

### ***SAMPLE PAPER EXCERPTS***

*Below are two examples of what the first two paragraphs of a demographic briefing could look like. Please read them and bring them to the first class meeting. The third excerpt will be used for an in-class writing lab.*

#### **Example #1**

Child poverty is an alarming problem in the United States that effects every person in this country, regardless of economic status, age, race, or gender. In 2001, 11.7 million children, or 16.3 % of children in the United States were poor. Children represent a disproportionate percentage of the poor population. They make up 35.7 percent of the poor, but only account for 25.6 percent of the general population. (U.S. Census Bureau) It is imperative to give attention to the problem of poverty among children since they are the future of the country, and they are not receiving the support, resources, or encouragement to know they deserve better. The focus population of this analysis of child poverty is children in the United States under 18 years of age. This analysis will discuss the definition, history, social context, trends, theoretical framework, and policy responses of child poverty, as well as the nature and extent of how child poverty is affecting the United States.

There are two different versions of the federal poverty measure. *Poverty thresholds* are the statistical version of the poverty measure and are issued by the Census Bureau. They are used for calculating the number of persons in poverty in the United States. The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes and does not include capital gains and noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps). Individuals in military barracks, institutional facilities, or unrelated individuals under age 15 (such as foster children) are not included in the measure based on CPS data. (U.S. Census Bureau). *Poverty guidelines* are the administrative version of the poverty measure and are issued by the Department of Health and Human Services. They are a simplification of the poverty thresholds and are used in determining financial eligibility for certain federal programs. (Institute for Research on Poverty). Both Poverty Thresholds and Guidelines account for inflation through the use of the consumer price index. Most of the this analysis will be using the Poverty Thresholds standards to discuss

the measures of poverty. For a family of four, the poverty threshold was \$17,603. (U.S. Census Bureau)

Poverty statistics were first taken by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1959...

### **Example #2**

In 2001, approximately one out of every six children in the United States was poor. Children account for a quarter of the general population, but make over one third of those under the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Given the prevalence of poverty among children, what else do we know? What does “poverty” mean for a child who is too young to earn a living? Are there more poor children now than there were a decade or a century ago? This demographic brief documents the scope of poverty among children in the United States.

### *Defining Child Poverty*

Unlike single adults, who are defined as poor when their income falls below a certain level, children, those individuals under age 18, are poor when their families are poor. The Census Bureau maintains the official U.S. definition of poverty: a family is poor when their money income falls below an established threshold. Poverty thresholds are updated yearly and different thresholds apply depending on the total family size and number of children. In 2002, a family of two adults and two children was considered poor if their income falls below \$18,244 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).

Some argue that the Census poverty threshold is too low...

**Excerpt for in-class lab**

In only a short time Latinos in the United States are predicted to become the biggest minority group in the country (Miley, 2001). The immigration history of Latinos in the United States and even whether they are called Latinos or Hispanics is complicated and interesting. It is also important to consider, that historically Latinos are more likely to suffer from poverty and inequality than most other ethnic groups in the U.S., and that this rate might likely increase over time. The demographics and some theoretical clues and notions about Latino poverty and inequalities must be thoroughly explored and dealt with if we hope to develop effective public policy for dealing with this problem. It is our role as social workers and citizens to understand and plan for the complex dynamics of this group that will inevitably exert a substantial influence on the rest of the country.