Nearly 7,000 Wake County children under age 5 are at risk of not being counted in the 2020 Census.

Young Children are the Hardest to Count

Children under 5 are more likely than older children to live in tracts the U.S. Census Bureau considers hard-to-count (HTC). These areas are often urban, with high poverty, complex housing units, and a high proportion of renters. In 2010, the national undercount rate for children 0-4 was 4.6%, more than twice the rate of any other age group. In Wake County, the young child undercount rate was 4.1%. Work must begin now to ensure all families – especially those in HTC areas – participate in the 2020 Census and include their young children in the count.

A Lower Count Means Less Investment

Each person missed in the Decennial Census forfeits a portion of the more than $23 billion annually in federal investment to North Carolina. If young kids are not counted, fewer federal dollars will funnel to Wake County, making it difficult to meet the needs of a growing population. Among the millions at stake to Wake County programs:

- $6.8 million toward Child Care and Development,
- $6.14 million toward the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and
- $4.67 million toward Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance.

If missed in the count, young children also stand to suffer the most from reductions in funding to vital programs. Each person missed also represents a missed opportunity for fair political representation through Congressional apportionment and redistricting.

Coordinated efforts must begin now to reach the families of young children, both within and outside of HTC census tracts, to ensure a successful count. The next decade of opportunity for Wake County children depends on it.
Endnotes


3 The estimated number of young children in Wake County’s HTC census tracts is 6,926 of a total 65,687 children under 5 in Wake County. The estimated number of young children in Raleigh’s HTC census tracts is 5,974 of a total 27,099 children under 5 in the city. Estimates produced by Steven Romalewski, Mapping Services Director, Center for Urban Research, CUNY Graduate Center, www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us, and compiled and analyzed by William O’Hare. North Carolina population totals are from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2012-2016 American Community Survey estimates. Wake County population totals are from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2013-2017 American Community Survey estimates.
