The Prevalence of Housing Eviction among Children Born in American Cities

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ABSTRACT

Recent research suggests that housing eviction is a common hardship for many poor urban families and may play an important role in the reproduction of urban poverty. The proportion of children affected by housing eviction, however, remains largely unknown. Using a population-based panel study of children born in 20 large U.S. cities between 1998-2000, this research presents representative estimates of the proportion of urban American children to experience an eviction for nonpayment of rent or mortgage by age 15: about 1 in 7. Rates of eviction are substantial across all cities and demographic groups studied, but children most likely to experience eviction are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Among those born into deep poverty, about 1 in 4 were evicted by age 15. Given prior evidence that forced moves have negative consequences for children, we conclude that the high prevalence and social stratification of housing eviction are sufficient to play an important role in the reproduction of poverty and warrant greater policy attention.