Institute for Civic Engagement
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DOCUDRAMA
Data Sheet

Income and finances
- Over the last 20 years, incomes for wealthy people in the 35- to 55-year-old age bracket rose by about 20%, but for poor people in that age group, income fell by about 20% (Bui, 2014).
- The Federal poverty level for a family of three is $19,530/year or less (US Dept. of HHS, 2013).
- The “living wage” for a family of three (two adults, one child) in New York City is $32.30/hour, or $67,178/year (MIT.edu, 2015).
- NYCs minimum wage is currently $8/hr., but some workers will be covered by an expansion of the city’s Living Wage provisions, which increases “their gross income from $16,640 to $27,310 per year” (NYC.gov., 2014).
- In 2012, more than one in five (22% of) US children under the age of six lived in poverty (Thompson and Haskins, 2014, p. 2).
- Rent-to-own businesses can become traps for their customers, who might not be told the actual interest rates on the items (such as large TV screens) that they renting. The Public Interest Research Group reports that some rent-to-own businesses charge interest rates of 220%APR (PIRG, n.d.).

Homelessness and Hunger
- More than 48.1 million Americans lived in households that were struggling against hunger in 2014, according to new data on food insecurity released [on September 9, 2015] by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Economic Research Service (Adach, 2015).
- According to Federal law, a homeless child is one without a "fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence" (Sparks, 2014, p. 32). By this definition, sleeping at a different friend’s house each night qualifies a child as being homeless.
- The US has almost 1.3 million homeless students. That number is 8% larger than last year, and it is 85% larger than the beginning of the recession (Paulson, 2014).
- In 2010, the number of cases that received emergency housing assistance in Cortland County for at least one night each month, was 17. Last year, in 2014, that number almost doubled to 31. That is in a county with fewer than 50,000 people (Neno, 2015, p. 1).
Stress. A regular part of life in poor families is long-term stress.

- Although people need some stress for healthy development (Sandstrom & Huerta, 2013, p. 12), an adult’s excessive stress hurts his/her productivity at work (Tugend, 2014).
- A parent’s stress can hurt the child’s health; the child can suffer from
  o Being raised by people other than their parents (Sparks, 2014, p. 32) (When the parent, feeling unable to provide for the child, asks friends or family to house and feed the child).
  o Increased cases of domestic violence (Sparks, 2014, p. 32).
  o Obesity (Hedwig et al, 2014, p. e70).
    - Children in low-income families are 1.6 times more likely to be obese than their upper-income peers (Hedwig et al, 2014, p. e70).
    - Overweight or obese children live with a higher risk of serious health issues than adults, including diabetes, heart disease, stroke, certain cancers (Seith and Isakson, 2011, p. 10), hypertension, and an impaired immune system (Katz et al, 2012, p. 471).
  o “Poor academic performance, a lack of social competence, and an inability to regulate emotions” (Sandstrom & Huerta, 2013, p. 13).

Health Care

- 36 million people in the US do not have health insurance (Gaynor, 2015).
- “A key safety net for those without coverage are the more than 1,200 free and charitable clinics across the country, which have seen a 40 percent bump in patient demand since 2012, for services from pediatric vaccinations to long-term management of diabetes for adults, according to the National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (NAFCC)” (Gaynor, 2015).
- “Those falling through the cracks include many of the working poor who do not qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford insurance premiums and related out-of-pocket medical costs, those living in states that rejected the Medicaid expansion and millions of immigrants living and working in the country illegally, who are prohibited from applying” (Gaynor, 2015).
- Nursing assistants suffer almost as many on-the-job musculoskeletal injuries as orderlies and firefighters, but many hospitals do not pay for treatment of those injuries (Zwerdling, 2015).

Health – External Pollutants

- When factories are near housing, that housing is often low-income housing.
- More than half of the almost 2 million apartments that are federally-subsidized are within a mile of factories that have had toxic emissions (Crain).
- Pollution can also come from inside the house:
- Lead paint is still found in older, low-income houses (Crain).
- Smoking is more likely in low-income, lower-education families.
Health, Internal Pollutants

- Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS), or "second-hand smoke" increases a child’s risk of contracting lower respiratory infections, inflammatory bowel disease, sleep disturbances, bronchitis, pneumonia, and leukemia (Al-Sayed and Ibrahim, 2012, p. 636).

- Non-nutritious eating habits are a kind of internal toxin.
  - Some people do not know how to cook (for example) zucchini.
  - Some people cook in non-nutritious ways, such as frying.
  - Some eat a lot of processed foods, which have high sugar levels— which are fattening.
  - Some eat a lot of canned foods; those foods’ high salt content raises blood pressure.

Health - Sex

- Many people—including college students—have misunderstandings about sex.
- Those misunderstandings can lead to STDs, to pregnancy—or to both.
- In 2012,
  - 2 out of every 5 births in the US were to unmarried individuals (CDC).
  - The birthrate for US teens was almost 1 in 3 (CDC).

- Toxins inside houses can be a major problem.
  - In 2010, 57 out of every 10,000 NYS children (birth to 4 years) was hospitalized for asthma (Cortland Counts, 2014).
  - In 2012, almost one in three pregnant women in Cortland County smoked cigarettes (Cortland Counts, 2014).

Language; Culture

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of non-English speaking children in US public schools rose by 40%. Of the 53 million US public school children in fall of 2010, ten percent—5.3 million—could not speak English (Garcia, 2011, p. 47).

Education

- According to a recent report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, (OECD), an average of 70% of 3-year-old children in OECD nations “are enrolled in education programs. In the United States, it’s 38 percent” (Kristof, 2014).
- Per the OECD report, “American teachers work far longer hours than their counterparts abroad. Yet American teachers earn 68 percent as much as the average American college-educated worker, while the O.E.C.D. average is 88 percent” (Kristof, 2014).
- The Head-Start Program improves children's education and health, and it lowers their chances of being charged with a crime (National Head Start Association)
References


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