

Demographic Change Amplifying Racial Inequities In America

By Suzanne Gamboa
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) - One-year-old Ka'Lani is so fascinated by a round plastic toy that she doesn't see her mother, Ke'sha Scrivner, walk into the Martha's Table day care, chanting her name while softly clapping out a beat that Ka'Lani keeps with a few bounces on her bottom.

Once on welfare, Scrivner worked her way off by studying early childhood education and landing a full-time job for the District of Columbia's education superintendent. She sees education as the path to a better life for her and her five children, pushing them to finish high school and continue with college or a trade school.

Whether her children can beat the statistics that show lagging graduation rates for black children is important not just to her family. The success of Ka'Lani and other minority children who will form a new majority is crucial to future U.S. economic competitiveness.

A wave of immigration, the aging of non-Hispanic white women beyond child-bearing years and a new baby boom are diminishing the proportion of children who are white. Already, half of U.S. children younger than 1 are Hispanic, Black, Asian, Native American or of mixed races.

"A lot of people think demographics alone will bring about change and it won't," said Gail Christopher, who heads the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's America Healing project on racial equity. "If attitudes and behaviors don't change, demographics will just mean we'll have a majority population that is low-income, improperly educated, disproportionately incarcerated with greater health disparities."

In 2010, 39.4 percent of black children, 34 percent of Hispanic children and 38 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native children lived in poverty, defined as an annual income of \$22,113 that year for a family of four. That compares with about 18 percent of white, non-Hispanic children, according to Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey.

Asian children overall fare better, with 13.5 percent living in poverty, the survey said.

The overrepresentation of minority children among the poor is

not new. What is new is that minority children will, in the not-too-distant future, form the core of the nation's workforce, and their taxes will be depended on to keep solvent entitlement programs for the elderly.

Based on where things stand for nonwhite children today, it's not hard to make some educated guesses about what the future holds for the youngest of America's children who already are a majority of their age group, said Sam Fulwood III, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress.

The recent recession worsened conditions for many children, but minorities were hard hit and are having more difficulty recovering.

The Pew Charitable Trusts found that, from 1999 to 2009, 23 percent of black families and 27 percent of Hispanic families experienced long-term unemployment, compared with 11 percent of white families. Pew Research Center, a subsidiary, found that the median wealth of white households is 20 times that of black households and 18 times that of Hispanic households.

That means more minority families end up in poor neighborhoods with underperforming school systems, leading to lower graduation rates and lower lifetime earnings, said Leonard Greenhalgh, a professor of management at Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.

"You are looking at the future workforce of the United States — what we need to be competitive against rival economies such as India and China, and we are not educating the largest, fastest growing percentage of the U.S. workforce, so as a nation we lose competitive advantage," Greenhalgh said.

It all starts with preschool, where overall enrollment has been increasing but Hispanic children are less likely to be included. Of Hispanic children ages 3 to 5 in the U.S., 13.4 percent were enrolled in full-day public or private nursery school in 2011, according to data from the National Center for Education Statistics.

That compares with 25.8 percent of black children enrolled in full-day preschool and 18.1 percent of white children. But already, Hispanics are one-quarter of students enrolled in public schools.

The situation prompted San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro to push for voter approval to raise the sales tax and expand preschool opportunities in his city, which is 63.2 percent Hispanic.

"I see a gap in educational achievement for San Antonio children versus children in Texas and the nation, and a large percentage of those are minority children and of course, we wanted to change that trajectory," Castro said in an interview.

President Barack Obama has proposed raising cigarette taxes to help pay for preschools. He has proposed a program to entice states to expand preschool programs to reach families with incomes up to twice the poverty line, and to require full-day kindergarten. But the partisan political showdown over government spending and raising taxes has led to across-the-board federal spending cuts and stalls in other legislation that may delay those proposals.

Sheila Smith, early childhood director at Columbia University's National Center for Children in Poverty, points to years of research that show kindergarteners perform better if they received high-quality early care, and if teachers used specific strategies aimed at developing behavior and language and math skills.

"If you have minority children from low-income families in very enriched preschool settings ... we see they make very big gains," Smith said. "But how many classrooms are very enriched to the point that we see kids making these very big gains? Not nearly enough."

Compounding the issue, experts say, is immigration status. About 4.5 million children of all races born in the U.S. have at least one parent not legally in the U.S., according to the Pew Hispanic Center. More than two-thirds of impoverished Latino children are the children of at least one immigrant parent, the center reported.

Latino and Asian immigrants over past two decades are driving a significant portion of the demographic change, and ensuring their children can succeed is critical, said Brookings Institution demographer William Frey.

"They're the future of our labor force. They're the future of our economy," Frey said. "They're the people who white baby boomers are

going to have to depend on for their Social Security, for their Medicare and just for a productive economy to keep all of us going in the future."

The picture isn't all bleak. History and recent data show improvements for the next generations of immigrant families.

The Pew Research Center found second-generation Americans, some 20 million U.S.-born children of 20th century immigrants, are better off than their immigrant parents. They have higher incomes, more graduate from college and are homeowners and fewer live in poverty, the study found.

Many experts on low-income children see good health as one more building block for education and prosperity. Children are less likely to learn if they are ill and missing school and unable to see a doctor.

On a recent weekday, 9-month-old Anderson sat on his mother's lap in the waiting room of the clinic at Mary's Center, a community organization in the nation's capital. He had struggled for three days with diarrhea, cold symptoms and vomiting.

He and his two siblings are American citizens, but their father and mother, Alba, who did not want her last names revealed because neither parent is in the country legally, are not. The children's health care is covered by Medicaid, and Alba says she wants them to be healthy so they can have a better life. "They have to go to college," said Alba, originally from El Salvador. "They have to do better, since their mother can't."

Anderson's generation will be the first to fully grow up under the new federal health insurance mandate taking effect next year. The act requires free preventive services and also extends money for the Children's Health Insurance Program through 2015.

In 2011, about 94 percent of black children, 92.3 percent of Asian/Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander children and 95 percent of white children had health insurance coverage, while 87.2 percent of Hispanic children and 83.4 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native children had some form of health insurance coverage, according to a study by Georgetown University's Center for Children and Families.

programs, the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics reported.

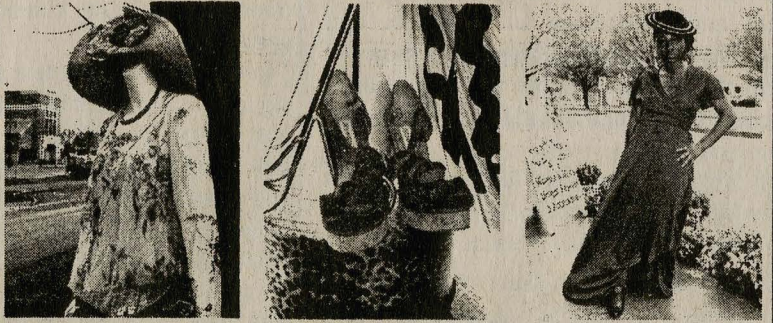
"We have the increasing rates of childhood asthma, childhood obesity and these are going to lead to problems later in life, so it's far better to make sure those kids have health insurance so you can address those issues as much as possible now," Alker said.

Chici Baby's

Consignment & Style Boutique

High End Fashions For Men & Women At Great Prices

LADIES • GENTLEMEN • JUNIORS • ACCESSORIES • VINTAGE • CONTEMPORARY



419 South Second St., Suite 3, Renton, WA 98057

Tues - Sat. 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

(425) 277-7769

ALL SIZES SHOES PURSES



Florene's 2 Express Towing & Recovery Service LLC.

\$50.00 Towing
FREE Mileage
24 Hrs A Day

206-306-3626

Washington Dental Clinic

Complete Family Dental Care For All Ages



Services Include:

- COSMETIC: Cosmetic Bonding For White, Even Smile, Porcelain & Veneer Inlays
- PREVENTIVE: Cleaning, X-rays, Fluoride, Examinations
- RESTORATIVE: Fillings, Crowns, Bridges, Root Canals, Extractions
- DENTURES: New Dentures, Repairs, Relines

Emergency Appointments Available
New Patients Welcome

Call us at (206) 722-8211

4543 Rainier Avenue South
Seattle, WA

Demonstrations

Continued From Front Page

whether Zimmerman violated Trayvon's civil rights when he spewed profanity, followed Trayvon after being told by a police dispatcher not to do so, and fired the fatal shot that killed Trayvon's dreams and those of his family."

Writing on his blog, Sharpton said, "Closely observing the Zimmerman trial, one fact served as a glaring reminder of the insanity of the entire fiasco: Zimmerman never was a cop. He was a citizen who was told by 911 dispatchers not to follow Trayvon; he was told, 'We don't need you to do that.' He, a self-professed community watchman, made assumptions such as, 'This guy looks like he's up to no good or he's on drugs or something.' Zimmerman even had the audacity to say 'f_king punks. These a_holes, they always get away.' Well, who are 'they'? The bottom line is, if Zimmerman had not defied the orders of the 911 dispatcher and acted on his own assumptions, Trayvon would be in the loving arms of his parents today."

Zimmerman's parents, Robert and Gladys Zimmerman, granted an interview to ABC News. When asked if his son were a racist, Robert Zimmerman replied: "Absolutely not. He's never been taught to be a racist."

In that same joint interview, from which excerpts were aired on television Monday, Gladys Zimmerman said that if given the opportunity to speak with Trayvon's parents, she would say: "We are deeply sorry for this tragedy."

Many Trayvon Martin supporters expressed disappointment with President Obama's statement on the

verdict.

In his statement, Obama said: "The death of Trayvon Martin was a tragedy. Not just for his family, or for any one community, but for America. I know this case has elicited strong passions. And in the wake of the verdict, I know those passions may be running even higher."

"But we are a nation of laws, and a jury has spoken. I now ask every American to respect the call for calm reflection from two parents who lost their young son."

"And as we do, we should ask ourselves if we're doing all we can to widen the circle of compassion and understanding in our own communities. We should ask ourselves if we're doing all we can to stem the tide of gun violence that claims too many lives across this country on a daily basis."

"We should ask ourselves, as

individuals and as a society, how we can prevent future tragedies like this. As citizens, that's a job for all of us. That's the way to honor Trayvon Martin."

Many Americans, ranging from the well-known and the unknown, have found different ways to honor the memory of the slain youth.

During a concert Sunday in Quebec City, Stevie Wonder said, "I decided today that until the Stand Your Ground law is abolished in Florida, I will never perform there again. As a matter of fact, wherever I find that law exists, I will not perform in that state or in that part of the world."

Pop star Beyonce's concern started in Nashville Saturday night about 30 minutes after the Zimmerman verdict. Before beginning her performance she said, "I'd like to have a moment of silence for Trayvon." The stage was

darkened for the silent tribute. Beyonce then sang the chorus of "I Will Always Love You."

FLOYD'S HOME COURT

presents

House of Cutz
&
Simplicity ~ N ~ Fashion
Design Studio

Come see us for your grooming and fashion needs!

Located in Skyway:

12661 Renton Ave. So.

206-708-6572

Get a one-year subscription to
The Seattle Medium For Only \$34

The Award-winning Seattle Medium Newspaper

Telling Our Story From A Perspective You Can Appreciate.

Each And Every Week.

Every Home Should Have A Seattle Medium...
Do You Have Yours?

Subscribe Today!!!

Name _____
Address _____
Apt./Ste. _____ City _____
State _____ Zip _____

☐ Enclosed is my check for \$34.00
☐ Please charge my credit card for \$34.00
Card Type _____
Card Number _____
Name as it appears on Card:

Return to: The Seattle Medium, Attn.: Subscriptions, P.O.
Box 22047, Seattle, WA 98122 or call (206) 323-3070 X.