest number of violent crimes—defined as criminal sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault/battery and murder—in 2002 include those on the South and West sides (see map on page 39).

"It is important that there be a universal understanding of what it means for children to be exposed to violence. They need intervention."

–Ann Parry, director of the Chicago Department of Public Health's Office of Violence Prevention

A number of initiatives are trying to combat both the effect of violence and youth involvement in crime or violence. A Chicago Safe Start pilot project is training those who respond to crimes—police, firefighters, emergency medical technicians and emergency room workers—to observe whether kids are present at the scene of a crime and to provide parents with information on the signs of exposure to violence and resources for help. The Shanti Foundation for Peace uses art to share messages of non-violence.

"It is important that there be a universal understanding of what it means for children to be exposed to violence," said Ann Parry, director of the Chicago Department of Public Health's Office of Violence Prevention. "They need intervention. There are things adults can and should do to support them."

Providing children and teens a safe place to go after school is another way to combat violence. The Chicago Youth Centers operate six after-school programs in neighborhoods with some of the city's highest rates of poverty.

"We're providing a safe, secure, nurturing environment for children during out-of-school time," said John Lee, senior vice president for operations. "It's during that period that children are most likely to get involved in all kinds of inappropriate activities. Considering the possibilities, we have this tremendous opportunity to contribute to the positive development of kids. Not just get them off the streets, but when they are in our care, how can we help them, what can we do to expose these young people to options that perhaps they would not be able to experience otherwise."

Lead poisoning can have a severe effect on children's developing brains

Communities experiencing the greatest number of violent crimes per square mile in 2002 include those on the South and West sides

Mayor Richard Daley has announced plans to expand the city's After School Matters program to double its enrollment and reach 14,000 teens in 36 neighborhoods by the end of the school year. His proposed fiscal year 2005 budget also includes another $1.2 million to expand programs that serve teens in the most vulnerable neighborhoods. It is important to expand the entire variety of out-of-school programs—offered at schools, community centers, parks, churches—to ensure that all children who want to participate are able to do so.

Supporting Families

Children do well when their families do well. And children who grow up poor are more likely to have a range of troubling outcomes: medical problems, developmental delays, learning difficulties. As they get older, they are more likely to drop out of school, have babies in their teens and be unemployed.

The South and West sides house the communities with the highest concentrations of families living in poverty (see map on page 41). These also are among the communities with the highest percentages of families headed by a single parent (see map on page 43). Children born to unmarried mothers are more likely to be poor and experience multiple living arrangements during childhood—factors associated with lower educational attainment and higher risk of teen childbearing. The growing situation of grandparents raising their grandchildren (see map on page 44) indicates a need for support services such as respite care, financial assistance, affordable housing and medical care.

Children who grow up poor are more likely to have a range of troubling outcomes: medical problems, developmental delays, learning difficulties

Simply having a job does not ensure greater family stability or entry into the middle class—working parents need support from programs such as subsidized child care, food stamps and Medicaid

Since federal welfare reform began, the number of Chicago children receiving help from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) declined by 75 percent from 1998 to 2003. Still, nearly 42,000 children continue to receive TANF. TANF dependency fell throughout the city, with the biggest drops on the North Side (see map on page 45).

A main reason for this decline is the requirement that welfare recipients work. And as the employment figures indicate (see maps on pages 46 and 47), a majority of Chicago families both with and without children are in the workforce.

Just because a family is no longer receiving TANF does not mean they have moved out of poverty or are able to pay for all the family's needs. Simply having a job does not ensure greater family stability or entry into the middle class. Thousands of low-income Chicago families struggle to make ends meet and need support from programs such as subsidized child care, food stamps, Medicaid and affordable housing initiatives.

Several programs provide much-needed support to families that are struggling financially:

- Subsidized child care helps working parents afford the high costs of care. For example, a single mother of two can receive assistance until she earns about $28,000 a year. Citywide, use of subsidized care has increased 76 percent, with the biggest increases in communities on the South and West sides (see map on page 48).

- The federal Food Stamp Program aims to reduce hunger and improve nutrition among low-income families. The program is an important support for families striving to pay for their basic needs. Use is highest in Chicago communities where there are also high rates of poverty (see map on page 49).

- The Medicaid health insurance program provides insurance coverage to low-income parents and their children. Children who lack health

The South and West sides house the communities with the highest concentrations of families living in poverty; these also are among the communities with the greatest prevalence of families headed by a single parent

More than 42,000 Chicago children continue to receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families although the number of children on TANF dropped citywide

insurance are less likely to receive preventive medical care and are more likely to do worse in school than their healthy peers. In Chicago, more than 340,000 children receive Medicaid, and coverage is highest in South and far West communities (see map on page 50).

To do what is best for children, policies must concentrate on moving their families not just into jobs, but out of poverty. That means supporting parents as they get the necessary skills to improve their earnings and boosting the incomes of poor families. Programs such as TANF, food stamps, and Medicaid can be better coordinated to make it easier for a family to apply for benefits. Eligibility can be expanded to help even more struggling families. In another example, increasing the size of the Illinois earned income tax credit to 20 percent of the federal credit will give poor families a bigger financial boost that they can use to pay off debt or put a down payment on a house. Expanding eligibility for Illinois' unemployment insurance program would allow even more families to receive help during tough times.

Building Strong Communities

Every community should ask itself: Are we providing the kind of environment that will allow children to grow into residents who give back to communities? How can we support parents in their important role? Many communities are working to prevent problems before they start by developing neighborhood ties that bring people together. We need to make communities strong for kids.

While the quality of life for many Chicago children is improving, there are challenges ahead. Not all children are progressing at the same pace and accessing the same opportunities. There are disparities by race and ethnicity, income and geography that need to be

We need to make communities strong for kids

It's time that we reached out to each other and created the kind of community that nurtures children

addressed. One important step is to make children a public priority and encourage smart investments of public and private resources. Addressing the policy proposals outlined in this report is another step, but many more issues need to be addressed, such as providing affordable housing, jobs that support families, quality learning, violence-free neighborhoods and much more.

Another is to support the development of programs that strive to meet needs in neighborhoods. The programs featured in this report can provide inspiration for people across the city working to meet the needs of children and their families.

Chicago's neighborhoods are full of adults who all play a role in influencing children and supporting parents. It's time that we reached out to each other and created the kind of community that nurtures children. A community where there are places for kids to hang out and where people have time for children. A place where we all share responsibility for each other and help rebuild the playground, speak out in favor of more money for schools and fight for after-school programs. Providing a good life for Chicago's children will bring a better future for us all.

What's Working for Kids

Building on Assets: Steans Family Foundation

By Julie Parente

The North Lawndale community faces challenges familiar to many Chicago neighborhoods: high unemployment, low family income, run-down housing, crime. But the community has seen signs of revitalization in recent years. There is new housing, a new shopping center, four new early childhood centers and new community networks working to address local problems.

Some of these improvements have been spurred by the support of the Steans Family Foundation, which has been working closely with North Lawndale residents and service providers for eight years. The foundation partners with the community to build on its strengths and put in place the necessary infrastructure to provide all residents with a better quality of life.

"We try to build the capacity of the community," Executive Director Reginald Jones said. "It's working to strengthen the current infrastructure and, where there are voids, to build the proper organizational structures and community structures to make positive change."

Relationships form the heart of the foundation's work. "We say we never lead with money," Associate Executive Director Susan Munro said. "It's much larger than grant making. We're out in the neighborhood. A lot of what I do is introduce people to one another. People learn about others doing similar work so they can collaborate."

The foundation started small by funding quality-of-life projects of $250 to $2,500 each—block parties, gardens, youth employment initiatives, clean-up days. Grantees were chosen by a review board made up of fellow residents. In 2002, the initiative became its own non-profit organization, the North Lawndale Small Grants Human Development Corp.

Other projects supported by the foundation include:

- Save Up! Individual Development Account Program that encourages residents to save money for home ownership and post-secondary education.
- Educational reform initiatives such as professional development of teachers and principals, tutoring and youth leadership programs.
- Early childhood programs that meet the child care, medical and mental health needs of young children and their families.
- Housing and economic development efforts to provide affordable housing and job training.
- Individual and organizational capacity building that provides management and leadership training opportunities.

Grantees are encouraged to partner with others in the community to receive funding. For example, an effort to increase the availability of quality early childhood options involved the Carole Robertson Center for Learning,

Lawndale Christian Development Corp., The Resurrection Project and the Illinois Facilities Fund. As a result, the Jubilee Family Development Center was built and the Carole Robertson Center for Learning doubled the size and capacity of its other North Lawndale site.

"(The foundation is) part of everything, part of the fabric of the community," said Gail Nelson, executive director of the Carole Robertson Center. "They came in with a community focus and listened to the community before rolling things out. ... We were a segmented community, doing our own thing. They really created the conditions under which we were able to build and sustain relationships. It's had a huge community impact."

Jones said it's important to address needs by building on existing community assets and connecting to external resources that can provide additional support.

"It's like the old saying—it takes a village," he said. "Everyone has a role—parents, neighbors, teachers, community leaders and the faith sector—in fostering positive community change."

For more information, contact the Steans Family Foundation at 312-467-5900 or www.steansfamilyfoundation.org.

Young children get creative at the Jubilee Family Resource Center.

What's Working for Kids

Providing Quality Early Learning: Chicago Commons

By Julie Parente

The mood is lively as a group of 2-year-olds gather around their teacher. "Ready?" she asks as "The Macarena" begins to play. The toddlers start to bounce and clap. Two children shake maracas, and one curly-haired girl does all the dance steps, placing her hands on her shoulders and hips and jumping in the air.

It looks like play, but the children in this classroom at the Chicago Commons Paulo Freire Family Center in the New City community are learning about music and movement. All activities are tailored to fit the developmental stages of the 200 children ages 7 weeks to 12 years who attend the center.

A young boy takes a break from learning about animals at the Chicago Commons Paulo Freire Family Center.

"Our image of the child is someone who is born into the world ready to learn, ready to socialize, curious, wanting to make connections," said Karen Haigh, Chicago Commons' senior vice president/director of programs. "So we don't look at what they're lacking, what we have to fix. We try to work with what they come with innately."

Chicago Commons operates five community-based early childhood programs throughout the city. It blends funding from different programs—federal Head Start and Early Head Start, and state PreKindergarten and subsidized child care—to provide seamless, quality services for low-income families. Some sites also offer prenatal care for pregnant women.

"We work in the neighborhoods with the least amount of resources," Haigh said. "At times, as neighborhoods have become gentrified, we've moved. We try to move to those areas where people need support."

Population growth in the New City area created the demand for a second Chicago Commons early childhood center. The Paulo Freire Center opened in fall 2001, just five blocks from the New City Center. Building Paulo Freire was a collaborative effort that involved the Mayor's Office, Illinois Facilities Fund, Holy Cross Church, Resurrection Project and Chicago Commons.

Paulo Freire is operating at capacity, but the community still needs affordable early childhood programs, center Director Jenny Seacat said.

"The schools in the area have preK classrooms for 3-to-5-year-olds, but there's a huge waiting list because there's a high density of younger children," she said. "There's also a need for day care. But for many parents, if they are working, we can't serve them because they earn too much to qualify for services."

Chicago Commons' approach to early childhood education emphasizes the relationship between child, parent and teacher. There are monthly parent/teacher meetings, and parents volunteer in the classrooms. Photo collages of parents with their children decorate the walls of the Paulo Freire Center—one grouping features "Our favorite family activity" described in English and Spanish. Each room has a parent information board with notices, menus and relevant articles.

The Paulo Freire Center's link to the surrounding community is obvious. Most of the staff lives nearby. Photos of neighborhood children who attend the center line the walls. Teachers create projects that tap into local resources, such as studying animals that live in the neighborhood. For the center's grand opening, older students painted a mural that depicts familiar neighborhood scenes: Mama Nena's Shrimp, McDonalds, Swap-O-Rama.

Toddlers play outside at the Paulo Freire Family Center.

"It's not so much what does the community do for the program, it's what kind of reciprocal exchange is going on between parents and teachers, parents and the center, children and the community, teachers and the community," Haigh said. "It's creating these different exchanges that all support learning for young children."

For more information, contact Chicago Commons at 773-638-5600 or www.chicagocommons.org.

What's Working for Kids

Achieving Academic Success: Rachel Carson Elementary School

By Julie Parente

On paper, it would appear that Rachel Carson Elementary School in Gage Park has a tough job to do. It's one of Chicago's largest elementary schools, with 1,300 children in preKindergarten through eighth grade. Ninety-nine percent of students are from low-income families, and two-thirds start school speaking little or no English.

But since opening on the Southwest Side in fall 1991, the school has flourished. Parents and teachers have close relationships. Student attendance is the highest among Chicago Public Schools. And test scores have improved so dramatically that a majority of Carson's eighth-graders now exceed national averages on reading and math tests.

So what's behind Carson's success?

"You have to believe kids can do better, and find the critical mass of adults—teachers, parents—who believe that, too," Principal Kathleen Mayer said.

Add an engaged and committed staff, collaborative decision-making, highly involved parents and a school-wide concern for students' social needs and you begin to see what makes Carson special.

It's not unusual to find 80 parents gathered at the school for the monthly bilingual parent meeting. A recent session included reports on No Child Left Behind, the bilingual committee's work and a presentation from the United Neighborhood Organization. These meetings are not the only time parents get together—many attend workshops on immigration, English as a Second Language, the importance of early literacy and how to work with your child's school.

"This community has a large immigrant population that has needs in terms of language, economics, family support," Mayer said. "Providing that information is vital and a part of our responsibility. If a child comes to school tired or hungry or distraught,

Students work on their lessons at Rachel Carson Elementary School.

you could have a Harvard graduate in the classroom, but that's not a guarantee of success."

Carson began offering ESL classes because teachers noticed that students skipped school when their parents needed help translating at the grocery store or social service agency. Staff also can refer parents to organizations that can help with any need, from clothing to food to mental health.

"I like the programs, I like the principal and the teachers, and I like to be a parent volunteer," said Patricia Martinez, who has two children enrolled at Carson and another who is a Carson graduate now in high school. "I'm very proud of this school. We have a very good team."

More than half of Carson's staff speaks Spanish, including the principal, who easily switches between languages when speaking to parents and students. She greeted students as they passed in the hallway and asked a group of first-graders what they are learning.

"Qué están apprendiendo?" she asked. "Calabazas," one student replied—pumpkins. Others piped in with monsters and skeletons, topical subjects for late October lessons. Carson uses a bilingual education program that helps students develop speaking, reading and writing competence in both English and Spanish.

Maureen Stiso's third-grade class is taught in English, but students receive regular lessons in Spanish. Stiso credits Carson's success to family involvement and a quality teaching staff.

"Any time that parents get involved in their child's education, students tend to excel," she said. "The faculty is great and work well together. And the students are very respectful. They want to succeed and make something of themselves. They want to learn."

Mayer said building relationships between parents and the school—and getting children on the path to academic success—begins with preKindergarten, which she calls a key to the school's success. So if a problem arises in fifth grade, parents aren't afraid to talk about it or ask for help.

The challenges that Mayer sees for Carson and the Gage Park community aren't small: job loss and economic issues, improving neighborhood schools, citizenship and access to college. And Carson still struggles to find resources to shrink class size, attract and retain quality staff and provide a safe facility.

"We will continue to support students and families by identifying needs together and providing resources and information on issues affecting the family," she said.

For more information, contact Rachel Carson Elementary School at 773-535-9222.

Principal Kathleen Mayer


Friday

What's Working for Kids

Supporting Young Mothers: Christopher House

By Brenda Baker

Homework, extracurricular activities and keeping up with the latest fashion trends are priorities for most teen girls. Teen mothers balance these concerns along with those of parenting a child.

These young mothers are more likely to come from poor families, struggle in school and suffer from substance abuse and behavioral problems. Their children are more likely to have received inadequate prenatal care, be born at a lower birth weight and are at higher risk for abuse and neglect. So it's crucial that teens secure a stable support system of positive, nurturing and trusting individuals. Even when a teen receives this support in her home environment, she needs support from outside sources to arm her with the resources she needs to provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for herself and her child.

Christopher House is a six-site family resource center that provides supportive services that result in happy, healthy kids who are successful in school; literate, working parents; and stable, nurturing families. Each year, the center's "Partners in Progress" program provides services to more than 70 pregnant and parenting teens who live in Uptown, Lincoln Square, Albany Park, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, North Center, Irving Park, Avondale and West Town.

"The 2000 Census reports a decrease in births to teens both national and locally here in Chicago," said Sara Manewith, director of "Partners in Progress." "However, anecdotally, this high-risk population continues to need community-based supports such as prenatal care and birthing assistance, home visits, peer support groups and academic assistance."

Seventy percent of program participants are enrolled in an educational program or have graduated, she said. Home visitors assist young mothers with enrolling in school and encourage them to stay in school and perform well. The program also offers onsite G.E.D. classes and provides free transportation and child care for young moms who participate.

"Teen moms continuing and completing their education directly affects the quality of life that they will be able to provide for themselves and their child," Manewith said. "With a high school diploma, they are guaranteed a greater potential for becoming self-sufficient. We find that the majority of our moms recognize the importance of continuing their education."

The program has seen changes in the population it serves, such as an increase in the number of illegal immigrants. Without proper immigration paperwork, obtaining employment, educational and financial resources is difficult. This puts teen mothers who are illegal immigrants and their children at an even greater risk, Manewith said. Christopher House offers English as a Second Language classes to "Partners in Progress" moms to assist them in securing the resources that they need for themselves and their babies.

Christopher House's Auxiliary Board raises thousands of dollars in gifts and supplies for teen moms at its annual fundraising event. The board hosts a potluck luncheon for new moms where new and veteran teen mothers share stores and introduce their babies to their peers and Christopher House staff.

For more information, contact Christopher House at 773-472-1083 or www.christopherhouse.org.

What's Working for Kids

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What's Working for Kids

Fighting Lead Poisoning: Westside Health Authority

By Brenda Baker

The Westside Health Authority is battling an insidious health threat—one that is practically invisible, yet can have a profound effect on children by harming their brain, kidneys or stomach and causing learning or behavior problems. The culprit? Lead dust.

Lead is a heavy metal that was once used in many products commonly found around the home, including paint made before 1978. Lead may be present in older homes that have lead-based paint that can chip and turn into dust. Lead also can be found in contaminated soil, water pipes, fishing sinkers, ceramics and stained glass.

"Children typically become poisoned by breathing lead dust or putting their hands in their mouths after they have come in contact with lead dust," said Anne Evens, director of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program for the Chicago Department of Public Health. "However, lead can be found in some soil and in lead-based glazing found on cooking pottery."

Since 2000, the Westside Health Authority has trained residents to be lead sampling technicians who go door-to-door identifying homes with young children and determining the level of lead dust. Two-thirds of the 264 homes tested in the communities of Austin, East Garfield, West Garfield, North Lawndale and South Lawndale were positive for lead, project Coordinator Casandra Alexander said.

The project provides information on lead abatement and refers children under 6 for blood lead screenings. Children under 6 are at the greatest risk of lead poisoning because their developing systems absorb lead at higher rates then adults.

Casandra Alexander (left) of the Westside Health Authority demonstrates dust sampling to two sampling technicians.

"The work of the Lead Awareness and Prevention Program is important because most parents are not aware of the effects that exposure to even a small amount of lead dust can have on their child's health and development," Alexander said.

The project also increases public awareness of the dangers of lead poisoning and ways to combat it. For example, community events and presentations include demonstrations of cleaning techniques to reduce lead dust. Affected residents are referred to resources that can help them pay for removing the lead threat.

The Chicago Department of Public Health works to ensure children are tested and parents and property owners are educated on the dangers of lead. Building inspectors identify lead hazards in homes and apartments and hold property owners accountable for making repairs. The program also provides grants to help low-income property owners make their homes lead safe. Intervention strategies focus on children under 2 with lower levels of lead in their blood.

"There's a delay between exposure to lead before age 3 and the time when you figure out there's a problem because kids are having trouble in school," Evens said. "Lead is a neurotoxin. There's no good use for lead in your body, so no level of lead is safe."

Patricia Perkins (seated) of the Westside Health Authority educates residents about lead poisoning at a health fair.

Chicago also is finalizing a strategic plan to eliminate lead-paint poisoning by the year 2010. State officials are working to address the problem as well. In 2003, lawmakers established the Lead Safe Housing Advisory Council, which is charged with making recommendations on steps to end childhood lead poisoning.

"Lead poisoning is one of the few causes of social and learning problems that we know how to prevent," said Anita Weinberg, director of Child Law Policy and Legislative Programs at Loyola University Chicago. "Recent research suggests that children are harmed by lead at lower levels than once thought."

For more information, contact the Westside Health Authority at 773-378-5034 or www.healthauthority.org or contact the Chicago Department of Public Health at 312-747- LEAD or www.ci.chi.il.us/health.

What's Working for Kids

Countering the Effects of Violence: Chicago Safe Start and Shanti Foundation for Peace

By Brenda Baker

Children can witness violence daily, through television, in their schools and communities or within their own homes. Research has shown that exposure has serious consequences. Infants demonstrate increased levels of irritability and fear of being alone. Young children regress developmentally by reverting to crying, clinging and wetting the bed. Older children exhibit threatening or violent behavior or become withdrawn or depressed.

The impact of violence on children depends on the level of exposure, the child's age and developmental phase, the family and community context in which the violence occurred and the availability of family and community supports.

"It is important that there be a universal understanding of what it means for children to be exposed to violence," said Ann Parry, director of the Chicago Department of Public Health's Office of Violence Prevention. "They need intervention. There are things adults can and should do to support them."

The health department's Chicago Safe Start project addresses the needs of children ages 5 and younger who have been or are at risk of being exposed to violence. Chicago Safe Start is a collaboration of residents, organizations and city and state agencies that works to shape policy and practice to ultimately reduce and prevent the negative impacts of violence.

"Collaboration is essential for the work of violence prevention," Parry said. "Young children are counting on adults to connect the dots between the realities of what they see, hear and know regarding violence and strategies and responses that prevent, identify and resolve issues of violence in their homes and communities."

The project has many facets, such as increasing awareness of the effects of witnessing violence among those who respond to crimes: police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians and emergency room workers. The pilot project has worked in the fifth and seventh police districts, the Englewood and Roseland communities, since 2002. Officials are trained to provide parents with Help Line cards if they have a child who was present at the scene of a crime. The cards provide information to link parents with community-based resources such as counseling or violence prevention activities. The seventh police district also developed a quarterly newsletter entitled "The Domestic News" to address domestic violence and children's exposure to violence.

"The newsletter helps make the community aware of the importance of preventing a child's exposure to violence by sharing with them alternatives to violent behavior," said Officer Claretha Cross, domestic violence liaison for the seventh district. "Once upon a time, the community only expected the police to be present after a crime had been committed. With the implementation of our program, they

understand that police officers are partners in making the public aware of the impact that violence has on children."

Another initiative addressing the importance of violence prevention is the Shanti Foundation for Peace. This program works with students in their schools by integrating core curriculum subjects with art skills and non-violence concepts. Professional Shanti artists utilize a variety of mediums including video, dramatics, visual arts, creative writing, poetry, music and storytelling to address issues of diversity, inclusiveness and collaboration that foster healthy communities.

"Parents, teachers and all members of the community must be proactive when addressing issues of violence by living nonviolently," Executive Director Indira Johnson said. "Children exposed to methods of resolving issues nonviolently will learn to model this behavior."

Because violence can have such a big impact on children, the broader community must play a role in preventing and addressing violence, said Barbara Shaw, director of the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority.

"A child's safety is critical to their healthy social, emotional and physical development," she said. "It is the responsibility of all community institutions including, schools, churches, social service organizations and others to ensure that information regarding violence, its effect on children and opportunities for support are made available to all parents."

For more information, please contact Chicago Safe Start at 312-745-0381 or www.chicagosafestart.net or contact the Shanti Foundation for Peace at 847-492-0955 or www.shantifoundationforpeace.com.

What's Working for Kids

Enriching the After-School Hours: Chicago Youth Centers and After School Matters

By Julie Parente

When the school day ends in Chicago's Bridgeport community, about 30 students ages 7 to 11 head to the Chicago Youth Center Fellowship House instead of going home. There, they get help with homework and take part in lessons in creative arts, science and life skills. The after-school program provides positive activities that build self-esteem as well as a safe place for children to go while parents are at work.

What teens do with their after-school time helps determine whether they will participate in high-risk behaviors, such as crime or drugs.

Children from the Chicago Youth Center Fellowship House take part in a gardening activity.

"It's during that period that children are most likely to get involved in all kinds of inappropriate activities," said John Lee, senior vice president for operations at Chicago Youth Centers. "Considering the possibilities, we have this tremendous opportunity to contribute to the positive development of kids. Not just get them off the streets, but when they are in our care, how can we help them, what can we do to expose these young people to options that perhaps they would not be able to experience otherwise."

Chicago Youth Centers has a long history of meeting the needs of children and their families. The organization opened in 1956 and operates at 10 locations, including a camp in Michigan. In addition to after-school programs at six sites, the centers offer Head Start, crisis counseling and foster care and adoption services.

Lee said there is an urgent need throughout Chicago for programs that serve teens.

"There are more options available for the younger children," he said. "As they mature, there tend to be fewer and fewer options, and those that are available tend to be more recreational in design as opposed to more structured and developmentally appropriate."

Fellowship House offers day and evening programs. The evening session from 5:30 to 8 p.m. is strictly for older

The Chicago Youth Center's Fellowship House offers a range of activites, including clubs and sports.

children, ages 12 to 16. In addition to homework help, teens eat dinner and can play sports, work on computers, participate in cooking, art or community service clubs or go on a monthly outing.

"The kids plan a lot of what we do," said Megan Readler, program supervisor at Fellowship House. "We've had children who come to the program for years and years."

Fellowship House is comprised of five classrooms in the Chicago Housing Authority's Bridgeport Homes housing development. Units are being renovated and many families have moved away, but the need is still great, Readler said.

"We're at capacity, but there's more kids we could serve," she said. "The program gets kids involved in efforts where they give back to their community. It enriches their academic abilities and teaches them about community service. We help build social structures with kids and families."

Chicago Youth Centers certainly isn't the only organization offering after-school programs. After School Matters, a partnership between the City of Chicago, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Park District and Chicago Public Library, provides clubs and apprenticeships in careers ranging from robotics to jewelry making.

"When I leave school, I have a job to go to," said Carolyn, 16, an After School Matters participant. "I like that because I love to learn and I like to make my own money."

Mayor Richard Daley announced plans to expand the program to reach over 22,000 teens in 35 neighborhoods by the end of the school year. His proposed fiscal year 2005 budget also includes another $1.2 million to expand programs that serve teens in the most vulnerable neighborhoods.

"Whether kids in a literacy program read to seniors at a senior center or donate rebuilt computers to an elementary school, we're trying to get them involved in communities and to get communities involved with us," said Kristin Eckberg, After School Matters' director of marketing.

For more information, contact Chicago Youth Centers at 312-795-3500 or www.chicagoyouthcenters.org, or After School Matters at 312-742-4182 or www.afterschoolmatters.org.

City of Chicago Data

Child Population			
Children Under 18	1990	2000	% change
	722,711	759,840	5.1%
Children Ages Birth to 5	1996	2000	% change
	262,333	263,277	0.4%
6-Year-Olds in Chicago Public Schools	2000	2002	% change
	36,514	34,340	-6.0%
	1990	2000	% change
Hispanic Children	198,916	265,857	33.7%
Black Children	338,951	336,973	-0.1%
White Children	162,166	122,672	-24.4%
Asian Children	24,455	23,579	-3.6%

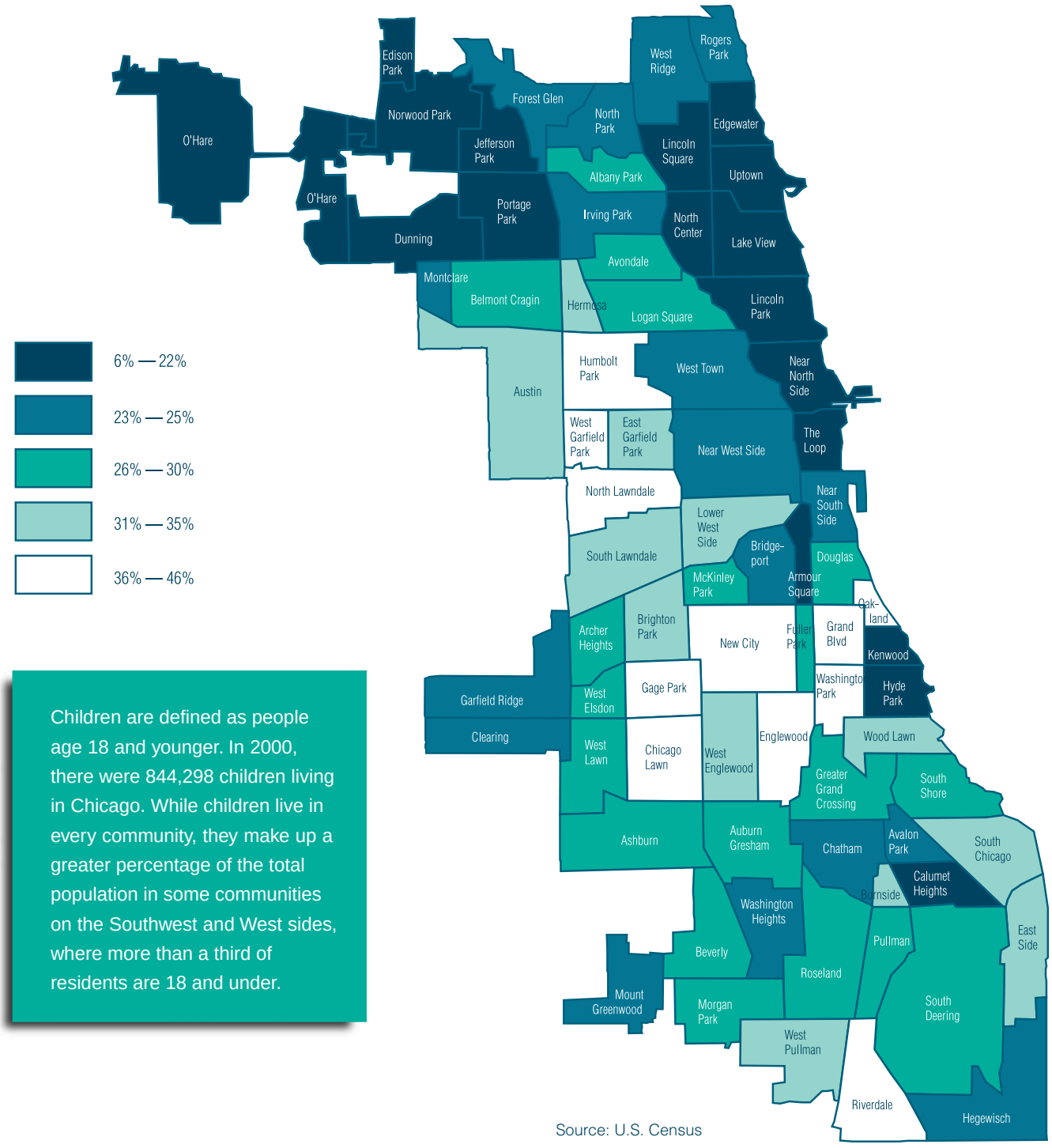
Education	
Class of 2002 dropouts	28,203
Class of 2002 dropout rate	24.2%

Safety		
Lead poisoning	2002	%
Children tested	109,041	35.0%
Children with high lead levels	10,125	9.3%
Crime rate	2002	
Violent crimes per square mile	15.7	
Non-violent crimes per square mile	50.2	

Family Support	2000	%
Households with children	364,392	
Married-couple families with children	179,408	49.2%
Single-parent families with children	127,048	34.9%
Grandparent-headed families with children	41,328	11.3%
Families with children in poverty	2000	%
	84,598	23.1%
Median family income	2000	
Married-couple families with children	$51,504	
Single-mother families with children	$19,070	
Single-father families with children	$27,222	
Working families	2000	
Two-adult working families	339,280	
Single-adult working families	169,572	

Children receiving:	1998	2003	% change
Child care subsidies	22,746	39,637	74.0%
TANF	164,579	41,732	-74.6%
Food stamps	189,837	207,128	9.1%
Medicaid	273,335	340,722	24.7%

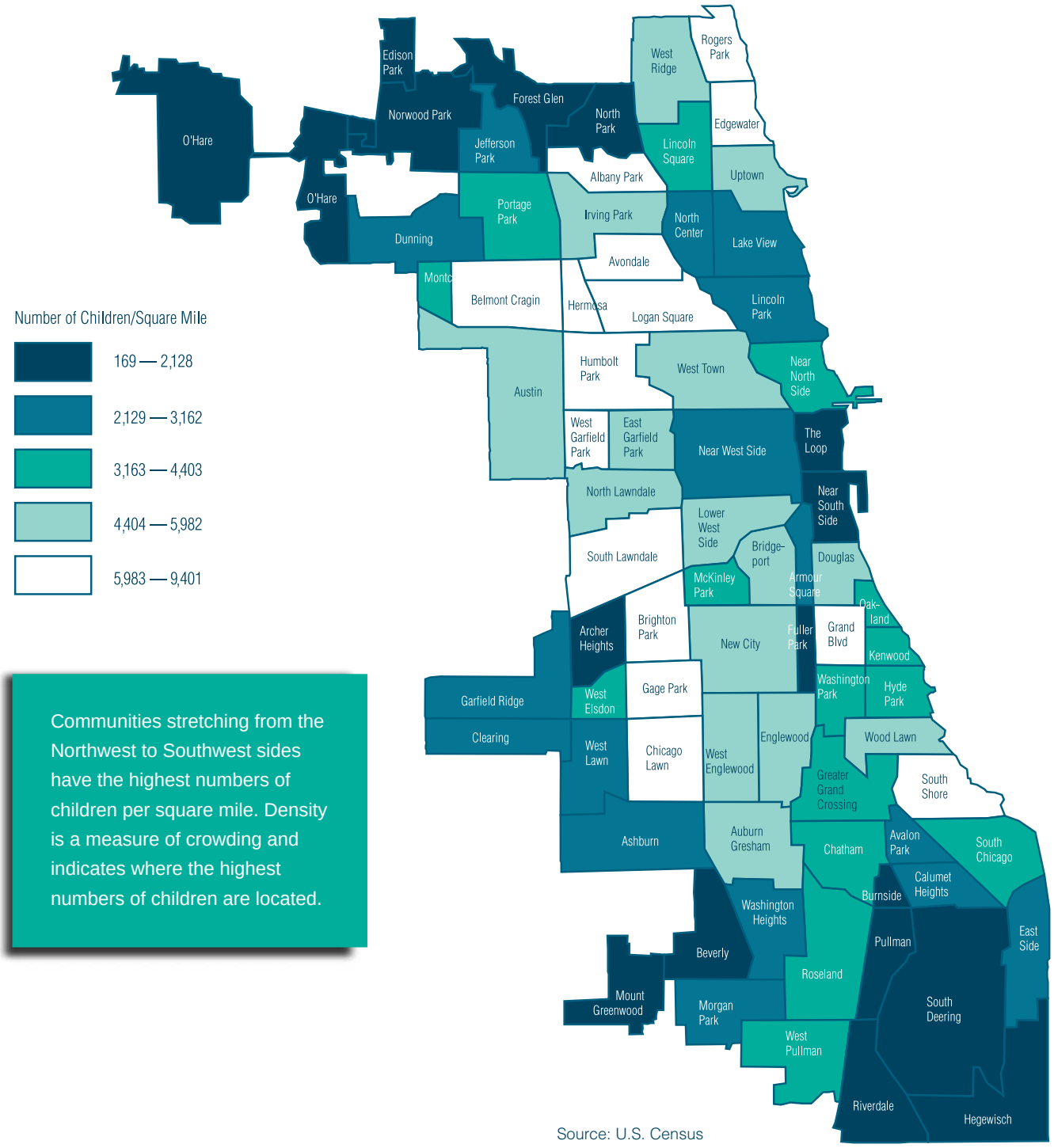
Percent of Total Population 17 and Under, 2000



Children are defined as people age 18 and younger. In 2000, there were 844,298 children living in Chicago. While children live in every community, they make up a greater percentage of the total population in some communities on the Southwest and West sides, where more than a third of residents are 18 and under.

Source: U.S. Census

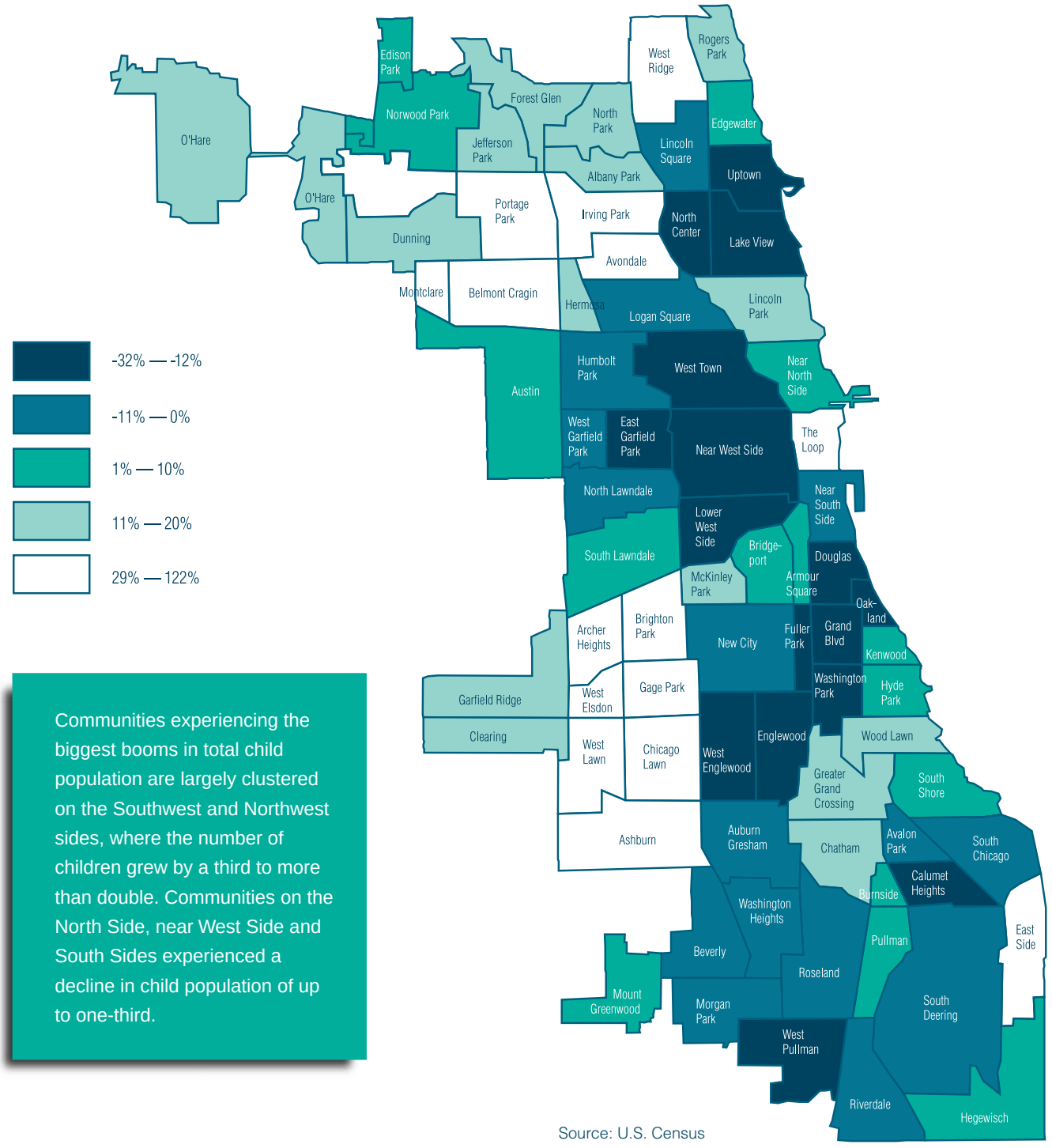
Density of Children, 2000



Communities stretching from the Northwest to Southwest sides have the highest numbers of children per square mile. Density is a measure of crowding and indicates where the highest numbers of children are located.

Source: U.S. Census

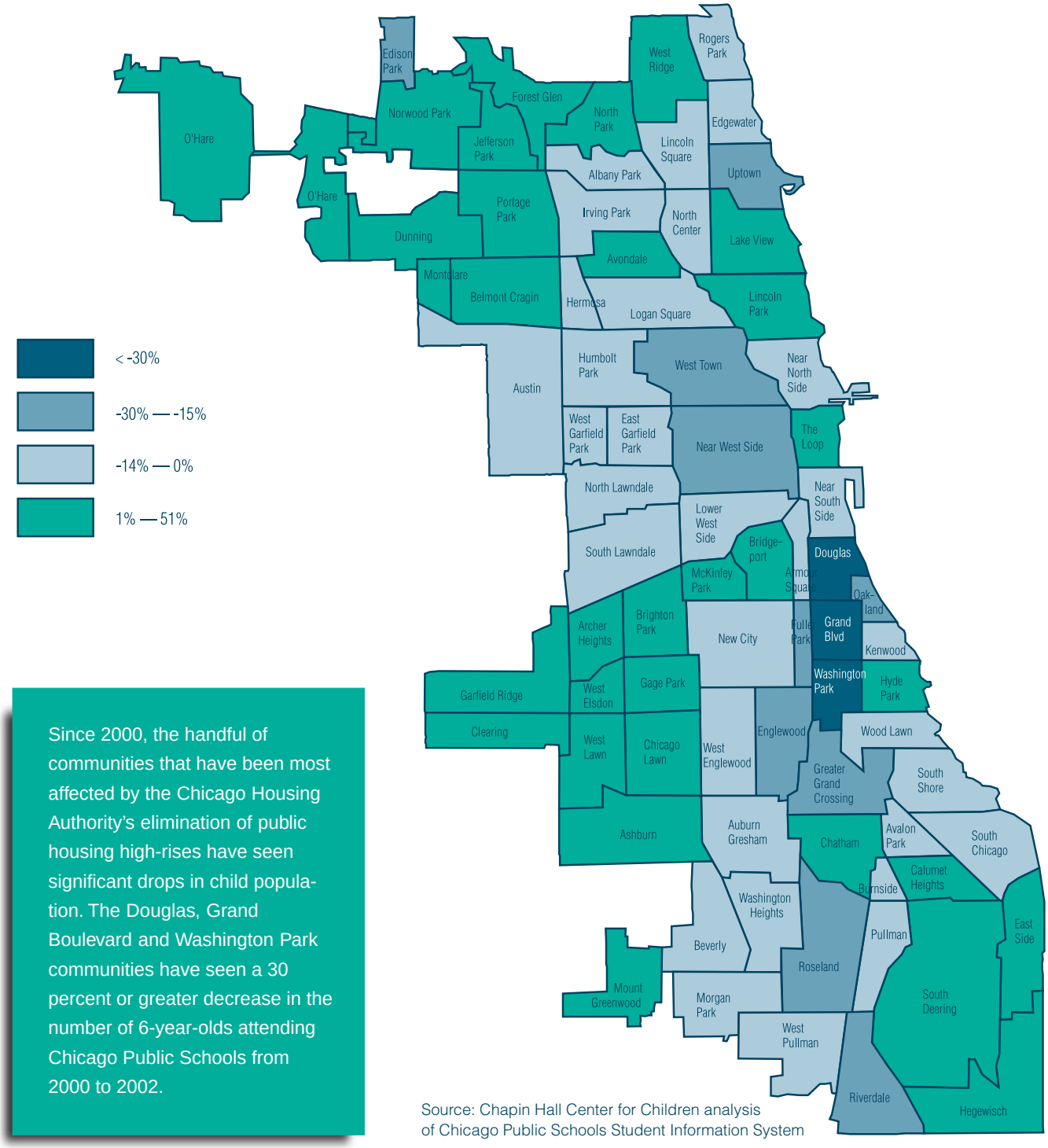
Changes in the Total Child Population, 1990 to 2000



Communities experiencing the biggest booms in total child population are largely clustered on the Southwest and Northwest sides, where the number of children grew by a third to more than double. Communities on the North Side, near West Side and South Sides experienced a decline in child population of up to one-third.

Source: U.S. Census

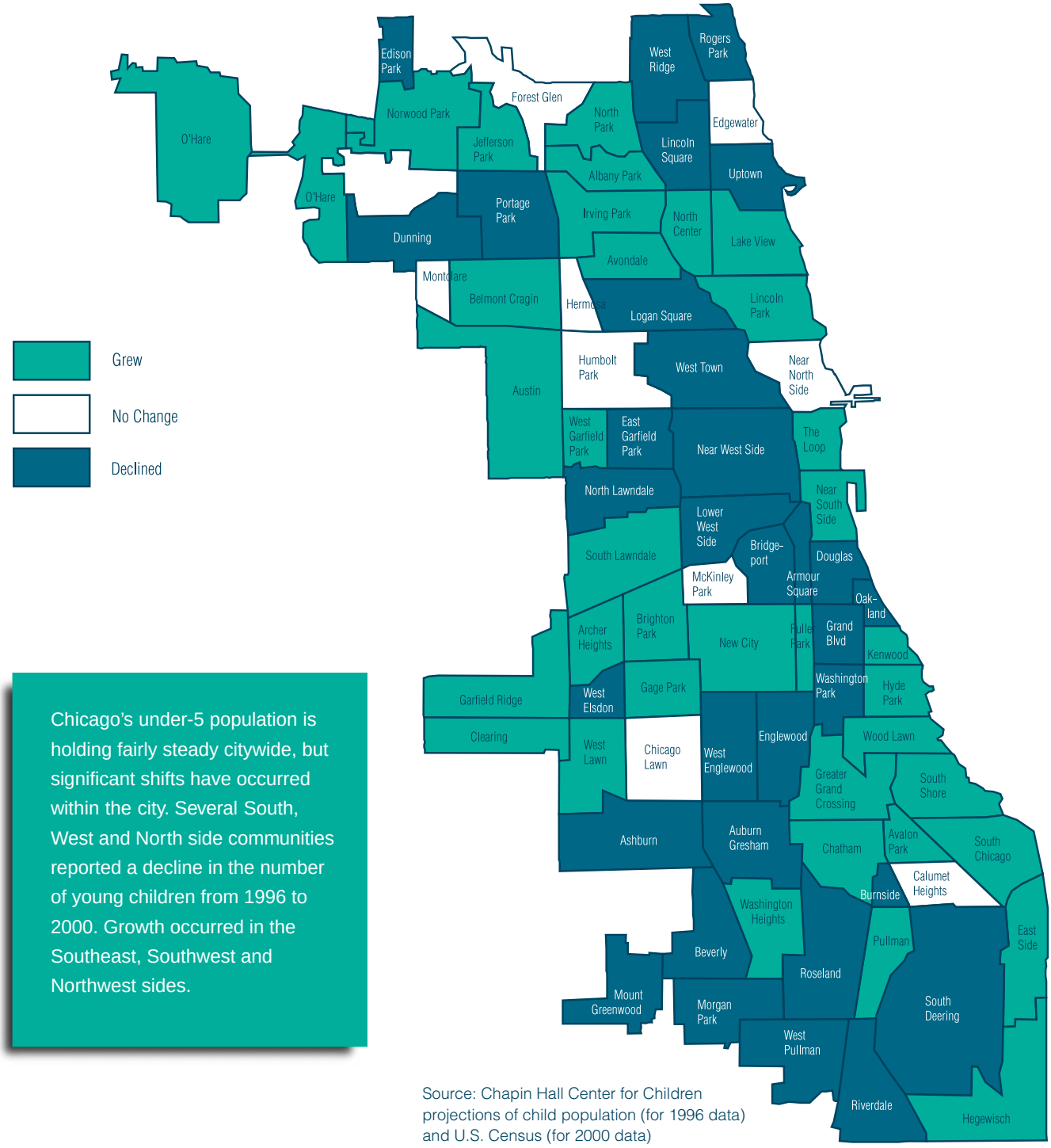
Changes in 6-Year-Olds Attending Chicago Public Schools, 2000 to 2002



Since 2000, the handful of communities that have been most affected by the Chicago Housing Authority's elimination of public housing high-rises have seen significant drops in child population. The Douglas, Grand Boulevard and Washington Park communities have seen a 30 percent or greater decrease in the number of 6-year-olds attending Chicago Public Schools from 2000 to 2002.

Source: Chapin Hall Center for Children analysis of Chicago Public Schools Student Information System

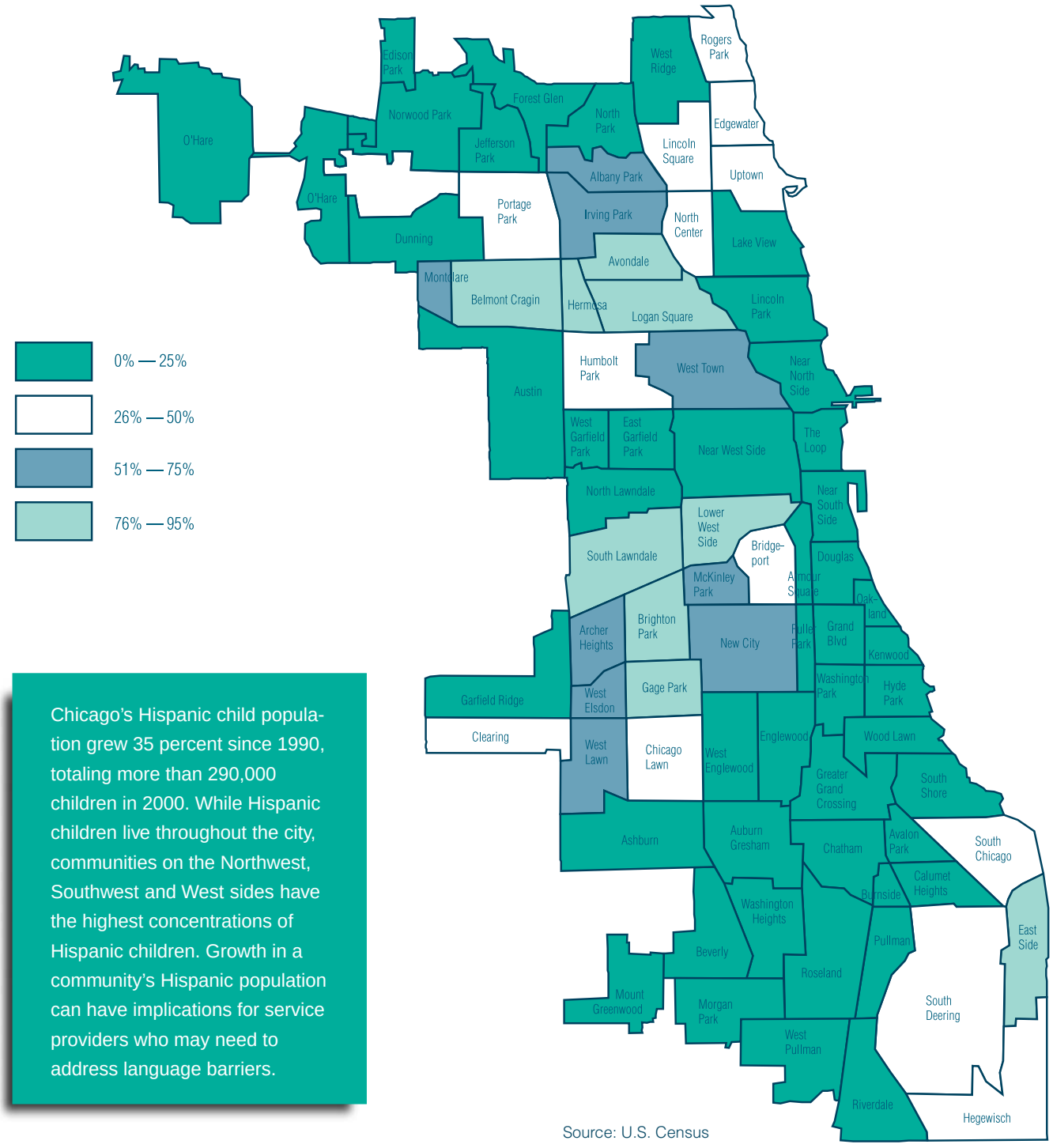
Changes in Young Child Population (Birth to 5), 1996 to 2000



Chicago's under-5 population is holding fairly steady citywide, but significant shifts have occurred within the city. Several South, West and North side communities reported a decline in the number of young children from 1996 to 2000. Growth occurred in the Southeast, Southwest and Northwest sides.

Source: Chapin Hall Center for Children projections of child population (for 1996 data) and U.S. Census (for 2000 data)

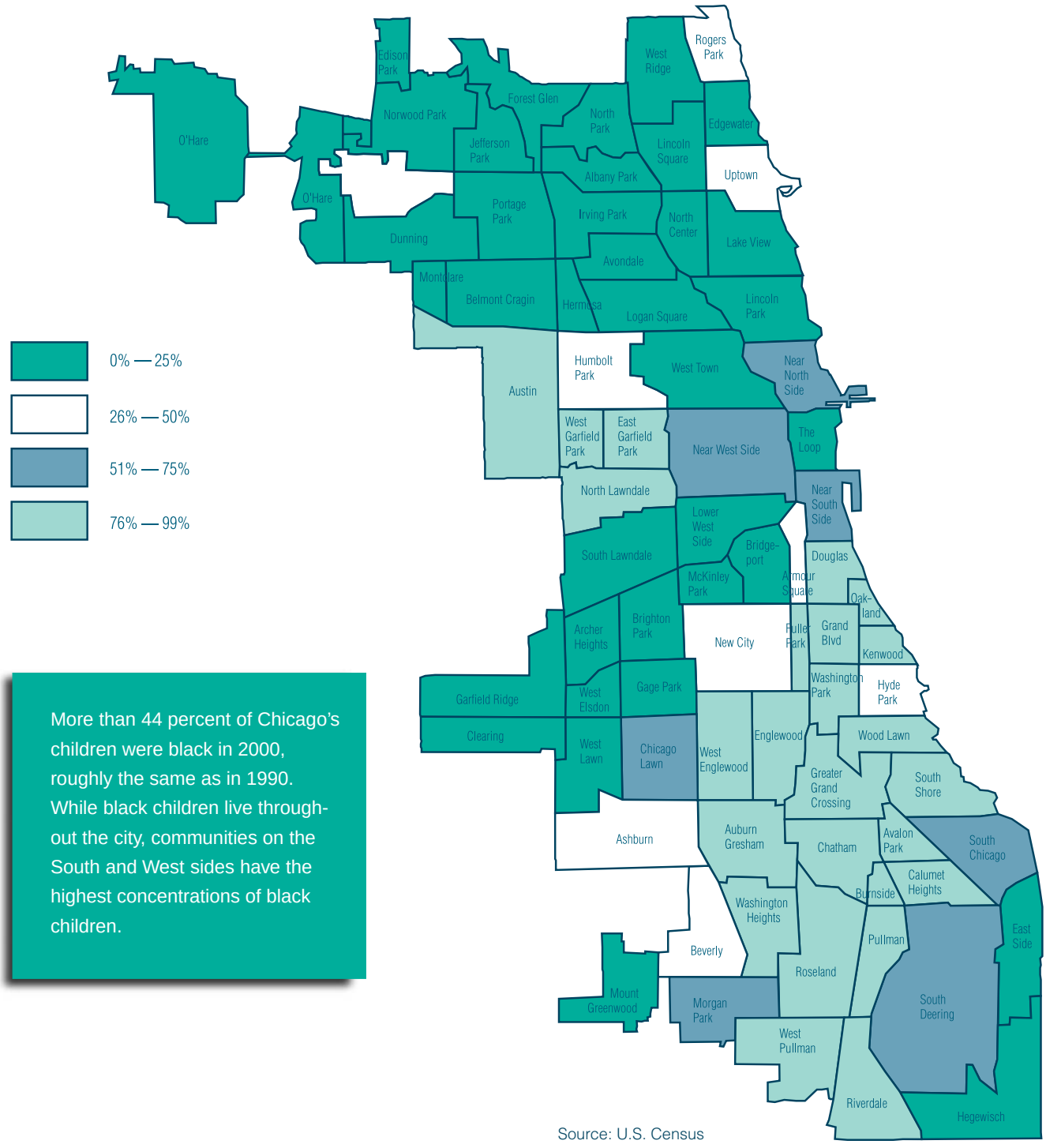
Percent of Children Who Are Hispanic, 2000



Chicago's Hispanic child population grew 35 percent since 1990, totaling more than 290,000 children in 2000. While Hispanic children live throughout the city, communities on the Northwest, Southwest and West sides have the highest concentrations of Hispanic children. Growth in a community's Hispanic population can have implications for service providers who may need to address language barriers.

Source: U.S. Census

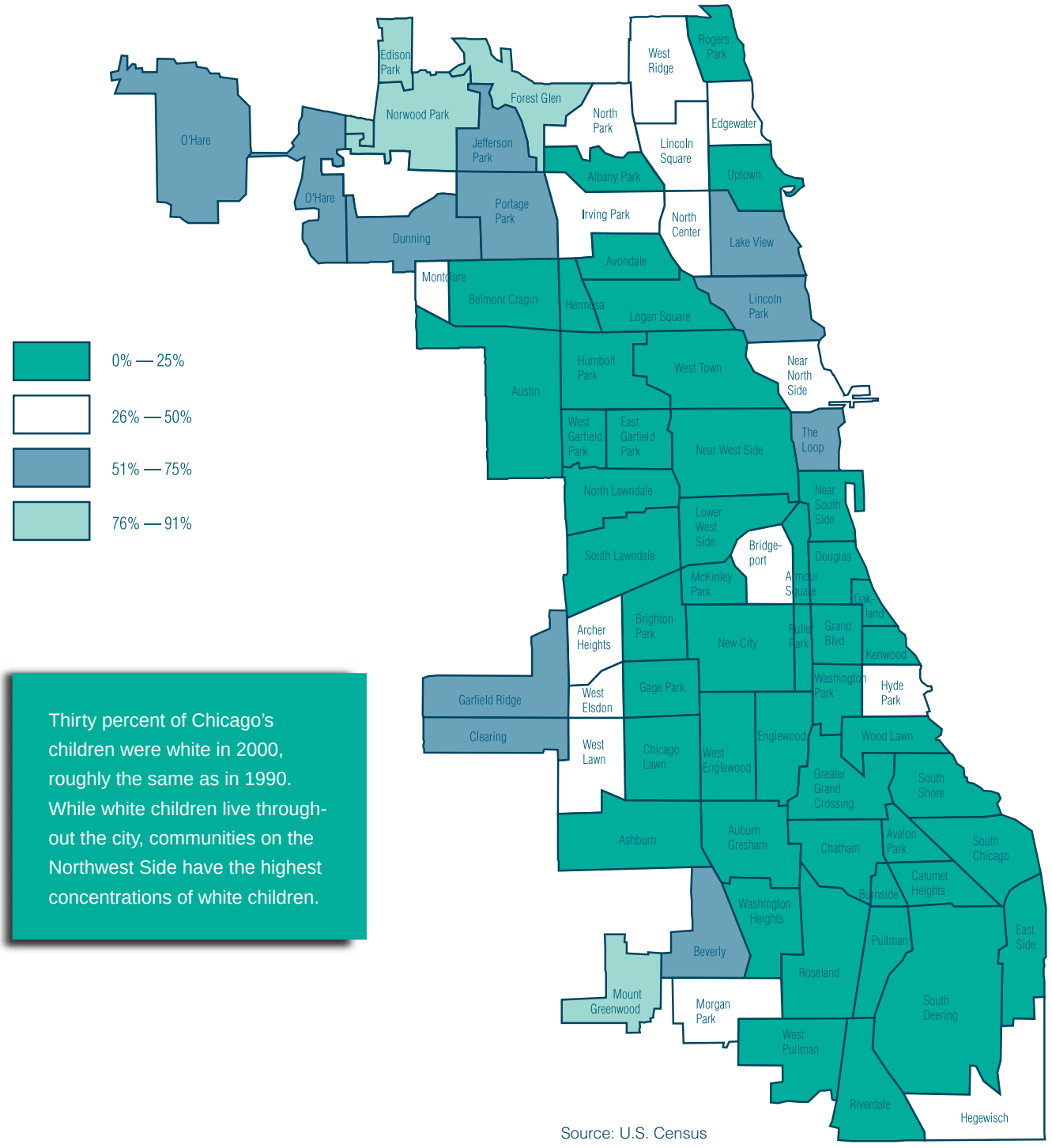
Percent of Children Who Are Black, 2000



More than 44 percent of Chicago's children were black in 2000, roughly the same as in 1990. While black children live throughout the city, communities on the South and West sides have the highest concentrations of black children.

Source: U.S. Census

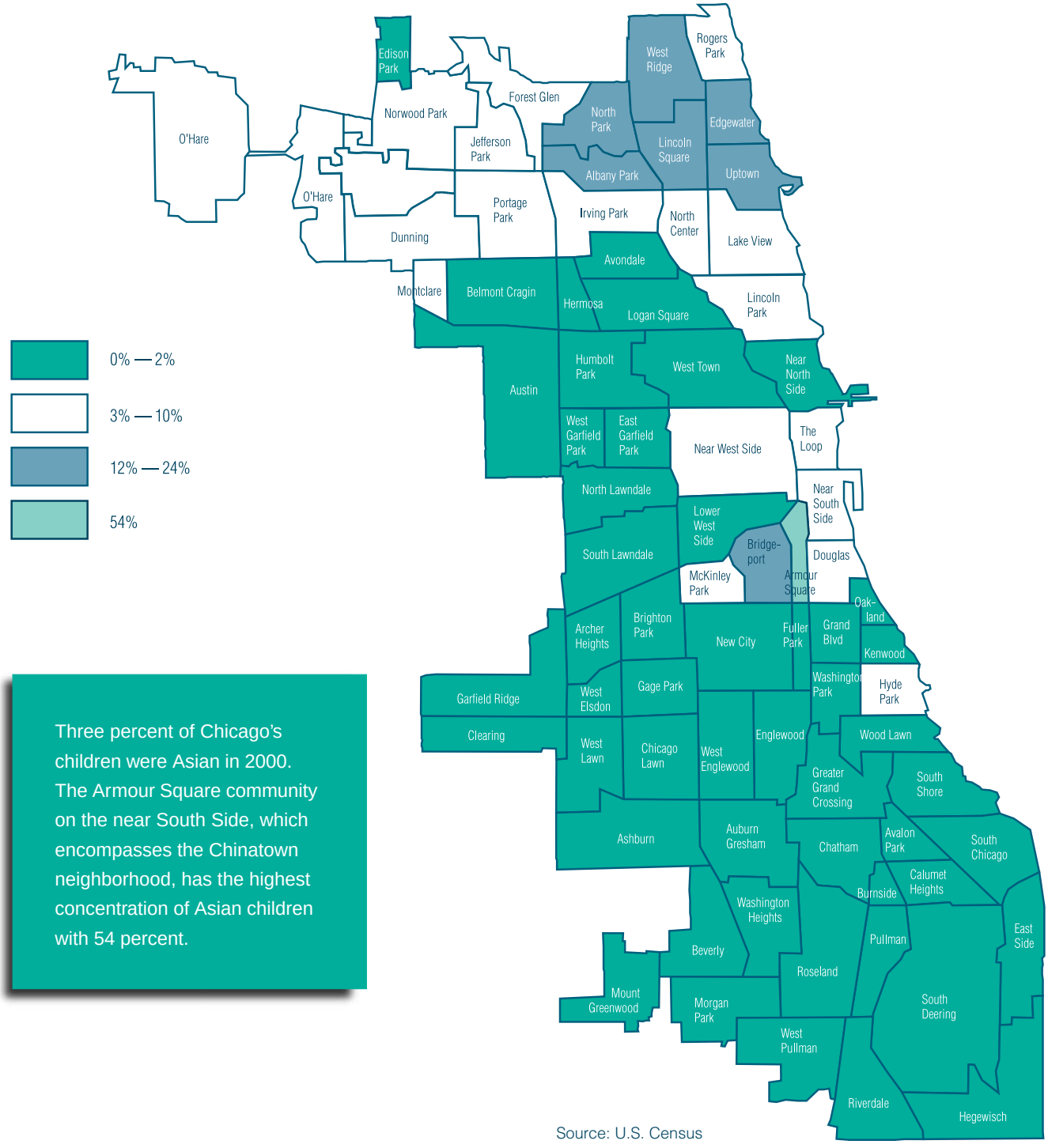
Percent of Children Who Are White, 2000



Thirty percent of Chicago's children were white in 2000, roughly the same as in 1990. While white children live throughout the city, communities on the Northwest Side have the highest concentrations of white children.

Source: U.S. Census

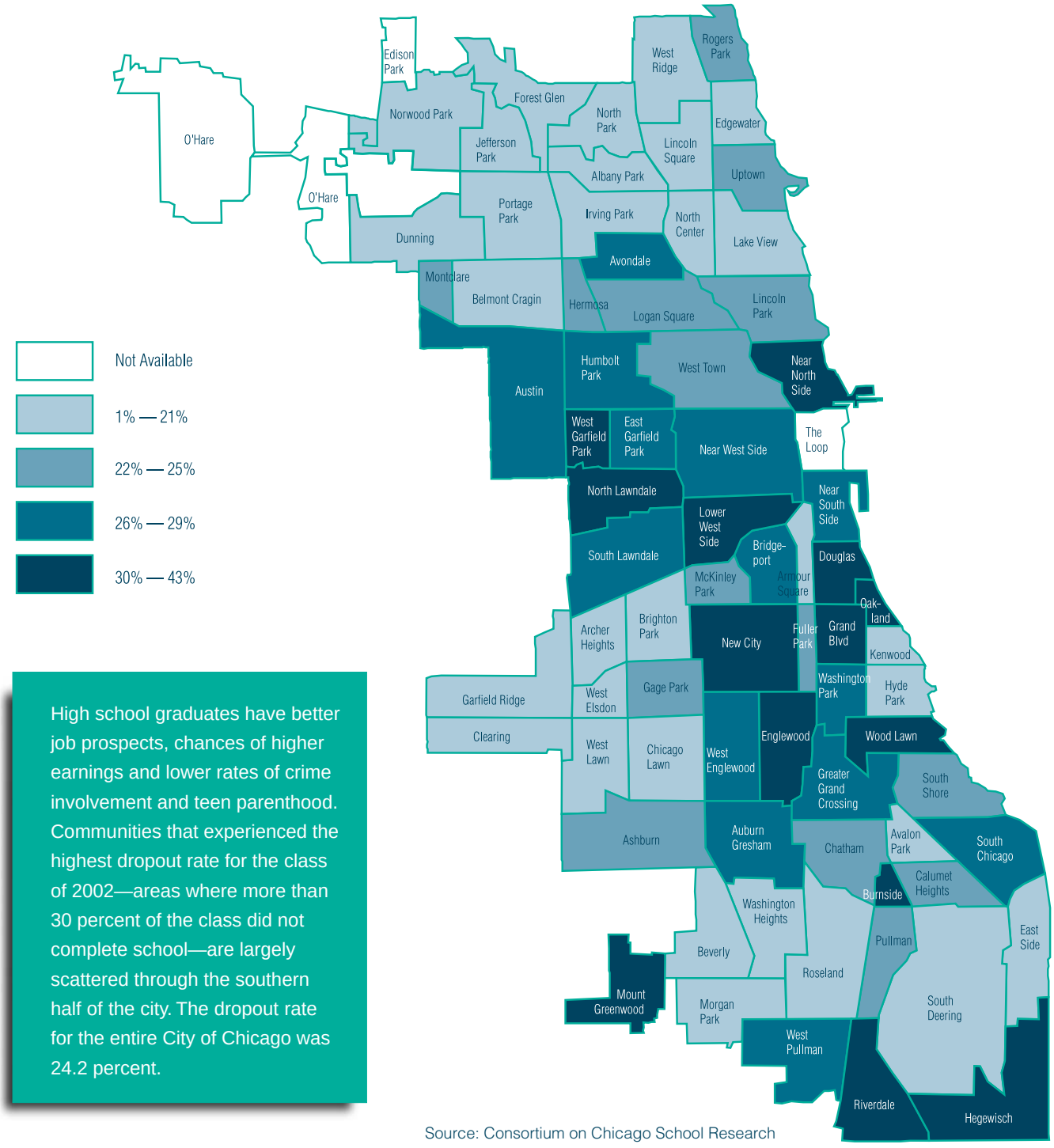
Percent of Children Who Are Asian, 2000



Three percent of Chicago's children were Asian in 2000. The Armour Square community on the near South Side, which encompasses the Chinatown neighborhood, has the highest concentration of Asian children with 54 percent.

Source: U.S. Census

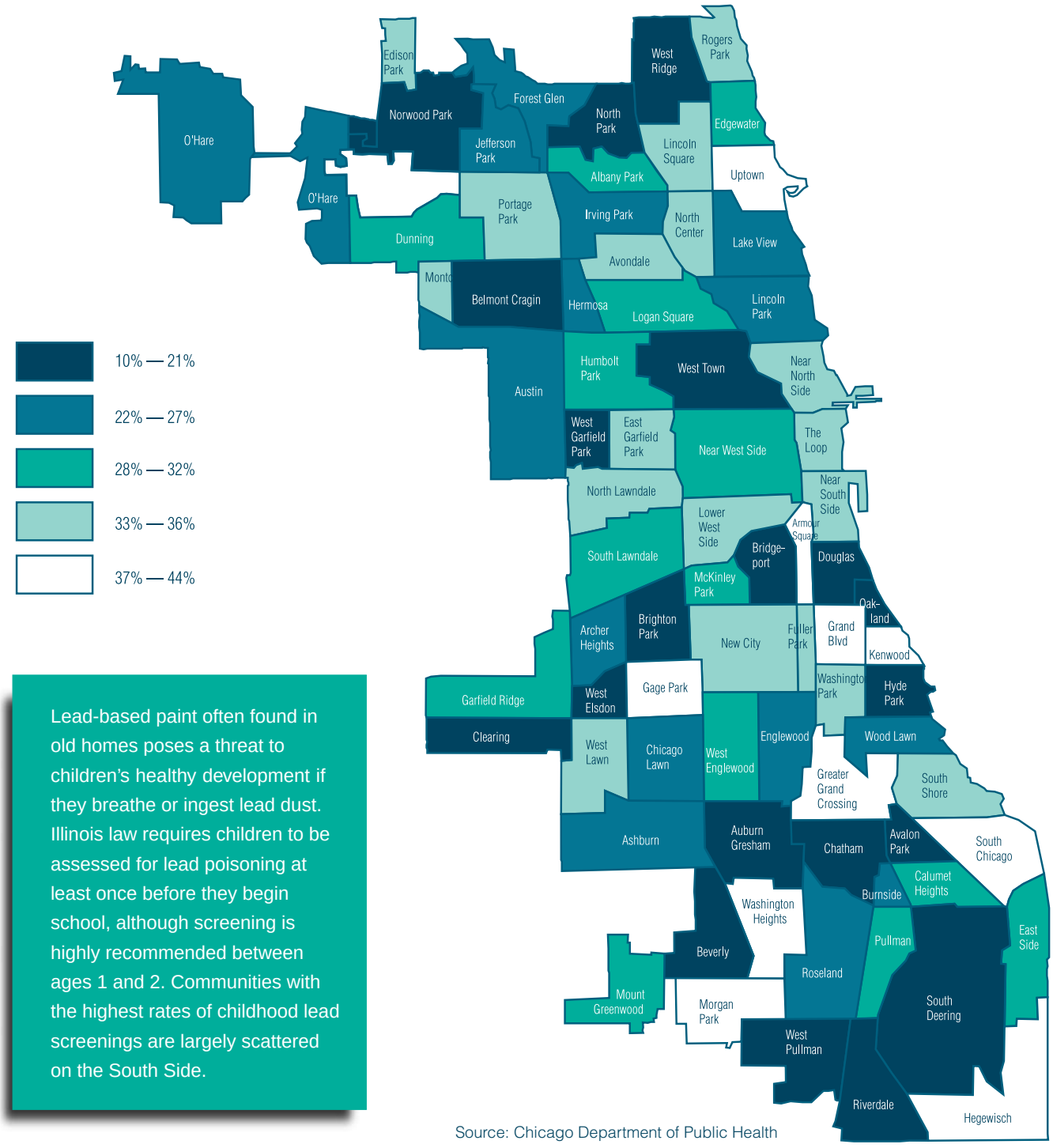
Chicago Public Schools Class of 2002
High School Dropout Rate



High school graduates have better job prospects, chances of higher earnings and lower rates of crime involvement and teen parenthood. Communities that experienced the highest dropout rate for the class of 2002—areas where more than 30 percent of the class did not complete school—are largely scattered through the southern half of the city. The dropout rate for the entire City of Chicago was 24.2 percent.

Source: Consortium on Chicago School Research

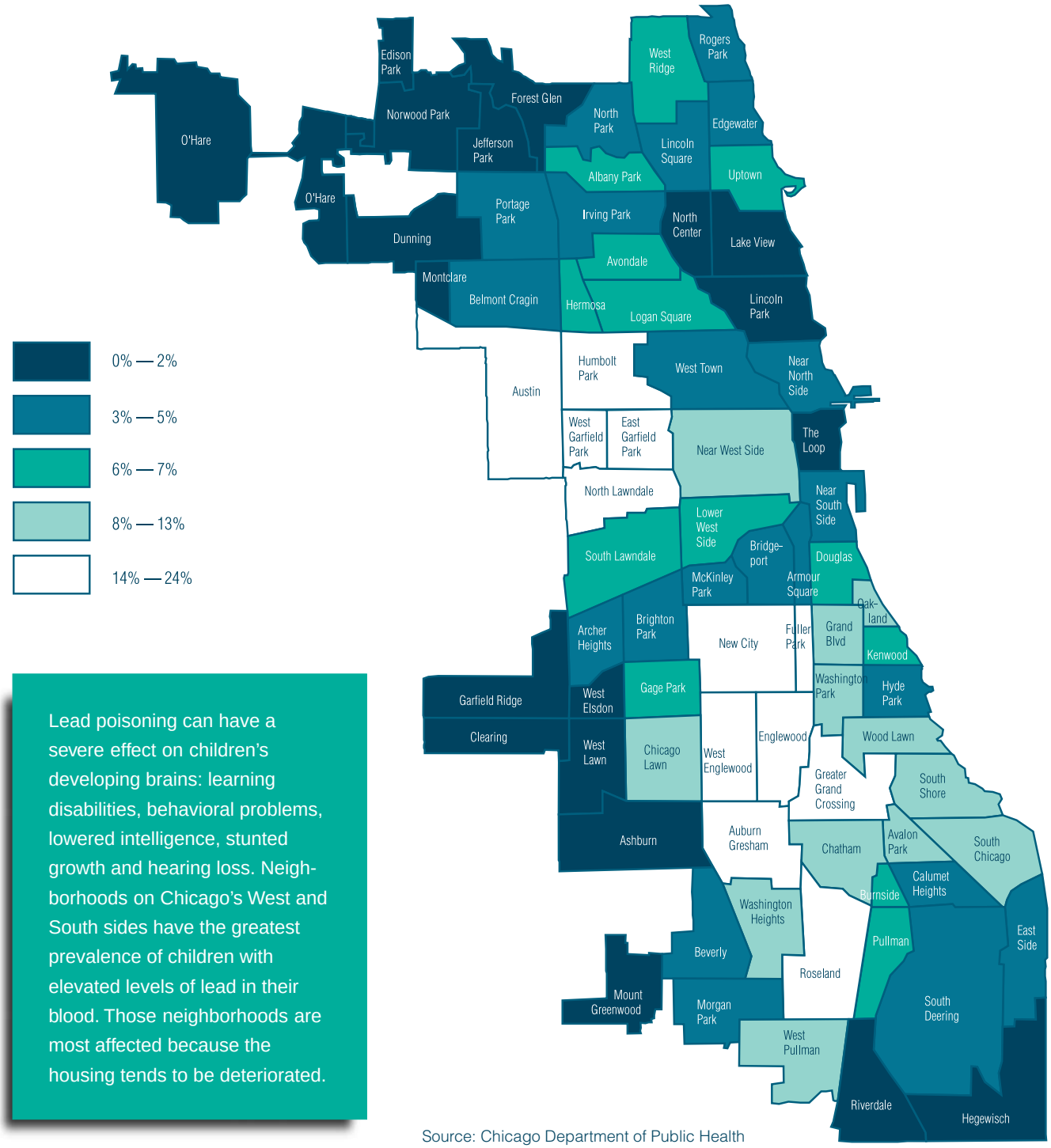
Children Tested for Lead Poisoning, 2002



Lead-based paint often found in old homes poses a threat to children's healthy development if they breathe or ingest lead dust. Illinois law requires children to be assessed for lead poisoning at least once before they begin school, although screening is highly recommended between ages 1 and 2. Communities with the highest rates of childhood lead screenings are largely scattered on the South Side.

Source: Chicago Department of Public Health

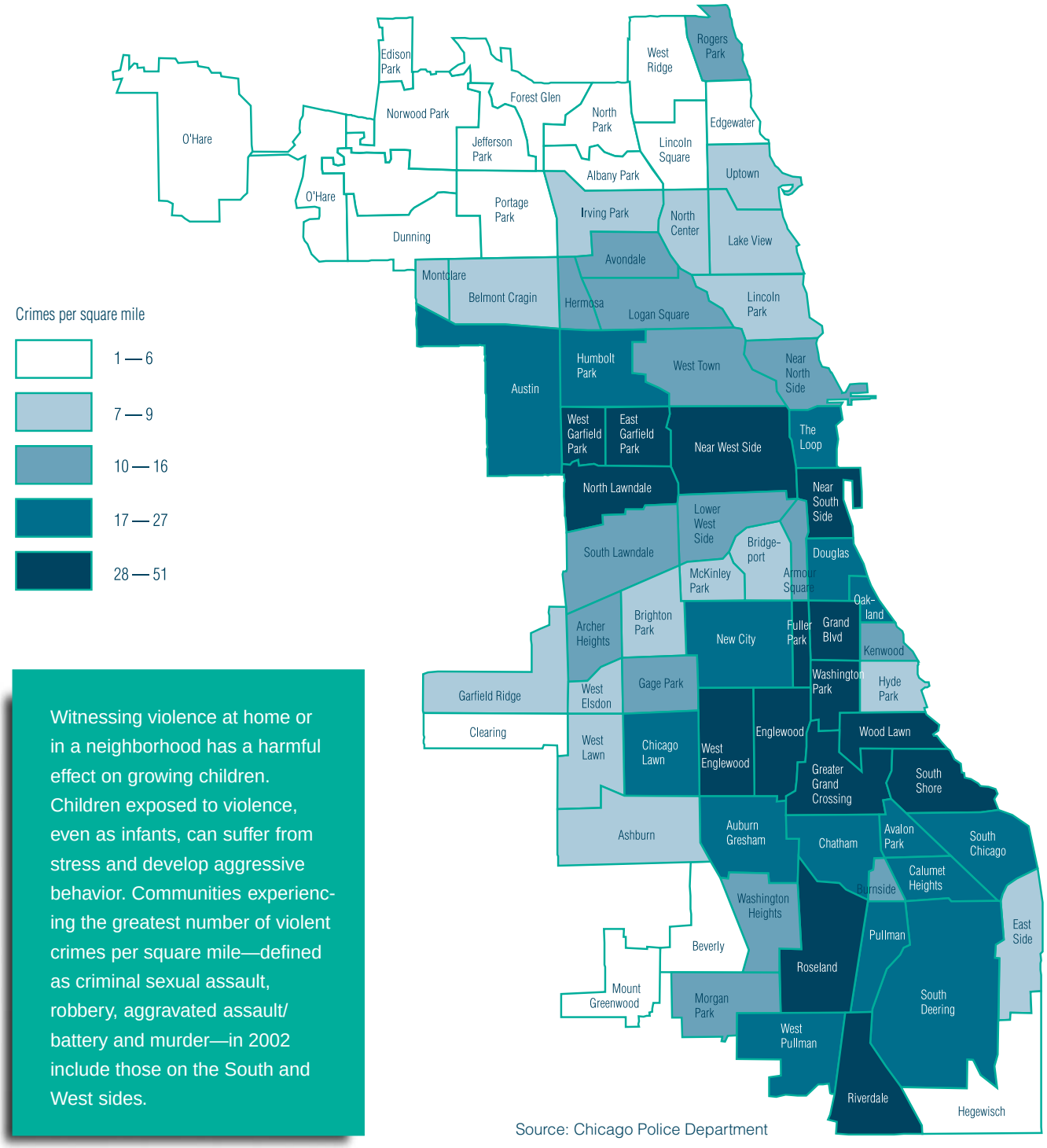
Children with High Blood Lead Levels, 2002



Lead poisoning can have a severe effect on children's developing brains: learning disabilities, behavioral problems, lowered intelligence, stunted growth and hearing loss. Neighborhoods on Chicago's West and South sides have the greatest prevalence of children with elevated levels of lead in their blood. Those neighborhoods are most affected because the housing tends to be deteriorated.

Source: Chicago Department of Public Health

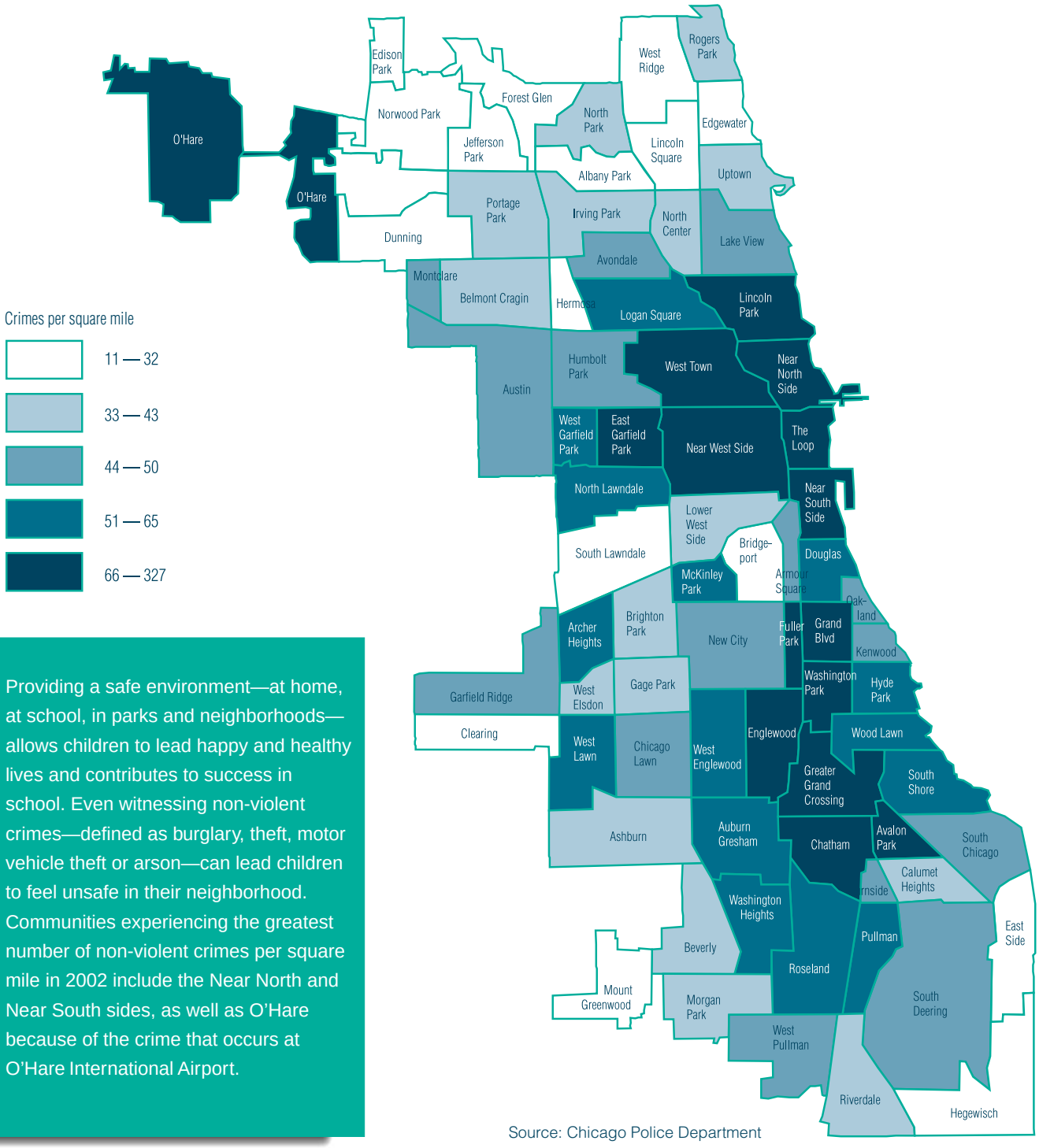
Violent Crimes, 2002



Witnessing violence at home or in a neighborhood has a harmful effect on growing children. Children exposed to violence, even as infants, can suffer from stress and develop aggressive behavior. Communities experiencing the greatest number of violent crimes per square mile—defined as criminal sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault/battery and murder—in 2002 include those on the South and West sides.

Source: Chicago Police Department

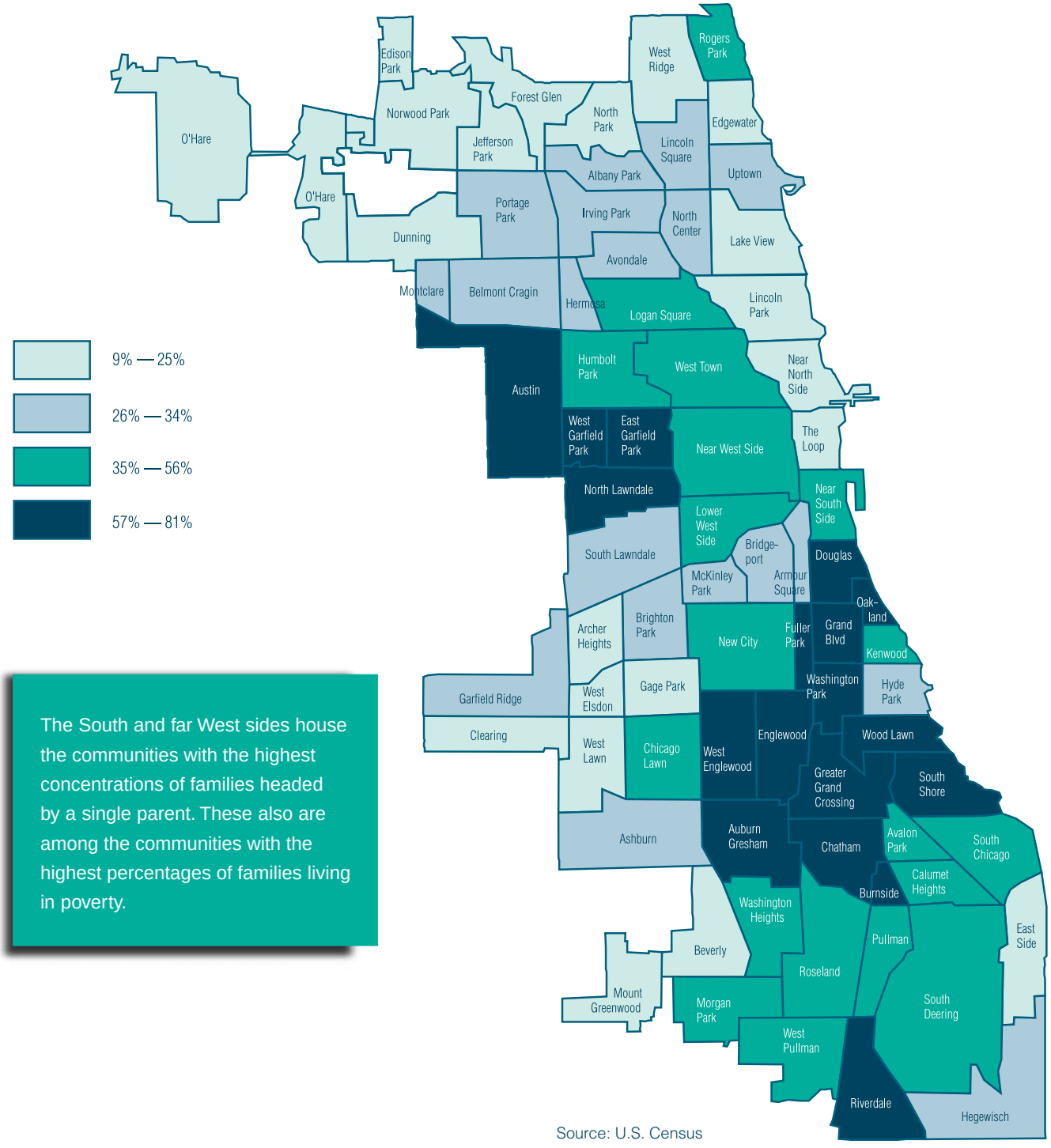
Non-Violent Crimes, 2002



Providing a safe environment—at home, at school, in parks and neighborhoods—allows children to lead happy and healthy lives and contributes to success in school. Even witnessing non-violent crimes—defined as burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft or arson—can lead children to feel unsafe in their neighborhood. Communities experiencing the greatest number of non-violent crimes per square mile in 2002 include the Near North and Near South sides, as well as O'Hare because of the crime that occurs at O'Hare International Airport.

Source: Chicago Police Department

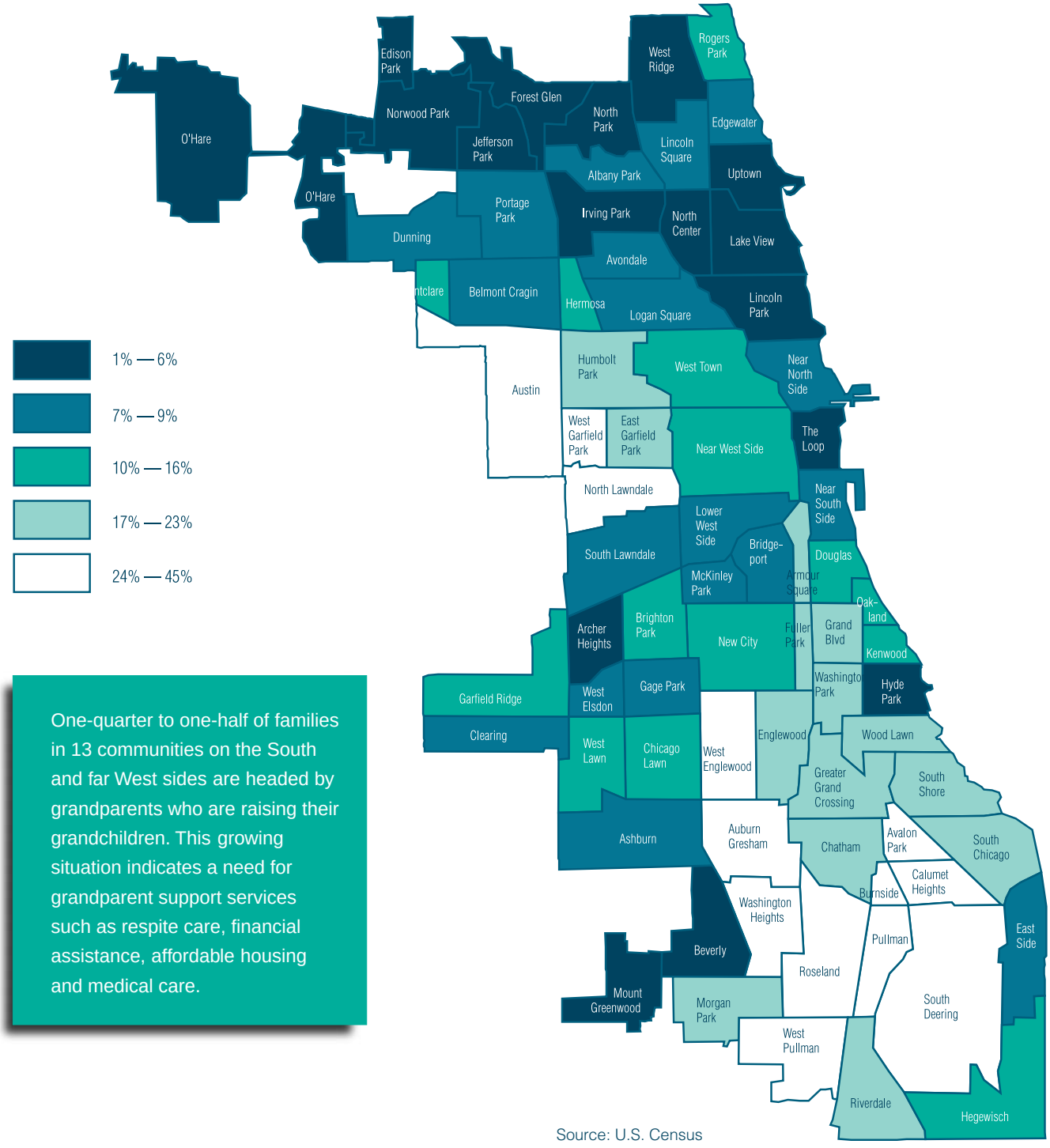
Percent of Families Headed by a Single Parent, 2000



The South and far West sides house the communities with the highest concentrations of families headed by a single parent. These also are among the communities with the highest percentages of families living in poverty.

Source: U.S. Census

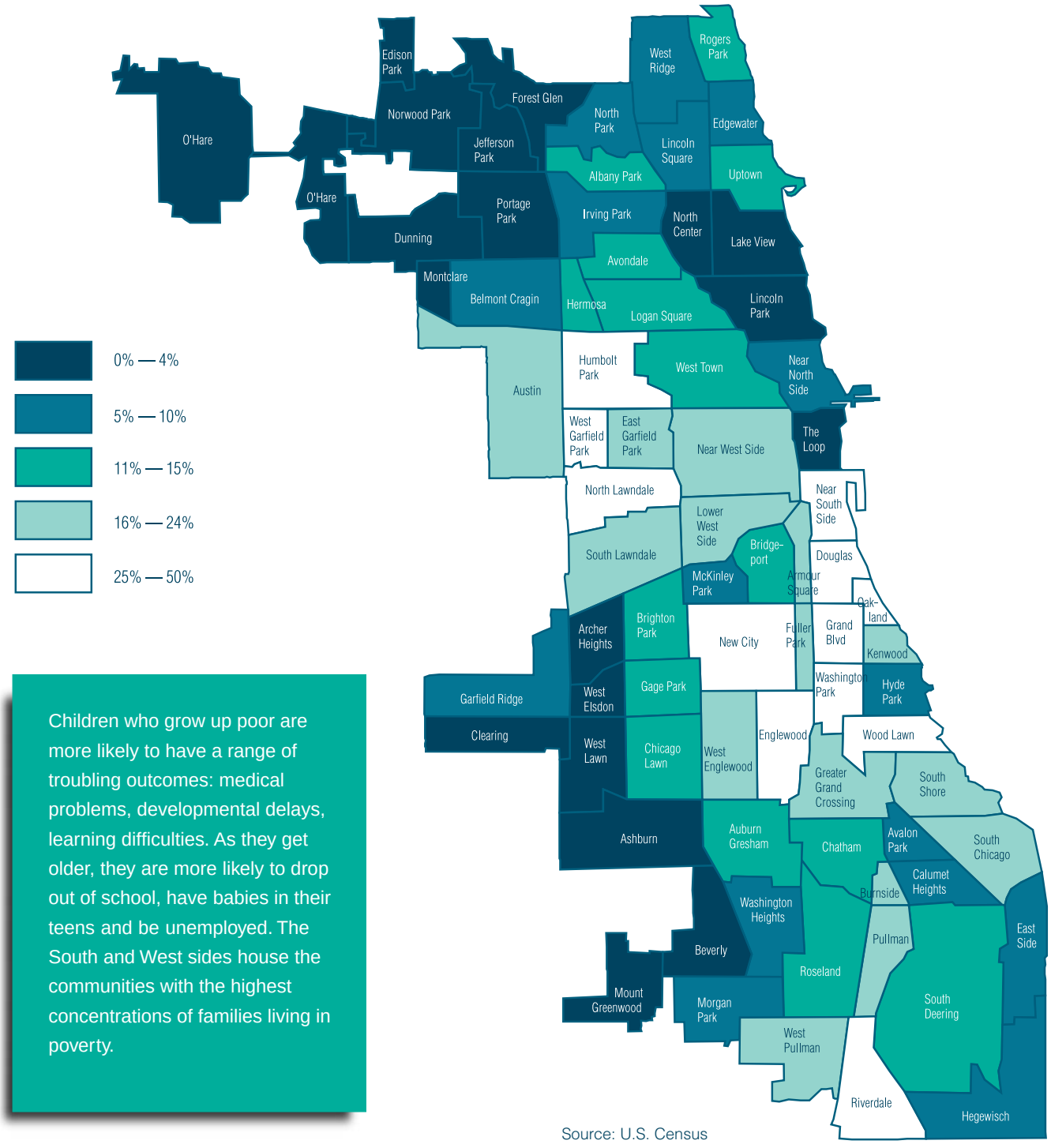
Percent of Families Headed by Grandparents, 2000



One-quarter to one-half of families in 13 communities on the South and far West sides are headed by grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. This growing situation indicates a need for grandparent support services such as respite care, financial assistance, affordable housing and medical care.

Source: U.S. Census

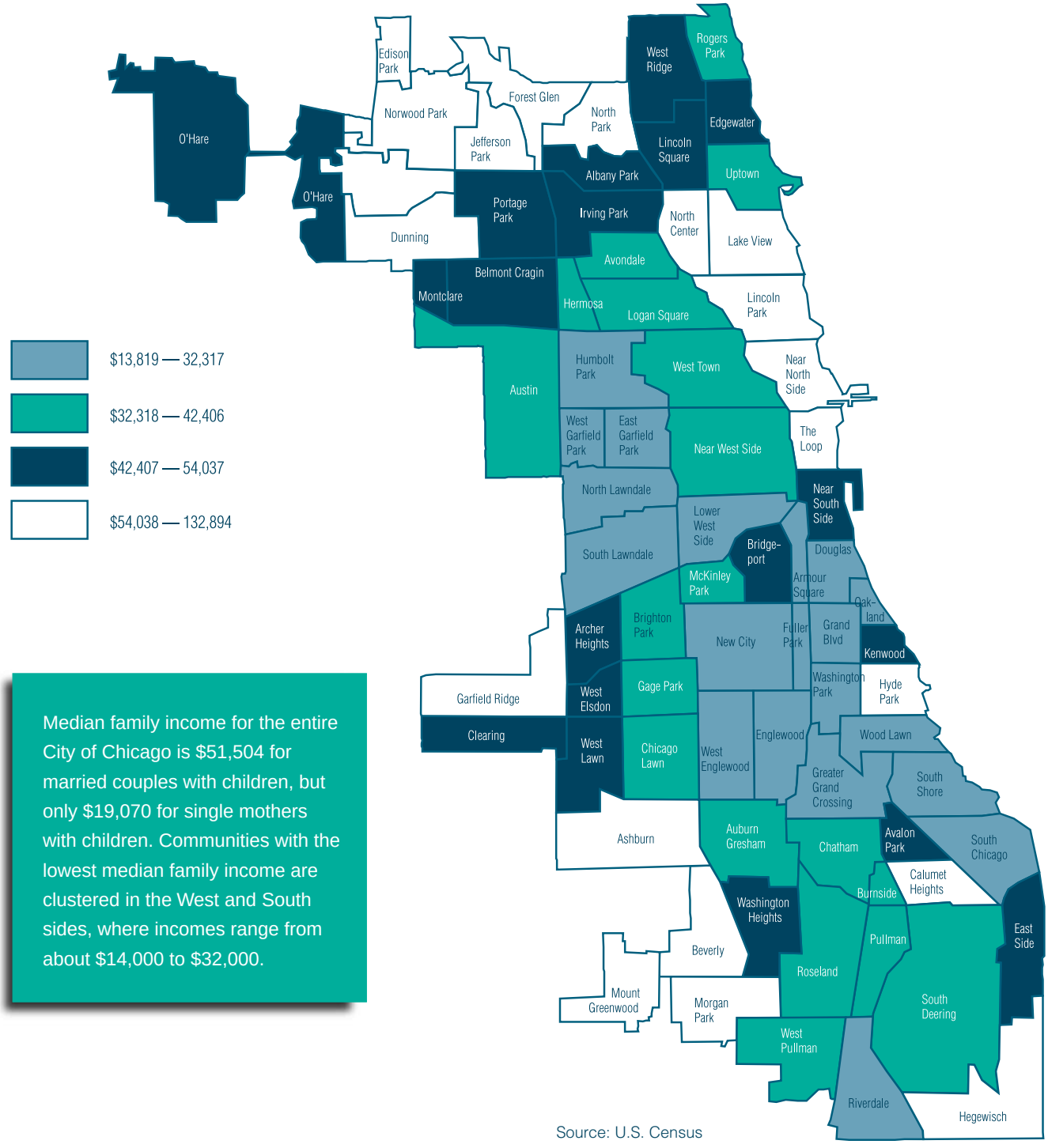
Percent of Families in Poverty, 2000



Children who grow up poor are more likely to have a range of troubling outcomes: medical problems, developmental delays, learning difficulties. As they get older, they are more likely to drop out of school, have babies in their teens and be unemployed. The South and West sides house the communities with the highest concentrations of families living in poverty.

Source: U.S. Census

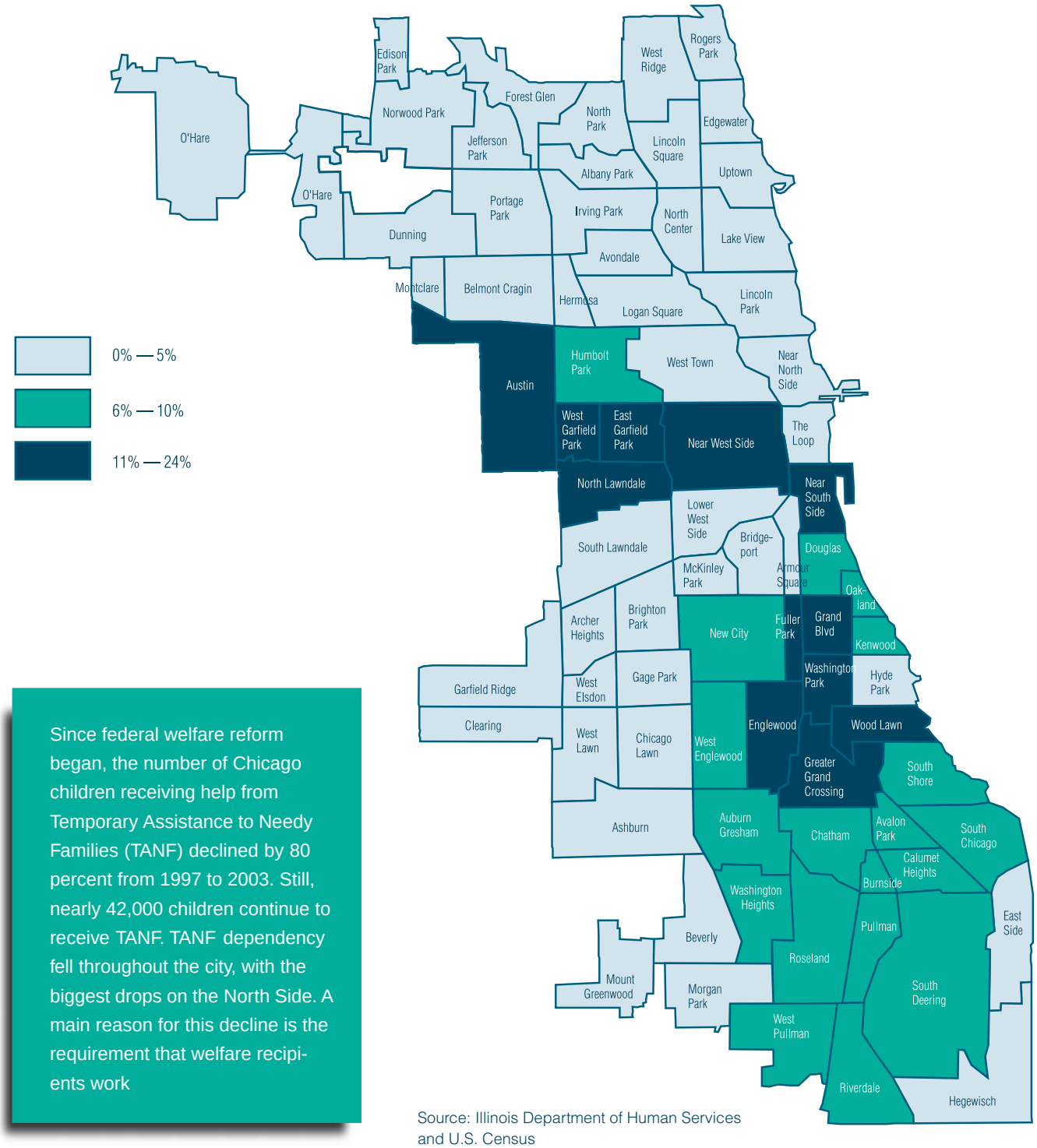
Median Family Income, 2000



Median family income for the entire City of Chicago is $51,504 for married couples with children, but only $19,070 for single mothers with children. Communities with the lowest median family income are clustered in the West and South sides, where incomes range from about $14,000 to $32,000.

Source: U.S. Census

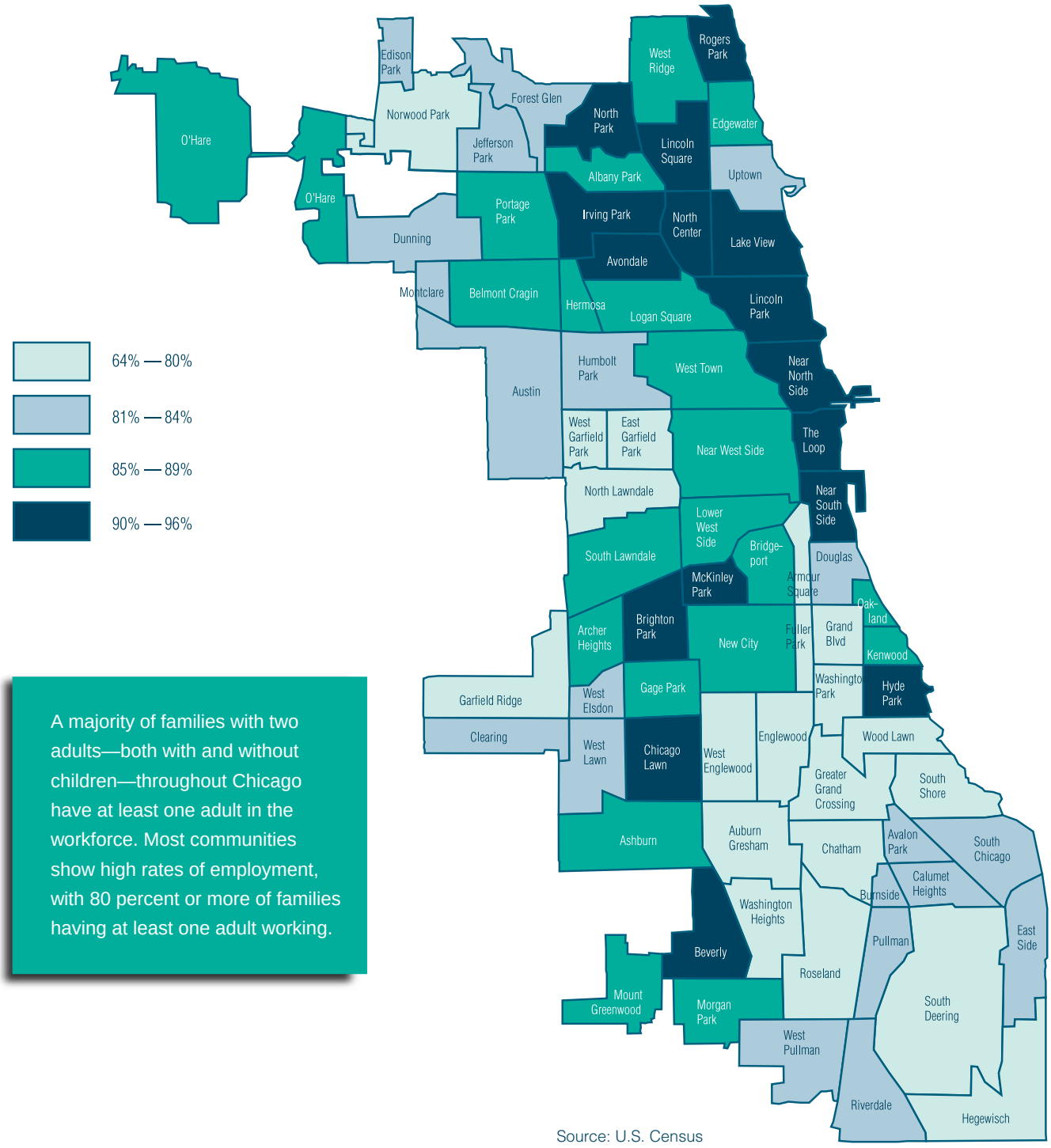
Percent of Children Receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, 2003



Since federal welfare reform began, the number of Chicago children receiving help from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) declined by 80 percent from 1997 to 2003. Still, nearly 42,000 children continue to receive TANF. TANF dependency fell throughout the city, with the biggest drops on the North Side. A main reason for this decline is the requirement that welfare recipi-ents work

Source: Illinois Department of Human Services and U.S. Census

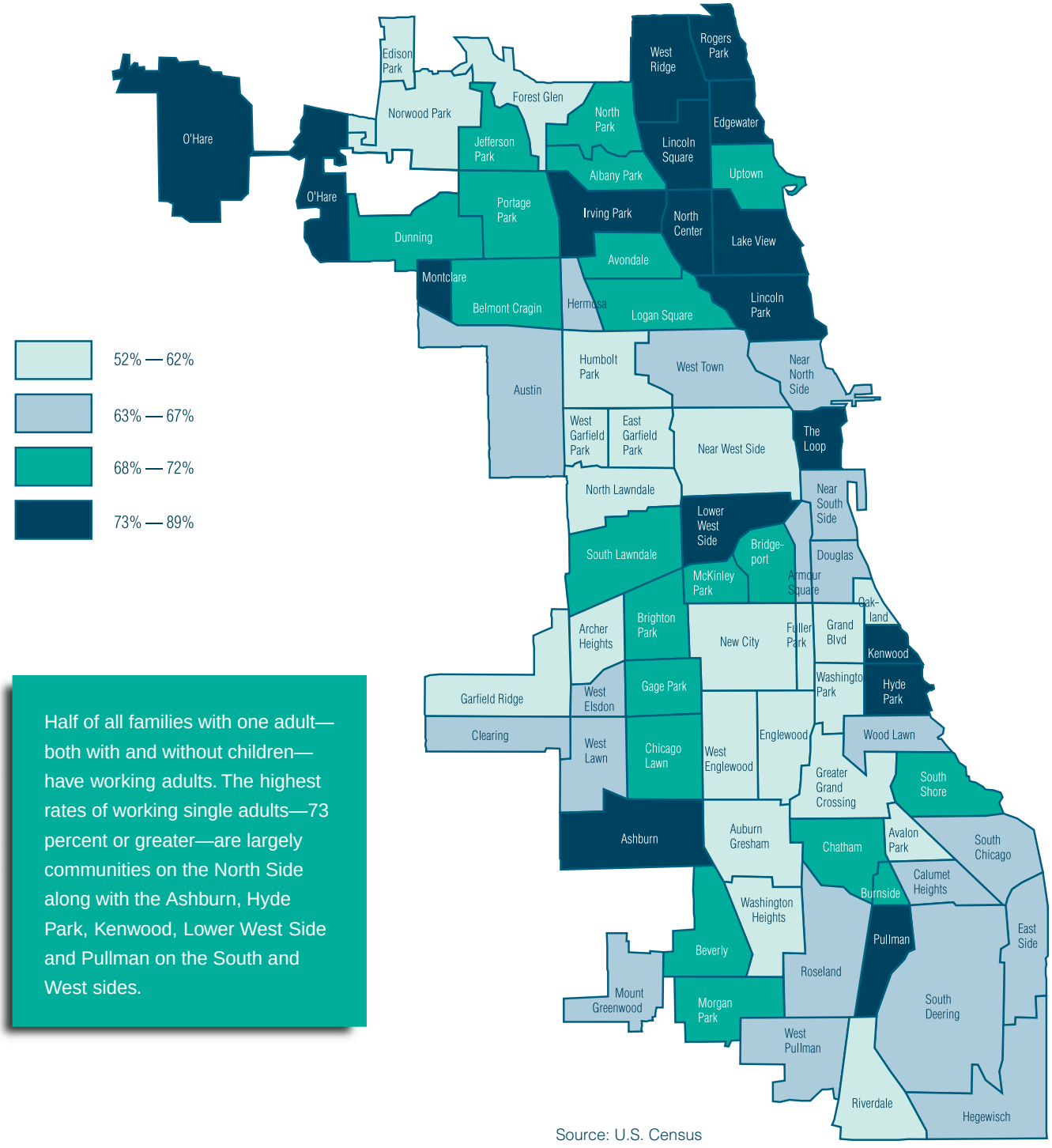
Percent of Two-Adult Families That Are Working, 2000



A majority of families with two adults—both with and without children—throughout Chicago have at least one adult in the workforce. Most communities show high rates of employment, with 80 percent or more of families having at least one adult working.

Source: U.S. Census

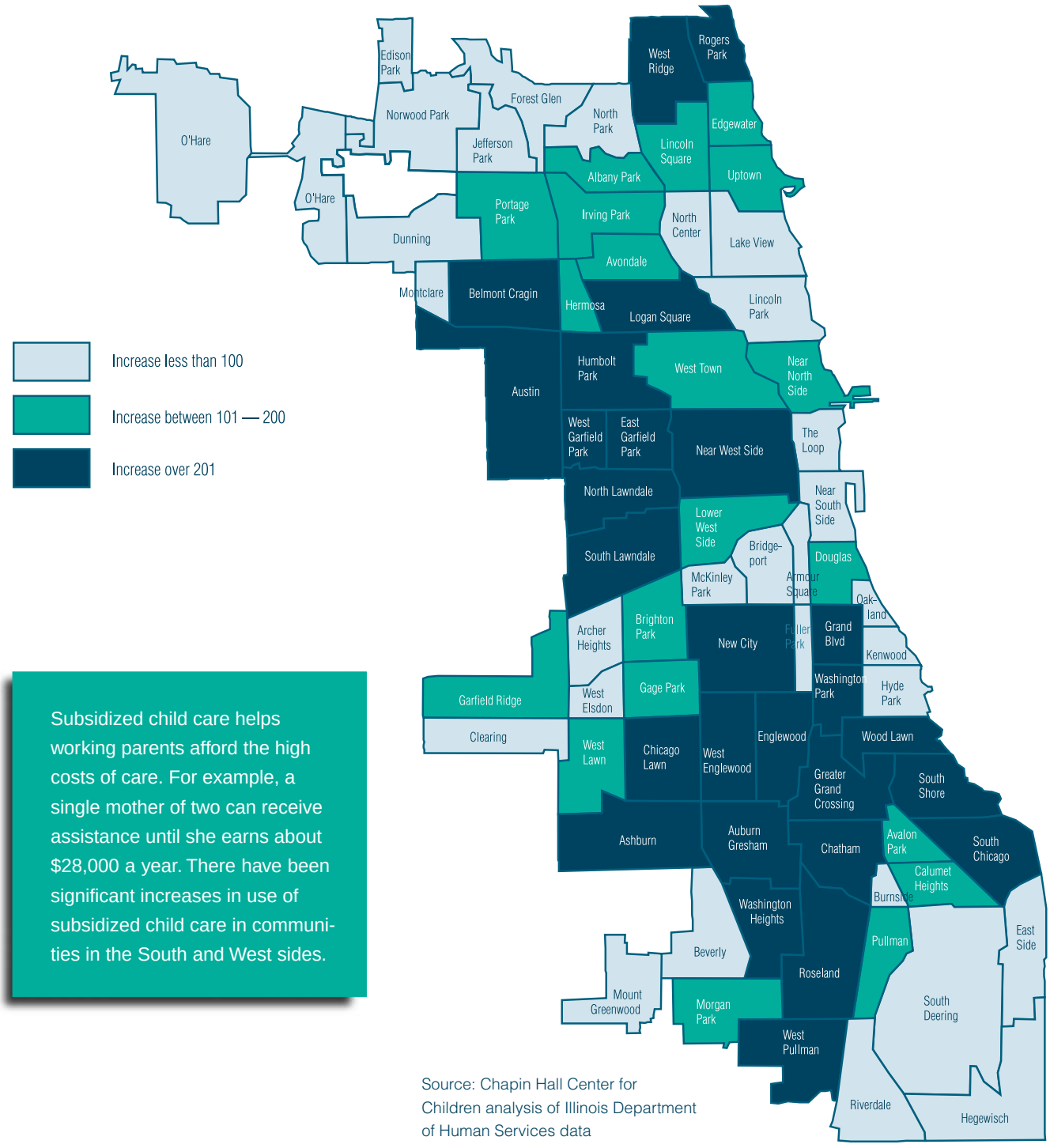
Percent of Single-Adult Families That Are Working, 2000



Half of all families with one adult—both with and without children—have working adults. The highest rates of working single adults—73 percent or greater—are largely communities on the North Side along with the Ashburn, Hyde Park, Kenwood, Lower West Side and Pullman on the South and West sides.

Source: U.S. Census

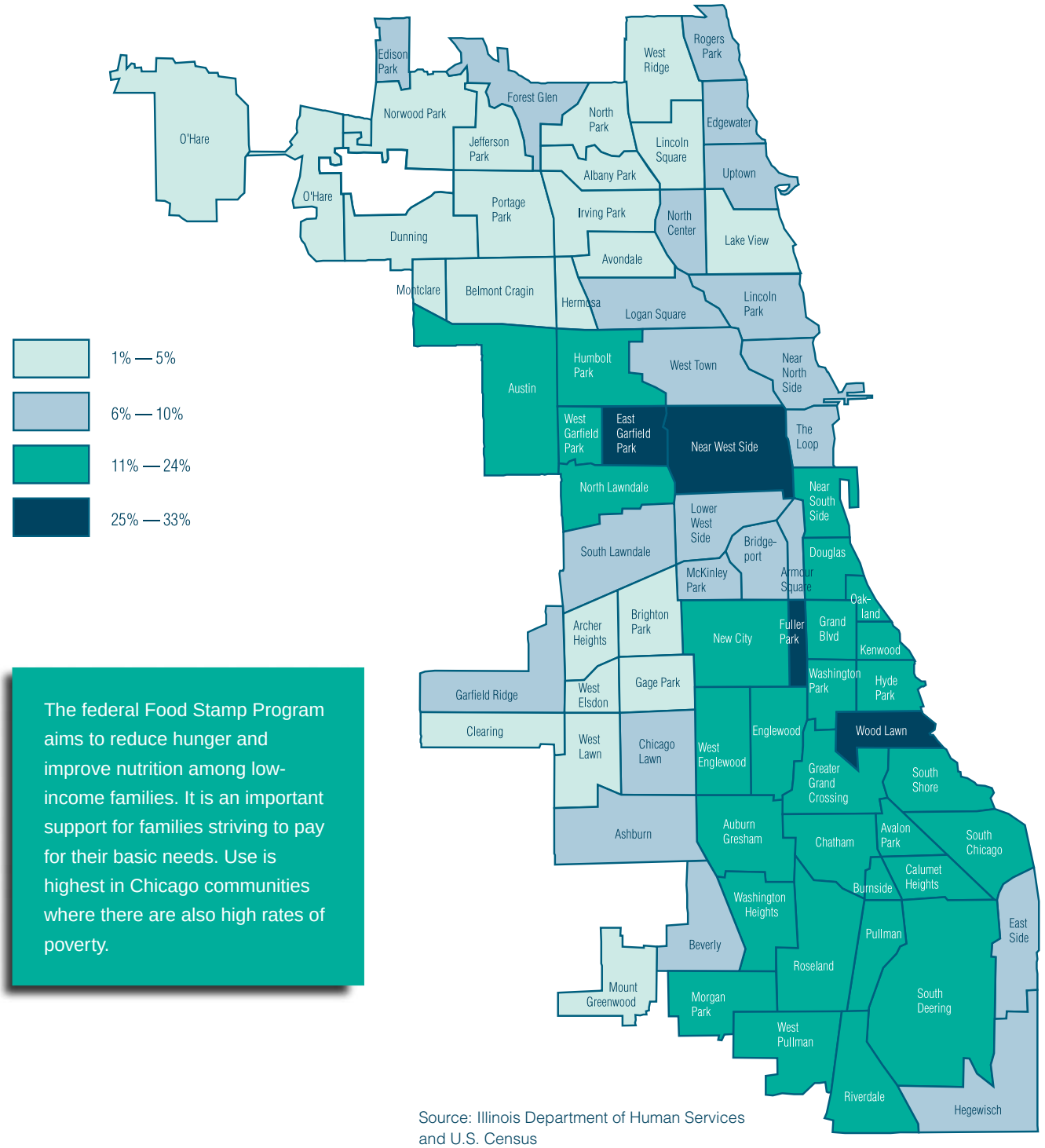
Changes in Children Birth to 5 Receiving Child Care Subsidies, 1998 to 2003



Subsidized child care helps working parents afford the high costs of care. For example, a single mother of two can receive assistance until she earns about $28,000 a year. There have been significant increases in use of subsidized child care in communities in the South and West sides.

Source: Chapin Hall Center for Children analysis of Illinois Department of Human Services data

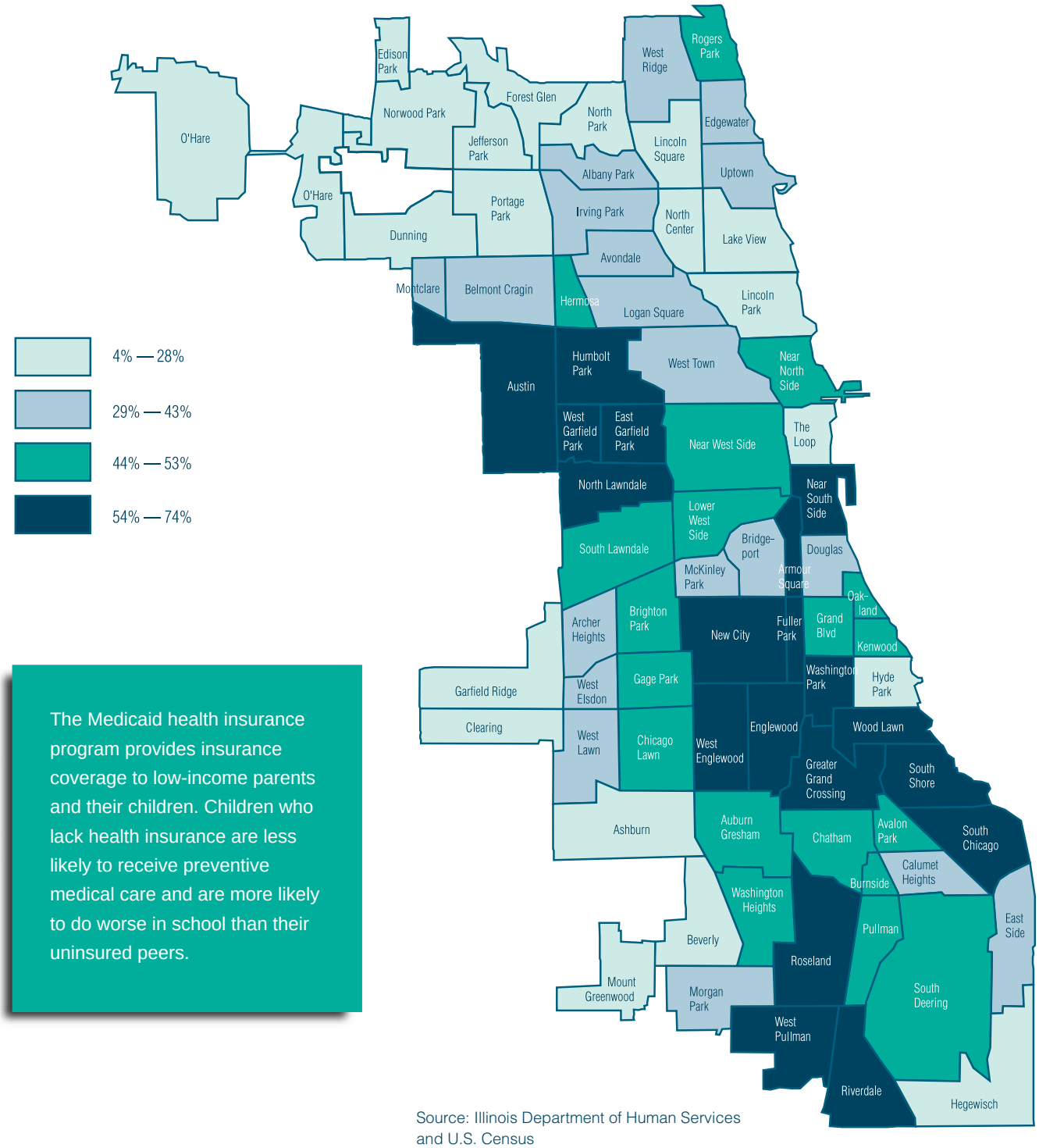
Percent of Children Receiving Food Stamps, 2003



The federal Food Stamp Program aims to reduce hunger and improve nutrition among low-income families. It is an important support for families striving to pay for their basic needs. Use is highest in Chicago communities where there are also high rates of poverty.

Source: Illinois Department of Human Services and U.S. Census

Percent of Children Receiving Medicaid, 2003



The Medicaid health insurance program provides insurance coverage to low-income parents and their children. Children who lack health insurance are less likely to receive preventive medical care and are more likely to do worse in school than their uninsured peers.

Source: Illinois Department of Human Services and U.S. Census

Chicago's Neighborhoods and Communities

Chicago has 77 officially defined community areas. While some of these community names may be familiar, many people instead use traditional or informal neighborhood names such as Pilsen, Chinatown or Wicker Park.

To the right is an alphabetical listing of common neighborhood names and their corresponding community areas.

Neighborhood	Community Area
Altgeld Gardens	Riverdale
Andersonville	Edgewater
Ashburn Estates	Ashburn
Back of the Yards	New City
Belmont Gardens	Hermosa
Belmont Heights	Dunning
Belmont Terrace	Dunning
Beverly View	Ashburn
Beverly Woods	Morgan Park
Big Oaks	Norwood Park
Bowmanville	Lincoln Square
Brainerd	Washington Heights
Brickyard	Belmont Cragin
Bronzeville	Douglas
Bucktown	Logan Square
Budlong Woods	Lincoln Square
Buena Park	Lakeview
Cabrini Green	Near North Side
Chinatown	Armour Square
Chrysler Village	Clearing
Columbus Circle	Near West Side
Cottage Grove Heights	Pullman
Cragin	Belmont Cragin
Crestline	Ashburn
DePaul	Lincoln Park
Dearborn Park	Near South Side
Dearborn Parkway	Near North Side
East Village	West Town
Eden Green	Riverdale
Edgebrook	Forest Glen
Edgewater Glen	Edgewater
Englewood	West Englewood
Epic	Edgewater
Fernwood	Roseland
Fifth City	East Garfield Park
Ford City	West Lawn
Galewood	Austin
Gladstone Park	Jefferson Park
Gold Coast	Near North Side
Golden Gate	Riverdale
Goose Island	Near North Side
Grand Crossing	Greater Grand Crossing
Gresham	Ashburn Gresham
Groveland Park	Douglas
Hamilton Park	Englewood
Hanson Park	Belmont Cragin
Heart of Chicago	Lower West Side
Hollywood Park	North Park
Humboldt Park	Humboldt Park
Hyde Park	Hyde Park
Irving Park	Irving Park
Irving Woods	Dunning
Jackson Park Highlands	South Shore
Jeffrey Manor	South Deering
Kelvyn Park	Hermosa
Kennedy Park	Morgan Park
Kilbourn Park	Irving Park
Lake Meadows	Douglas
Lakewood/Balmoral	Edgewater
Lawndale	North Lawndale
Le Claire Courts	Garfield Ridge
Lithuanian Plaza	Chicago Lawn
Little Village	South Lawndale
Longwood Manor	Washington Heights
Loyola	Rogers Park
Magnificent Mile	Near North Side
Marquette Park	Chicago Lawn
Marynook	Avalon Park
Mayfair	Albany Park
McKinley Park	McKinley Park
Medical Center	Near West Side
Middle Edgebrook	Forest Glen
Montclare	Montclare
Morgan Park	Morgan Park
Mount Greenwood	Mount Greenwood
Museum Park	Near West Side
Noble Square	West Town
North Mayfair	Albany Park
Nortown	West Ridge
Norwood Park	Norwood Park
Old Irving Park	Irving Park
Old Norwood	Norwood Park
Old Town	Near North Side
Old Town Triangle	Lincoln Park
Oriole Park	Norwood Park
Park Manor	Greater Grand Crossing
Park West	Lincoln Park
Parkview	Ashburn
Peterson Park	West Ridge
Pill Hill	Calumet Heights
Pilsen	Near West Side
Prairie Shores	Douglas
Princeton Park	Roseland
Printer's Row	Loop
Pulaski Park	North Park
Ranch Triangle	Lincoln Park
Ravenswood	Lincoln Square
Ravenswood Gardens	Lincoln Square
Ravenswood Manor	Lincoln Square
River North	Near North Side
River West	Near North Side
Roscoe Village	North Center
Rosehill	West Ridge
Saint Ben's	North Center
Sauganash	Forest Glen
Schorsch Forest View	O'Hare
Schorsch Village	Dunning
Scottsdale	Ashburn
Sheffield Neighbors	Lincoln Park
Sheridan Park	Uptown
Sleepy Hollow	Garfield Ridge
South Commons	Douglas
South Loop	Near South Side
State Parkway	Near North Side
Stony Island Park	Avalon Park
Streeterville	Near North Side
The Island	Austin
The Villa	Irving Park
Tri-Taylor	Near West Side
Ukranian Village	West Town
Union Ridge	Norwood Park
University Village	Near West Side
Vittum Park	Garfield Ridge
West Morgan Park	Morgan Park
Wentworth Gardens	Armour Square
West Beverly	Beverly
West Chesterfield	Chatham
West Rogers Park	West Ridge
Wicker Park	West Town
Wildwood	Forest Glen
Wrightwood	Ashburn
Wrightwood Neighbors	Lincoln Park
Wrigleyville	Lakeview

Data Definitions and Sources

Percent of Total Population 18 and Under, 2000
Definition: This measures the number of children ages birth through 18.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Density of Children, 2000
Definition: This measures the number of children ages birth through 18 per square mile.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Changes in Total Child Population, 1990 to 2000
Definition: This measures changes in the 18-and-under population from 1990 to 2000.
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3A and 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Changes in 6-Year-Olds Attending Chicago Public Schools, 2000 to 2002
Definition: This counts the number of 6-year-olds who were enrolled in any grade in September 2000 and September 2002.
Source: Chapin Hall Center for Children analysis of Chicago Public Schools Student Information System

Percent of Children Who Are Hispanic, 2000
Definition: Children are defined as age 19 or younger. Race is a self-identification question on the decennial census in which respondents choose the race or races with which they most closely identify. Hispanic is defined as people who identified themselves as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban or "other Spanish, Hispanic or Latino." People who are Hispanic may be of any race.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Percent of Children Who Are Black, 2000
Definition: Children are defined as age 19 or younger. Race is a self-identification question on the decennial census in which respondents choose the race or races with which they most closely identify. The 2000 Census was the first to allow respondents to select more than one racial category. We display respondents counted as black or African American alone.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Percent of Children Who Are White, 2000
Definition: Children are defined as age 19 or younger. Race is a self-identification question on the decennial census in which respondents choose the race or races with which they most closely identify. The 2000 Census was the first to allow respondents to select more than one racial category. We display respondents counted as white alone.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Percent of Children Who Are Asian, 2000
Definition: Children are defined as age 19 or younger. Race is a self-identification question on the decennial census in which respondents choose the race or races with which they most closely identify. The 2000 Census was the first to allow respondents to select more than one racial category. We display respondents counted as Asian alone.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Changes in Young Child Population (Birth to 5), 1996 to 2000
Definition: This measures changes in the birth-to-5 population from 1996 to 2000.
Sources: Chapin Hall Center Children projections of child population (for 1996 data) and U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3 (for 2000 data)

Class of 2002 High School Dropout Rate
Definition: This measures the percentage of students entering high school together in 1998 that dropped out before graduating in 2002.
Source: Consortium on Chicago School Research

Children Tested for Lead Poisoning, 2002
Definition: Children are defined as age 6 or younger. The number of children tested includes the total number of unique children with any blood lead test (capillary or venous) reported in 2002. Children with a community area of "unknown" were reported with addresses that could not be geocoded to a particular location in the city (street address was invalid or missing or was a post office box), but were identified as being a Chicago resident using the city or zip code.
Source: Chicago Department of Public Health

Children With High Blood Lead Levels, 2002
Definition: Children are defined as age 6 or younger. The number of children with an elevated blood lead level (i.e. lead poisoned) counts the number of children whose highest venous blood lead level was 10 micrograms per deciliter or higher. High capillary tests are excluded from counts of elevated tests. Children with a community area of "unknown" were reported with addresses that could not be geocoded to a particular location in the city (street address was invalid or missing or was a post office box), but were identified as being a Chicago resident using the city or zip code.
Source: Chicago Department of Public Health

Violent Crimes, 2002
Definition: Violent crimes are criminal sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault/battery and murder. Data are displayed as the number of crimes per square mile.
Source: Chicago Police Department, 2002 Annual Report

Non-Violent Crimes, 2002
Definition: Non-violent crimes—or property crimes—are burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson. Data are displayed as the number of crimes per square mile.
Source: Chicago Police Department, 2002 Annual Report

Percent of Families in Poverty, 2000
Definition: A family is a group of two or more people with own children who reside together and are related by birth, marriage or adoption. A family is considered to be in poverty if the family's income falls below the poverty threshold as determined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. The poverty threshold is meant to reflect the income that can sustain a family's basic needs for a year. It counts income before taxes and does not include capital gains and non-cash benefits such as food stamps, Medicaid and public housing. Poverty thresholds vary by family size. For example, the poverty threshold for a family of four was $17,960 in 2000.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Median Family Income, 2000
Definition: A family is a group of two or more people with own children who reside together and are related by birth, marriage or adoption.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Percent of Families Headed by a Single Parent, 2000
Definition: A family is a group of two or more people with own children who reside together and are related by birth, marriage or adoption. This data reflects families headed by a single parent.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Percent of Families Headed by a Grandparent, 2000
Definition: A family is a group of two or more people with own children who reside together and are related by birth, marriage or adoption. This data reflects families headed by a grandparent.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Percent of Children Receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, 2003
Definition: Data are active cases in September 2003. Children grantees refers to TANF Medical Assistance Grant recipients.
Source: Illinois Department of Human Services

Percent of Two-Parent Families That Are Working, 2000
Definition: A family is a group of two or more people who reside together and are related by birth, marriage or adoption. Families include those with children and with no children. Adults are defined as being in the labor force if they were working or with a job but not at work (due to illness or vacation, for example) during the reference week. Those who are excluded include those whose only activity consisted of work around the house or unpaid volunteer work. Also excluded are people on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces. The reference week is the calendar week preceding the date on which the respondents completed their questionnaire.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Percent of Single-Parent Families That Are Working, 2000
Definition: A family is a group of two or more people who reside together and are related by birth, marriage or adoption. Families include those with children and with no children. Adults are defined as being in the labor force if they were working or with a job but not at work (due to illness or vacation, for example) during the reference week. Those who are excluded include those whose only activity consisted of work around the house or unpaid volunteer work. Also excluded are people on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces. The reference week is the calendar week preceding the date on which the respondents completed their questionnaire.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 3

Changes in Children Birth to 5 Receiving Child Care Subsidies, 1998 to 2003
Definition: This reflects the number of children ages birth through 5 who received a child care subsidy certificate from the Illinois Department of Human Services.
Source: Chapin Hall Center for Children analysis of Illinois Department of Human Services data

Children Receiving Food Stamps, 2003
Definition: Data are active cases in September 2003. This displays the number of children receiving benefits from the federal Food Stamp Program.
Source: Illinois Department of Human Services

Children Receiving Medicaid, 2003
Definition: Data are active cases in September 2003. Medicaid is available to children age 19 and younger. Infants qualify if their family income is less than twice the federal poverty level, while children ages 1 to 19 qualify if their family income is less than 133 percent of the poverty level.
Source: Illinois Department of Human Services

Acknowledgements

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