



On Poverty

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1

The Compelling Why

2

Even Here?

3

Our Piece of the Puzzle

# What We Want

- participate as responsible citizens in an ever-changing world
- a learning community where all people strive for continuous improvement in everything they do
- achieving quality education for all learners through teamwork
- assure all students the opportunity to learn and grow to meet the demands of today and tomorrow
- helping every child achieve their best future
- high expectations for every child every time
- responsible learners, innovative schools and strong communities

# Definition

A chronic and debilitating condition that results from multiple adverse synergistic risk factors and affects the mind, body, and soul.

Jensen, Eric. *Teaching with Poverty in Mind: What Being Poor Does to Kids' Brains and What Schools Can Do About It*. ASCD: 2009.

# What We Have

Between 2006 and 2014

Poverty in Montcalm County  
increased more than 30%

# What We Have

26% of children 0-5 years old  
in Michigan live in poverty

[www.datacenter.kidscount.org/topics](http://www.datacenter.kidscount.org/topics)

# Free and Reduced Lunch

Montcalm County

53.7%

State

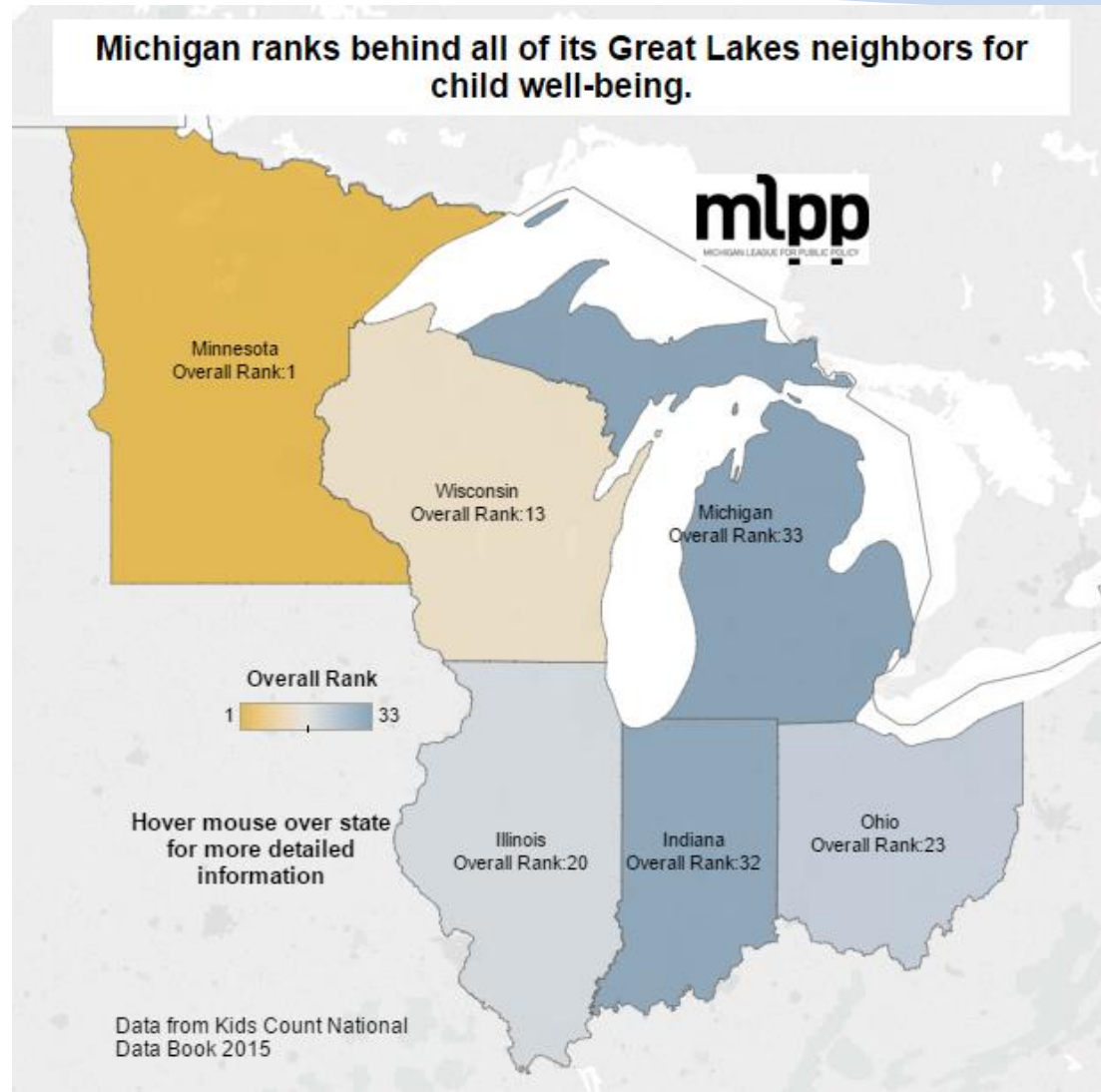
46.8%

# Child Well-Being 2016

▶ 1 <sup>st</sup>	Livingston
▶ 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Ottawa
▶ 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Clinton
▶ 45 <sup>th</sup>	Montcalm
▶ 80 <sup>th</sup>	Muskegon
▶ 81 <sup>st</sup>	Clare
▶ 82 <sup>nd</sup>	Lake



# Child Well-Being 2015



# A Big Threat

Growing up in poverty is one of the greatest threats to healthy child development. Poverty and financial stress can impede children's cognitive development and their ability to learn. It can contribute to behavioral, social and emotional problems and poor health.

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency

Montcalm County

43.9%

State

50.1%

# Students Proficient in Reading & Math

Montcalm County

21.9%

State

31.5%

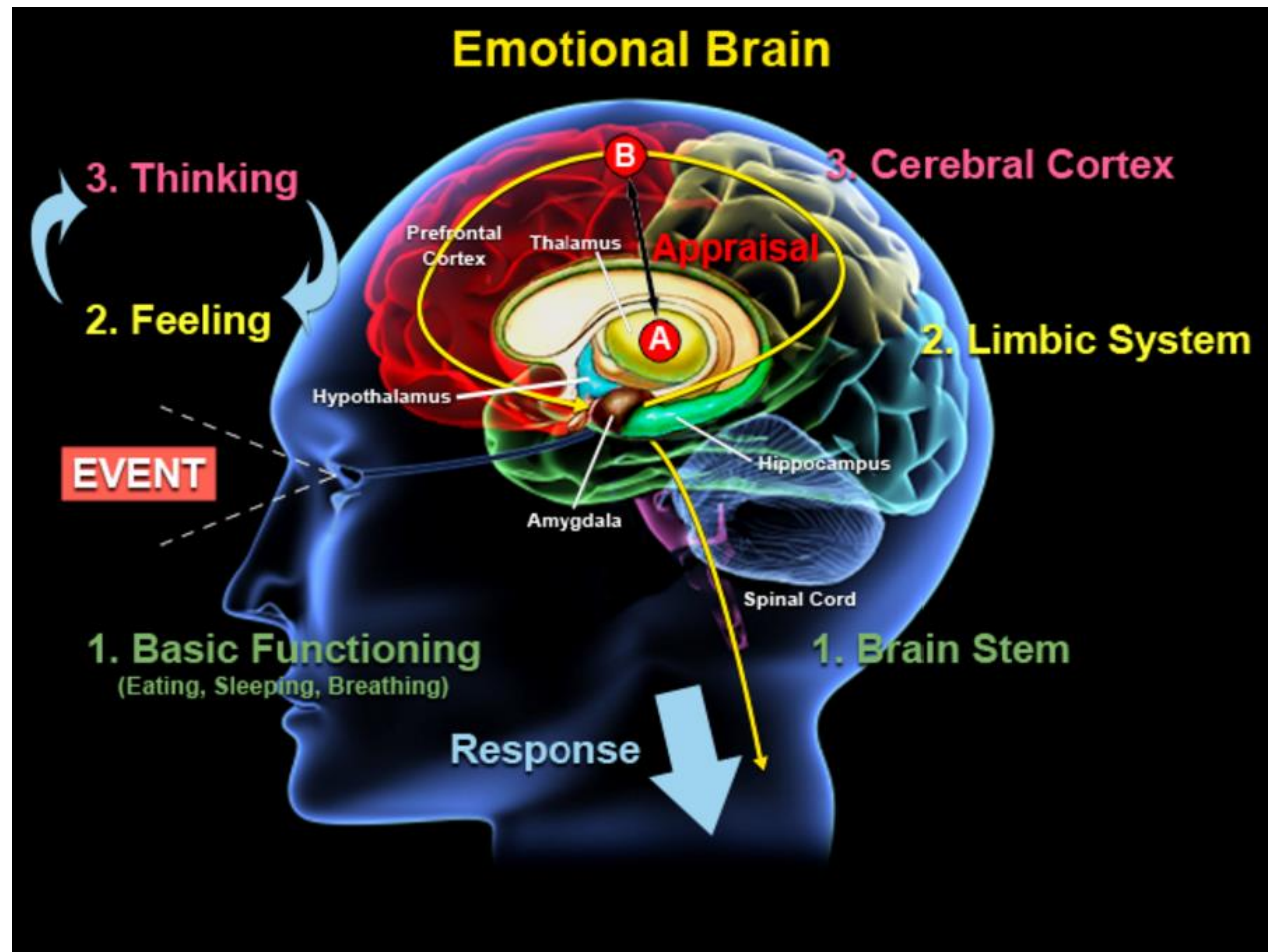
# 30 Million Word Gap

	<b>Words heard per hour</b>	<b>Words heard in a 100-hour week</b>	<b>Words heard in a 5,200-hour year</b>	<b>3 years</b>	<b>Encouraging words vs discouraging words per week</b>
Welfare	616	62,000	3 million	10 million	500 vs. 1,100
Working class	1,251	125,000	6 million	20 million	1,200 vs. 700
Professional	2,153	215,000	11 million	30 million	3,200 vs. 500

Risley, Todd R. Meaningful Differences in Everyday Experiences of Young American Children, 1995.

# Brain Research and Poverty

Situational stress can hijack decision making. The constant struggle to make ends meet, deal with the pressures of social bias, and protect against trauma place extraordinary demands on cognitive bandwidth. Brain capacity for impulse control, memory, and judgment is taxed to the limit.



# Cumulative Effects of Poverty

Persistent hyper-activation of the stress response can, over time, create significant negative effects:

- Heart disease
- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- Hypersensitivity, exaggerated response
- Memory, impulse control, mental flexibility

# Hope is Justified

## Students Eligible For Free Or Reduced Priced Lunch

Year(s): 5 selected | Data Type: All

Data Provided by: Michigan League for Public Policy

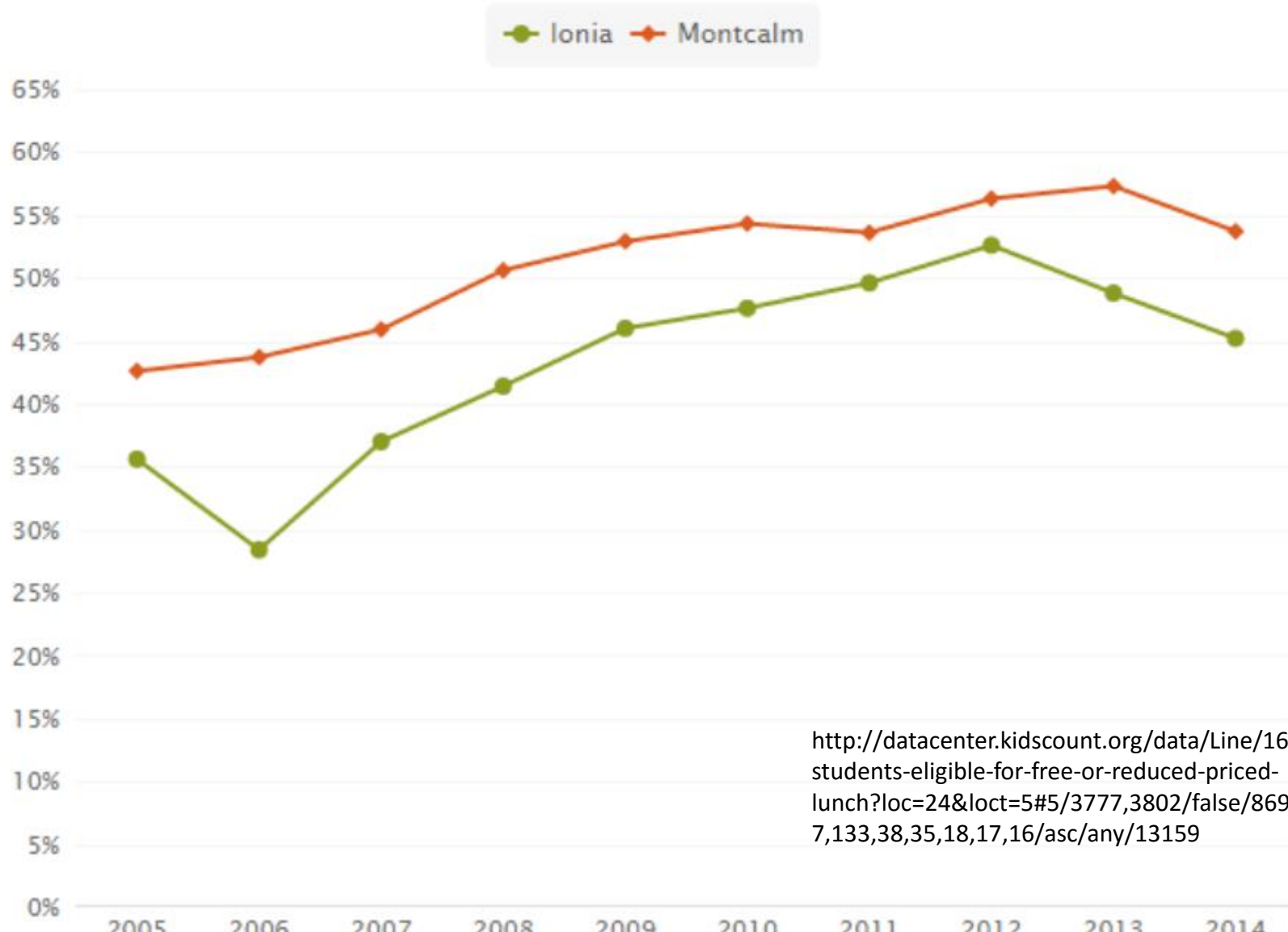
Location	Data Type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Ionia	Number	5,117	5,299	5,490	5,030	4,624
	Percent	47.6%	49.6%	52.6%	48.8%	45.2%
Montcalm	Number	6,681	6,504	6,635	6,617	5,967
	Percent	54.3%	53.6%	56.3%	57.3%	53.7%



# Students Eligible For Free Or Reduced Priced Lunch

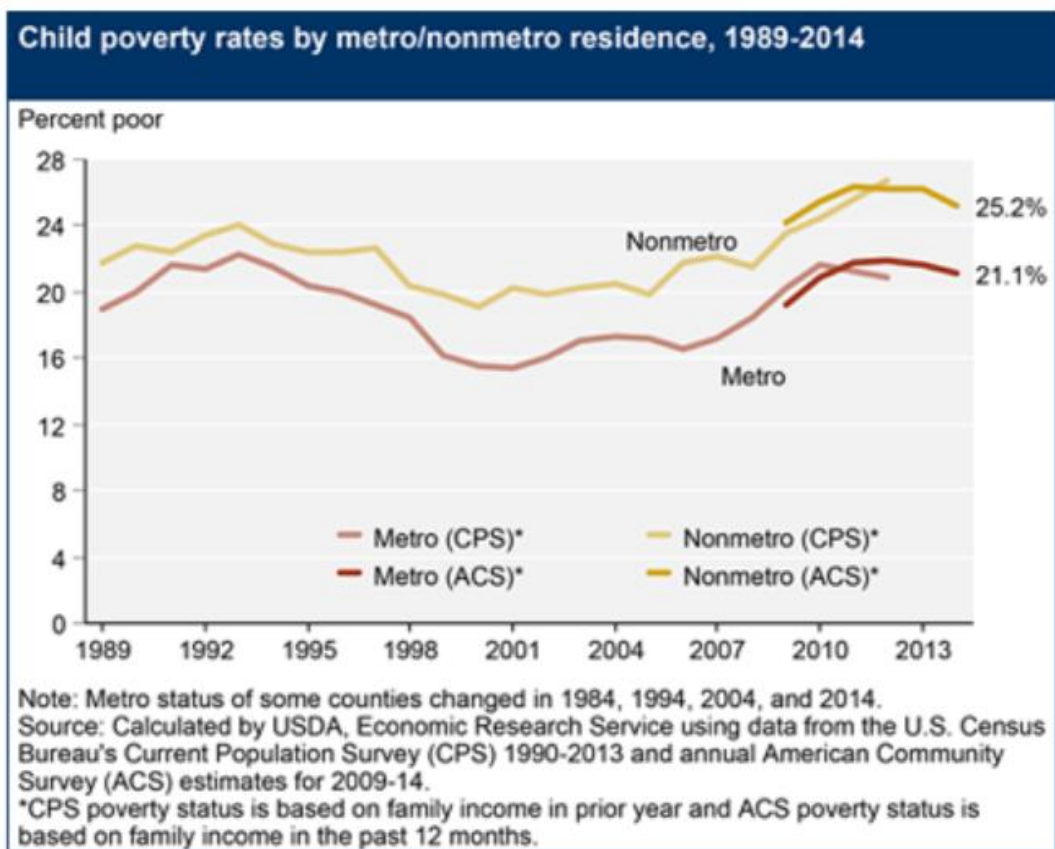
Year(s): 10 selected | Data Type: Percent

Data Provided by: Michigan League for Public Policy



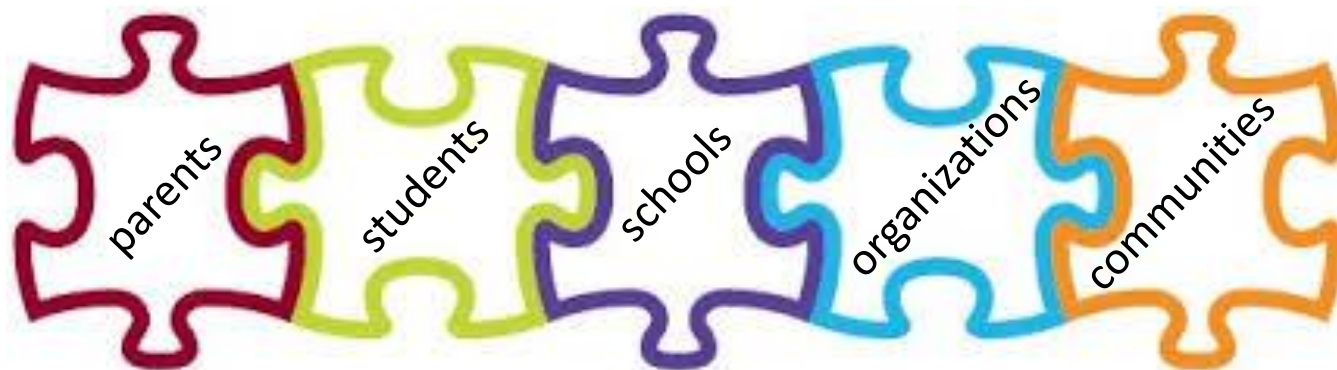
<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/Line/1672-students-eligible-for-free-or-reduced-priced-lunch?loc=24&loct=5#5/3777,3802/false/869,36,868,867,133,38,35,18,17,16/asc/any/13159>

# U.S. Child Poverty Rates




# Plasticity

The prefrontal cortex remains responsive to stimulation well into adulthood. Its plasticity enables it to continue, even into adulthood, to grow and strengthen new neural pathways that can support executive functioning skills.



# Circle of Supports





. . . Research has shown education to be the single-most important leveraging tool for improving economic opportunity.

Isaacs, Sawhill, and Haskins, 2007

# Staff Training

- Recognize the signs of chronic stress
- Know the unspoken rules
- Focus on a growth mindset
- Foster empathy building and caring relationships
- Maintain knowledge of resources and supports
- Provide reading supports including vocabulary
- Introduce conflict resolution skills
- Teach social skills, teach behavior

# Educational Opportunities






# What Works

To attain higher-skilled, well-paying jobs of today's knowledge based economy, adults need enhanced strategic-thinking skills to guide them through the innumerable decisions and trade-offs required in the complicated journey to economic independence.

Babcock, 2014

# Parent Support

- Build relationships
- Provide positive activities
- Build on a continuum of supports
- Provide parenting classes
- Foster awareness of supports and resources



“Without addressing poverty and ensuring parents have access to economic opportunities, child outcomes in health, education and welfare will not improve.”

Kids Count 2016, p. 2

# Quality, Universal Preschool

- Strong curriculum
- Evidence-based screening tools & assessments
- Teacher child ratio 1/8
- Consistent family engagement
- Visit model programs



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On Poverty