



CONSEQUENCES • CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION

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IMPACT ON ALICE • K-12 EDUCATION

For all families, a quality K-12 education lays the groundwork for future employment opportunities and long-term economic stability. As with early education, ALICE and other low-income families face multiple barriers to access, including:

- **Income Disparities**

By the time they reach high school, children from families with low socioeconomic status (SES) have literacy skills that are an average of five years behind their higher-income peers.³⁴ Schools in communities with low SES, as well as low-SES families themselves, are more likely to have fewer resources to support students, which impacts academic achievement.³⁵

- **The Achievement Gap**

As children move on to K-12 education, the one area of concern for ALICE households is the achievement gap. Nationwide, Black, Hispanic, and Native American students (who are disproportionately low income); students with limited English proficiency; and students with disabilities have lower test scores throughout K–12 and have high school graduation rates below the national average.³⁶

- **Housing discrimination**

Past and current public policies and an array of systemic forces — including housing discrimination — have segregated many children living in under-resourced neighborhoods with low-quality schools. Although neighborhoods and schools are modestly more integrated by race than they were decades ago, significant racial segregation persists. In most states, there is wide variation in school performance across school districts.³⁷

What do families do if they don't live near a quality elementary, middle, or high school?

▼ Move to a Different Neighborhood

Moving to a community with higher-quality, better-performing schools is one possible solution.



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Increased expenses: Most high-performing schools are in areas with a higher cost of living. For instance, in the 100 largest metropolitan areas, housing costs almost \$11,000 more per year near high-scoring public schools than near low-scoring ones.³⁸ Property taxes, food, transportation, child care and other essential needs are also more expensive in these areas, making them impossible for most ALICE families to afford.



Face increased isolation due to uprooting from one's community. Leaving behind neighbors, family, and other social connections can take a toll on one's physical and emotional well-being, leading to increased health care costs.

Housing Vouchers and ALICE

Housing vouchers have the potential to enable ALICE families to move to areas of opportunity, but they have not worked well in practice because many landlords will not accept them (despite this being an illegal form of housing discrimination). Most families with housing vouchers live near a school that, on average, has 74 percent low-income students and ranks in the 26th percentile by state test scores.³⁹

▼ Commute to a School in Another Neighborhood

While options vary by location, commuting to a higher-quality, better-performing school in another community is possible. In some areas, magnet and charter schools make this a viable option for students who meet the criteria or win the entrance lottery; in other areas, students travel just as far to attend better-performing traditional public schools. In New York City, student commuting time shows how residential segregation by race and income often determines school quality: Between 2013 and 2016, the average commuting time to the nearest high-quality school was higher for Black and low-income NYC students than for other students.⁴⁰



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Long commute: Time spent commuting is time students cannot be participating in after-school activities, sports, or jobs, or doing homework; commuting also adds expense to the family budget. This is especially challenging for ALICE students as a recent report found that students living in economically disadvantaged areas face the longest commutes to school.⁴¹

Increased absenteeism: Especially when students rely on public transportation to get to school, they are more likely to face delays. Use of public transportation is also associated with increases in absenteeism.⁴²

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Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed