

# Education Access and Quality: Effects of Low Income on Pediatric Health Care Outcomes

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## Pico Question:

Are lower-income students more susceptible to decreased healthcare outcomes compared to higher-income students?

## Statistics:

- Children without well-off families are at a greater risk for poor cognitive, behavior, and health outcomes (Berger et al., 2009).
- Approximately 20% of all United States children live in poverty (Chung et al., 2016).

## Background:

It is suspected that children who live in poverty are more likely to experience poorer health outcomes than those who live comfortably. As a result, many assistance programs have been put in place to remedy this gap. However, families still can not afford, provide, or are exposed to proper health care for their children.

## Problems:

- Poverty can negatively affect children's birth weight, language development, nutrition, increase chances of chronic illness and injury (Council of Community Pediatrics, 2016).
- Studies show children living in poverty have higher rates of academic absenteeism and low rates of physical fitness (D'Agostino et al., 2019).
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) lead to toxic stress which is shown to have long-term effects on one's health (Chung et al., 2016).



## Solutions:

- Stronger public policies such as expanded coverage for health services under the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid, an increased child tax credit and, "creating a national initiative for high-quality, federally subsidized early childhood education programs" (Racine, 2016, p. S88).
- Tailor interventions towards high poverty youth groups to increase physical activity (D'Agostino et al., 2019).
- Ensure pediatric health clinicians utilize proper screening tools and community referrals to identify and combat social health determinants (Chung et al., 2016).

## Summary:

The connection between income, health care, and education could not be more apparent. As suggested by the research, there is a clear indication that lower-income students are more likely to experience health issues and lack access to quality care. The health and education systems must prioritize low-income students by offering nutrition support and after-school programs to help.

## References:

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