Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
PolicyLab

A Portrait of Disadvantage: Understanding Poverty's Influence on Child Development

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A new PolicyLab *Research at a Glance* brief has serious implications for how we think about addressing child poverty. Researchers, clinicians and child welfare advocates have long known that poverty can negatively influence child development. Kids in low-income families are more likely to experience food insecurity, and their parents are less likely to be educated on best parenting practices. Since many studies focus on children older than two years of age, PolicyLab researcher Hallam Hurt, MD, and colleague Laura Betancourt, PhD, wanted to understand how early the effects of poverty can be seen in infants. They studied low- and higher-income infants under the age of one, evaluating their risk of developmental disadvantage in domains such as their home and neighborhood environments. As outlined in the new brief, they found that infants in low-income households were at higher risk for developmental disadvantage that their higher-income counterparts in more than a dozen risk factors.

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