

# WHAT'S NEW WITH KIDS?

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Seventy-five percent of the nation's land area is nonmetropolitan. Seventeen percent of the nation's population resides in nonmetropolitan areas. Only 6.5 percent of the rural area's work force is involved in farming. These data, along with other Census data, are reported in *Demographic Trends in Rural and Small Town America*, a publication of the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire. The 34-page report presents a picture of the changing face of rural America focusing on demographic changes and policy considerations.

Of interest to KIDS COUNT are the references to children, specifically child poverty and the growth of the Hispanic population, in the article and the implications for policy considerations. Poverty rates are higher among rural children than urban children, and the highest poverty rates are in rural areas. Of the racial/ethnic groups, Hispanics in rural America grew at the fastest rate. The effect of this growth is illustrated in one of the eight vignettes featured in the article. Surrey County, North Carolina, the birthplace of Andy Griffith, has experienced significant changes due to the passing of its three major industries—tobacco, furniture production, and textiles. Although these industries lost employment, Wayne Farms, a large chicken industry, added to their work force. Eighty to 85 percent of the company's work force is Hispanic and their presence has been felt in the local schools. Hispanic enrollment increased 500 percent from 1996. The increase resulted in policy changes. One elementary school principal reported several changes that occurred in her school: an intake center was opened in the school district to test and enroll all new students, training in cultural matters was made a priority for staff and parents, the district's priorities were ensuring that monies were concentrated on grades K-2, and that every student could read by grade two.

This report can be viewed at: [http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/documents/demographics\\_complete\\_file.pdf](http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/documents/demographics_complete_file.pdf).

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