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Children Left Behind: How Metropolitan Areas are Failing America's Children

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Summary

- Black and Hispanic children live in families that experience many disadvantages.
- Disparities among individuals and families are exacerbated by vast inequalities in neighborhood and school environments.
- Inequalities for poor black and Hispanic children go far beyond what can be explained by income differences.
- Entire range of opportunities is much more limited for black and Hispanic children.

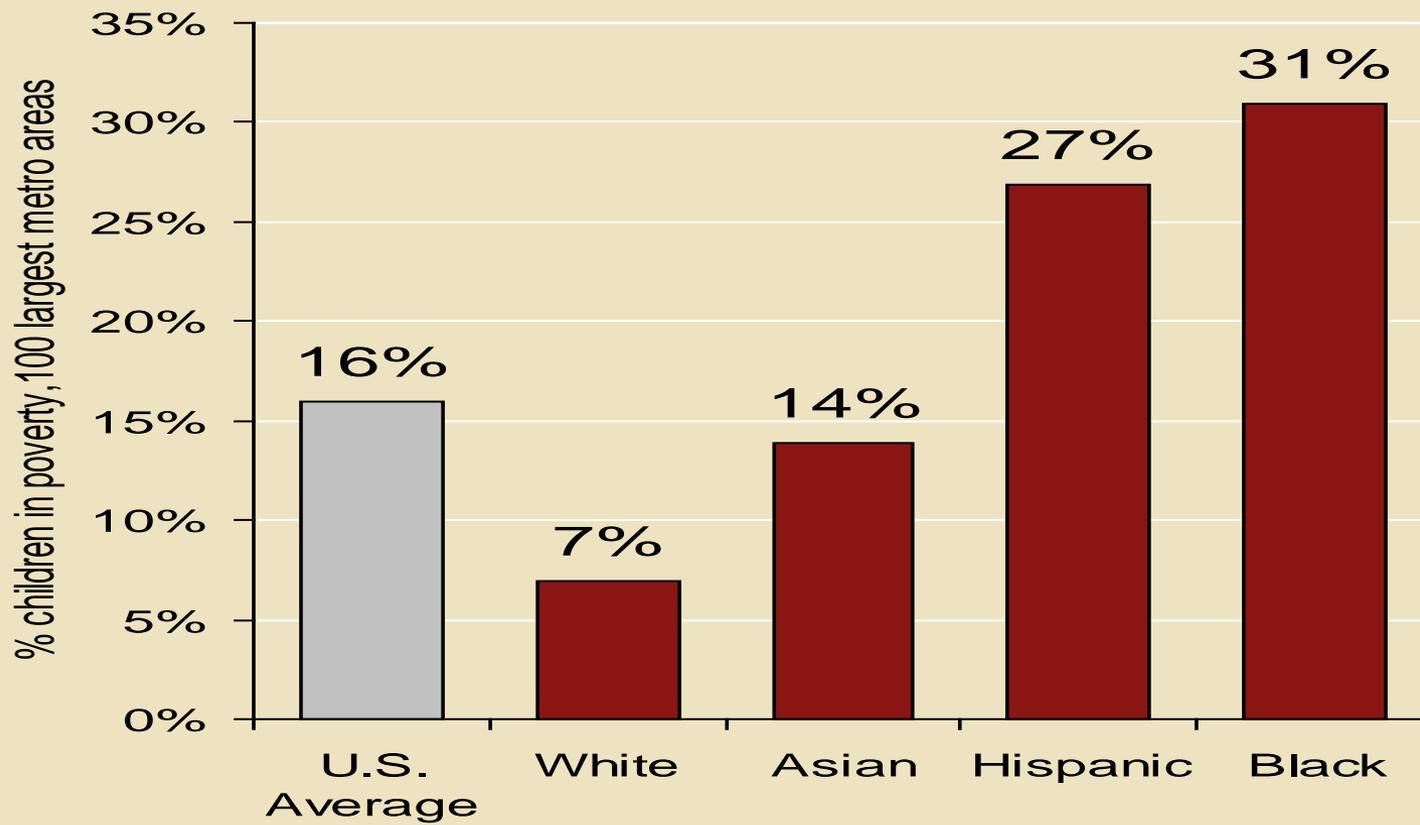


Why did we focus on children?

- Because they are the future.
- Early life experiences are critical to human development and opportunities for advancement throughout life.
- Economists have urged investment in early childhood produce high rate of return for society



Child poverty for blacks and Hispanics in metros much higher than U.S. average





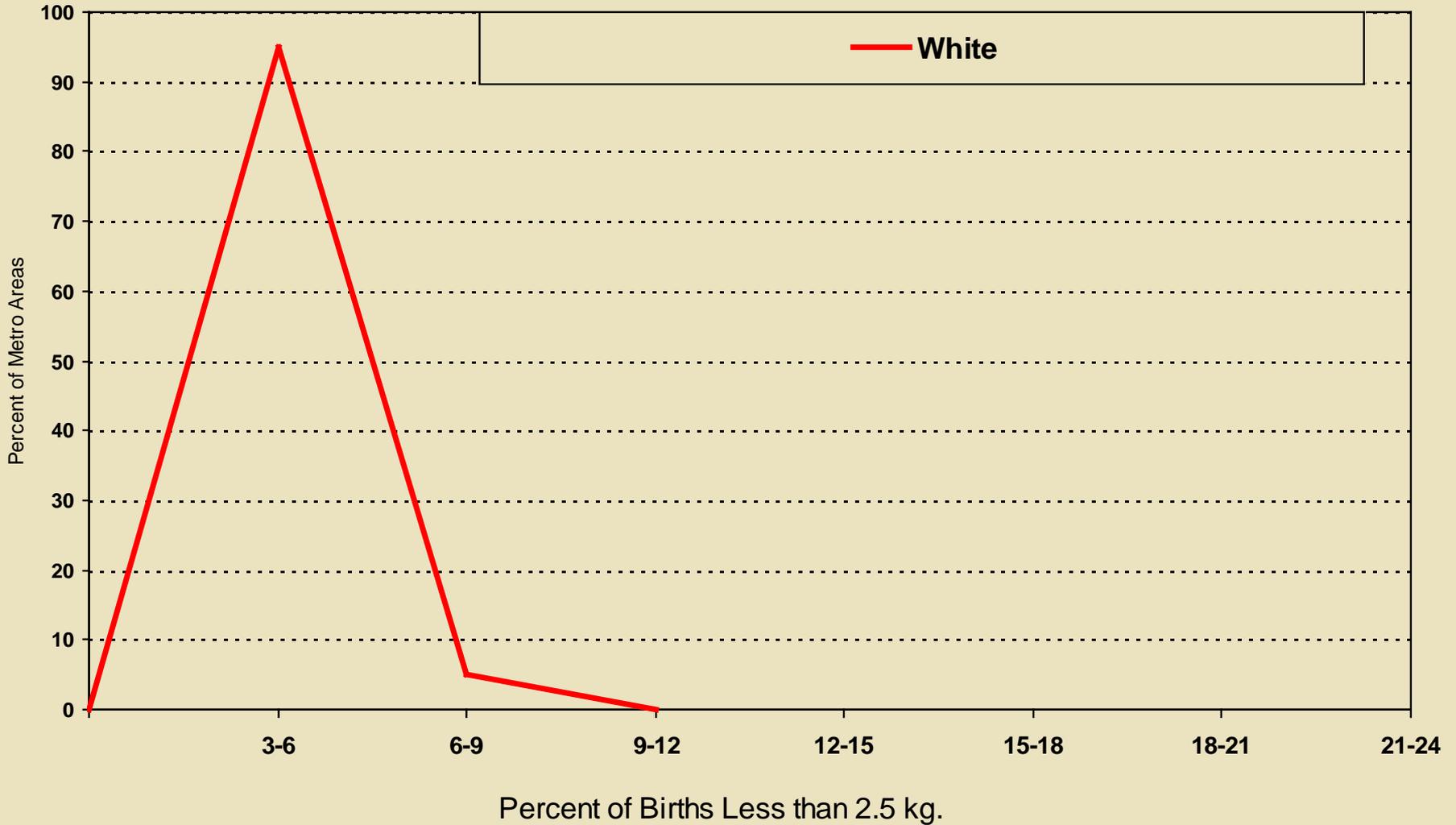
Disadvantaged conditions in families, neighborhoods and schools disproportionately hurt black and Hispanic children, and hinder their life chances and economic potential.



Black children encounter
difficulties right from birth

Low-Birthweight Rates: Distributions by Race/Ethnicity

100 Largest Metro Areas: 2001-2002



Note: Excludes metro areas with less than 100 births to mothers in the specified subgroup over the 2001-2002 time period.

Excludes plural births and births which occurred abroad, in Puerto Rico, or in U.S. Territories.

Source: DiversityData analysis of National Center for Health Statistics Vital Statistics Natality Birth Data

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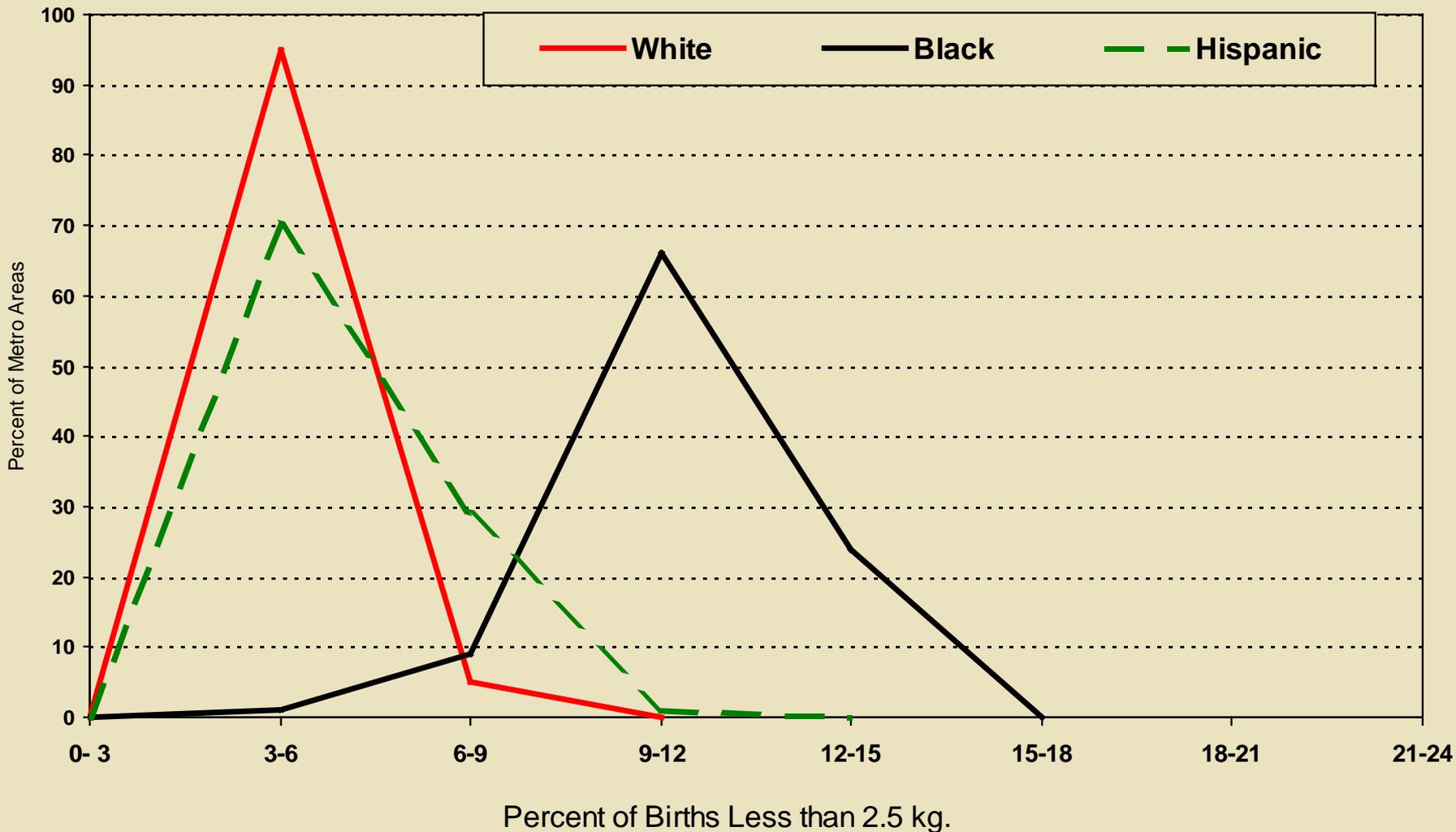
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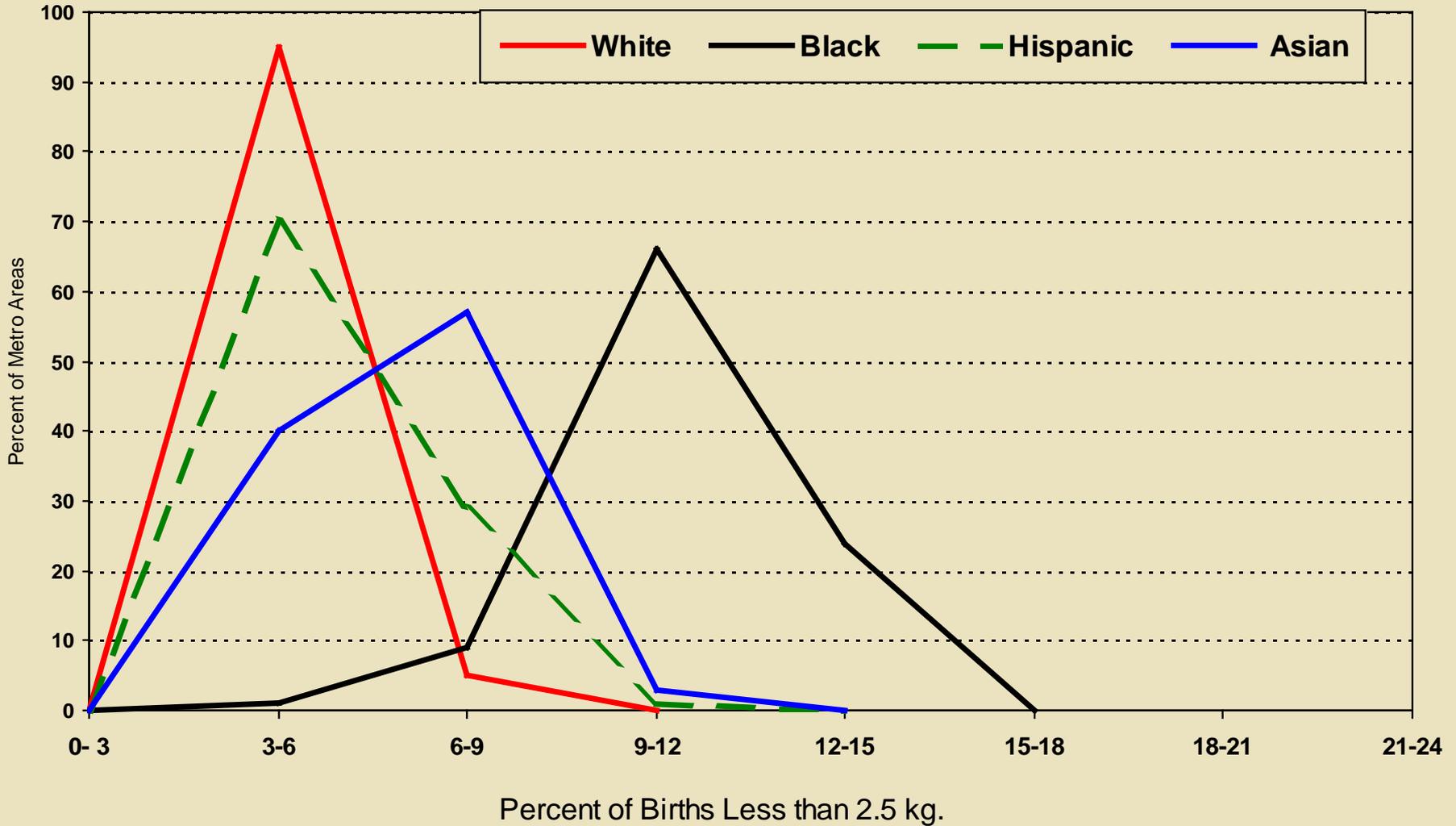
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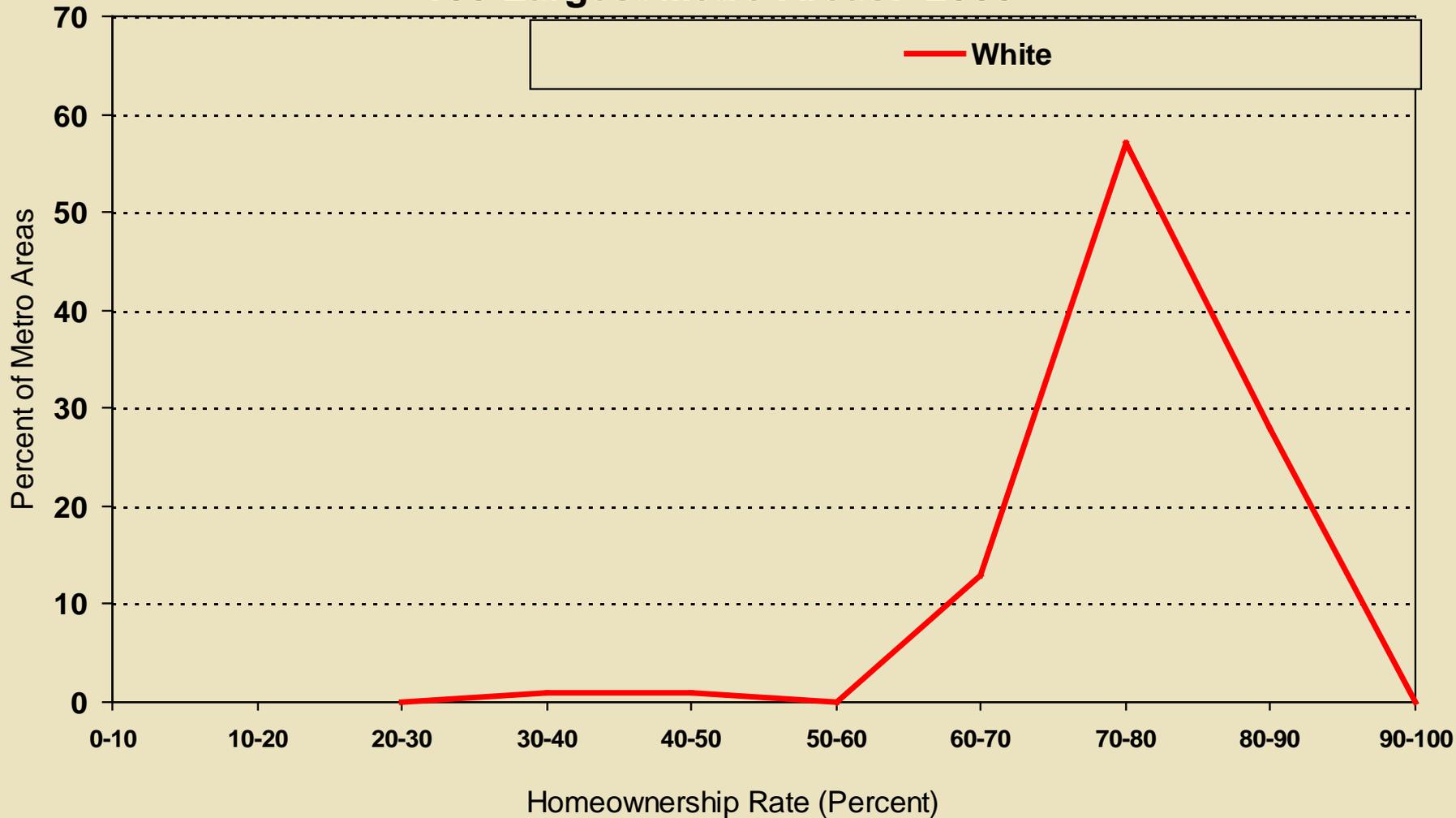
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Children in black and Hispanic families face multiple disadvantages

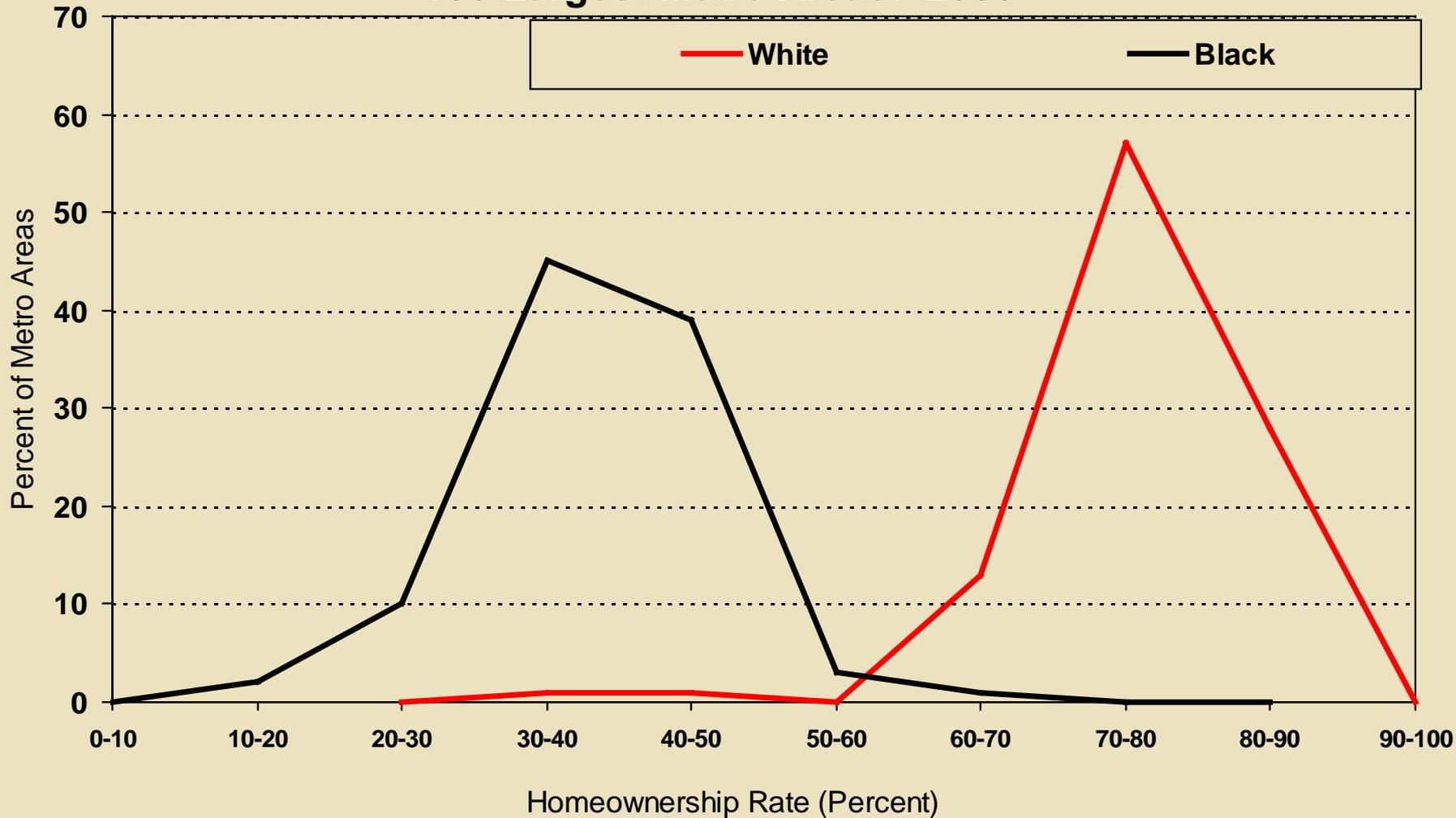
- Neighborhood conditions compound initial health disadvantage of black children, and undermine initial health advantage of Hispanic children.
- Poverty rates are much higher for black and Hispanic families with children, and homeownership rates are much lower.

Homeownership Rates for Families with Children Distributions by Race/Ethnicity 100 Largest Metro Areas: 2000



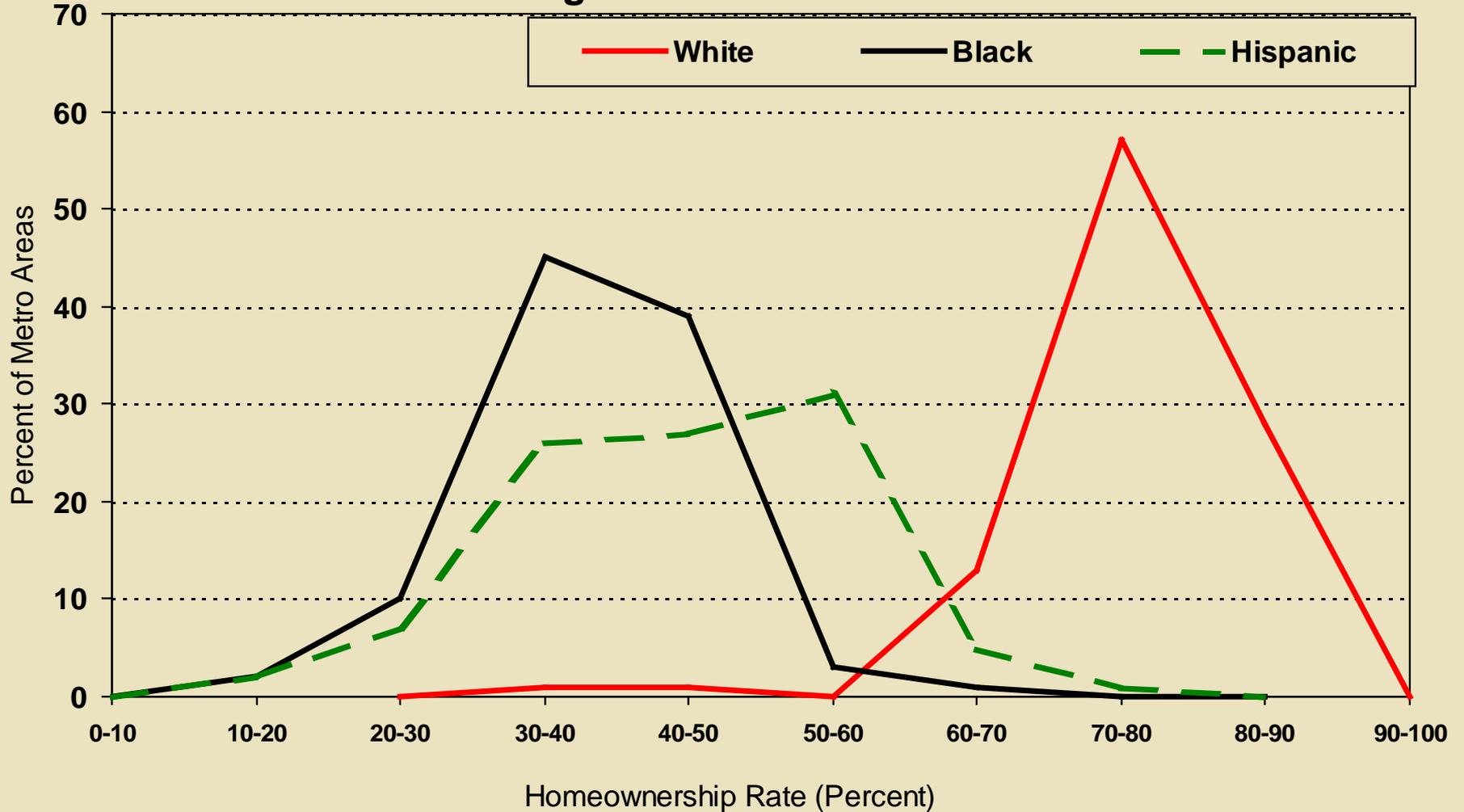
Source: DiversityData analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 4 data.

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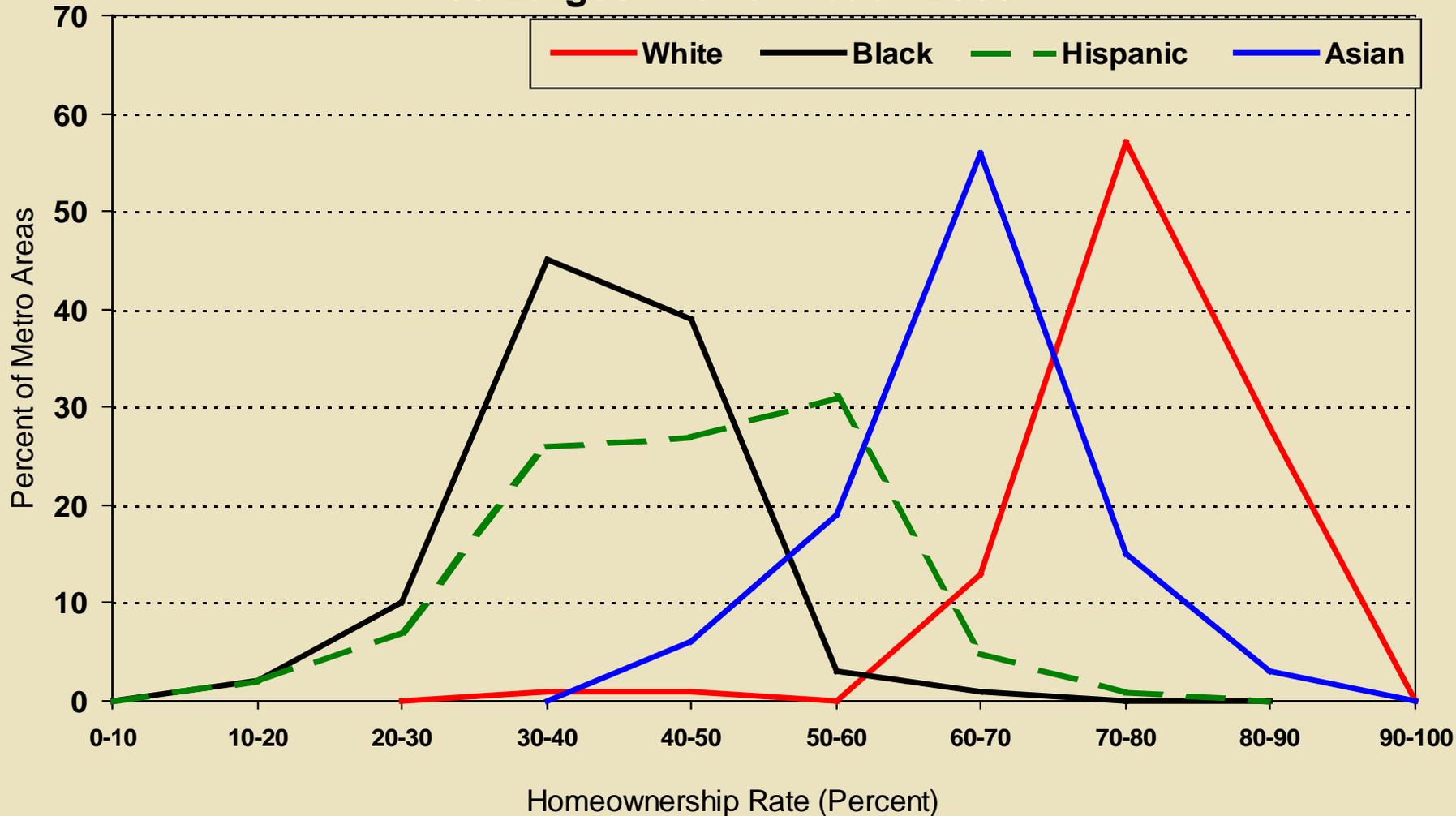
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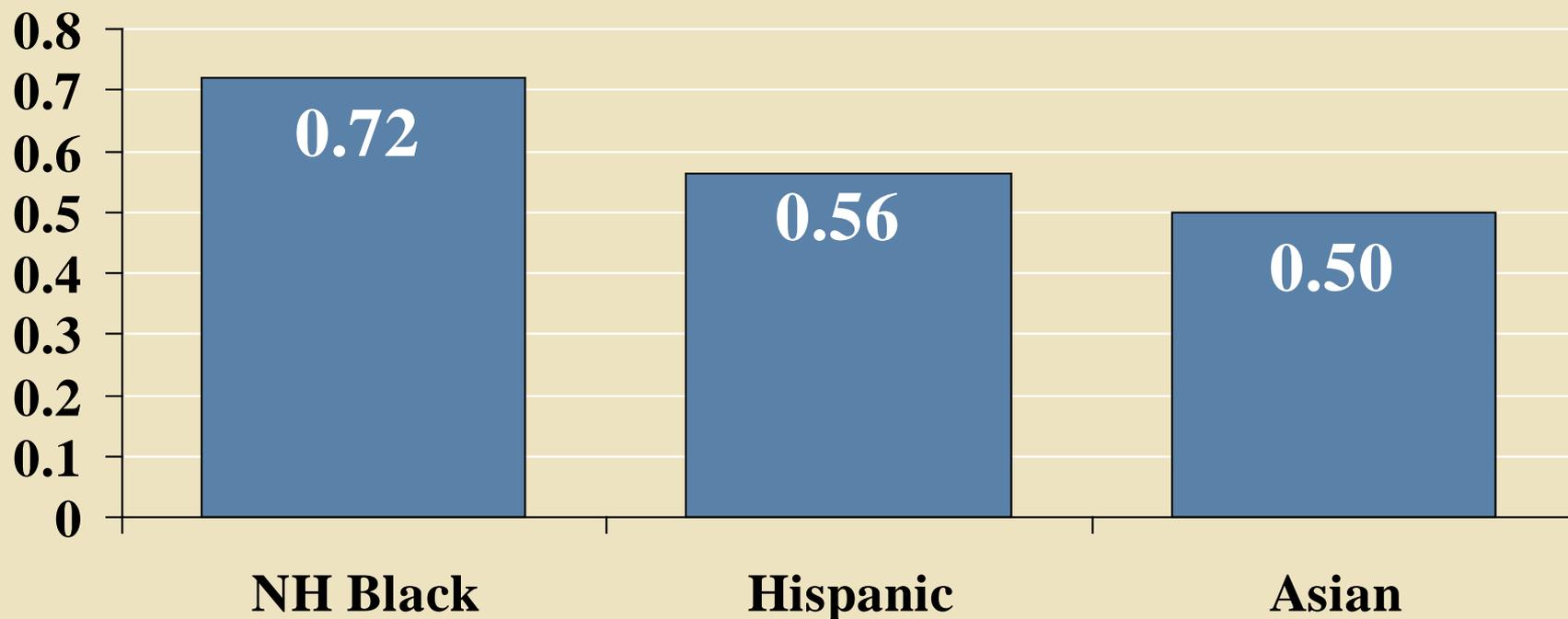
Neighborhood disadvantage aggravates difficulties for black and Hispanic families

- Not only do black and Hispanic children live in *different* neighborhoods than white children, but they also live in neighborhoods with much less favorable socioeconomic conditions.



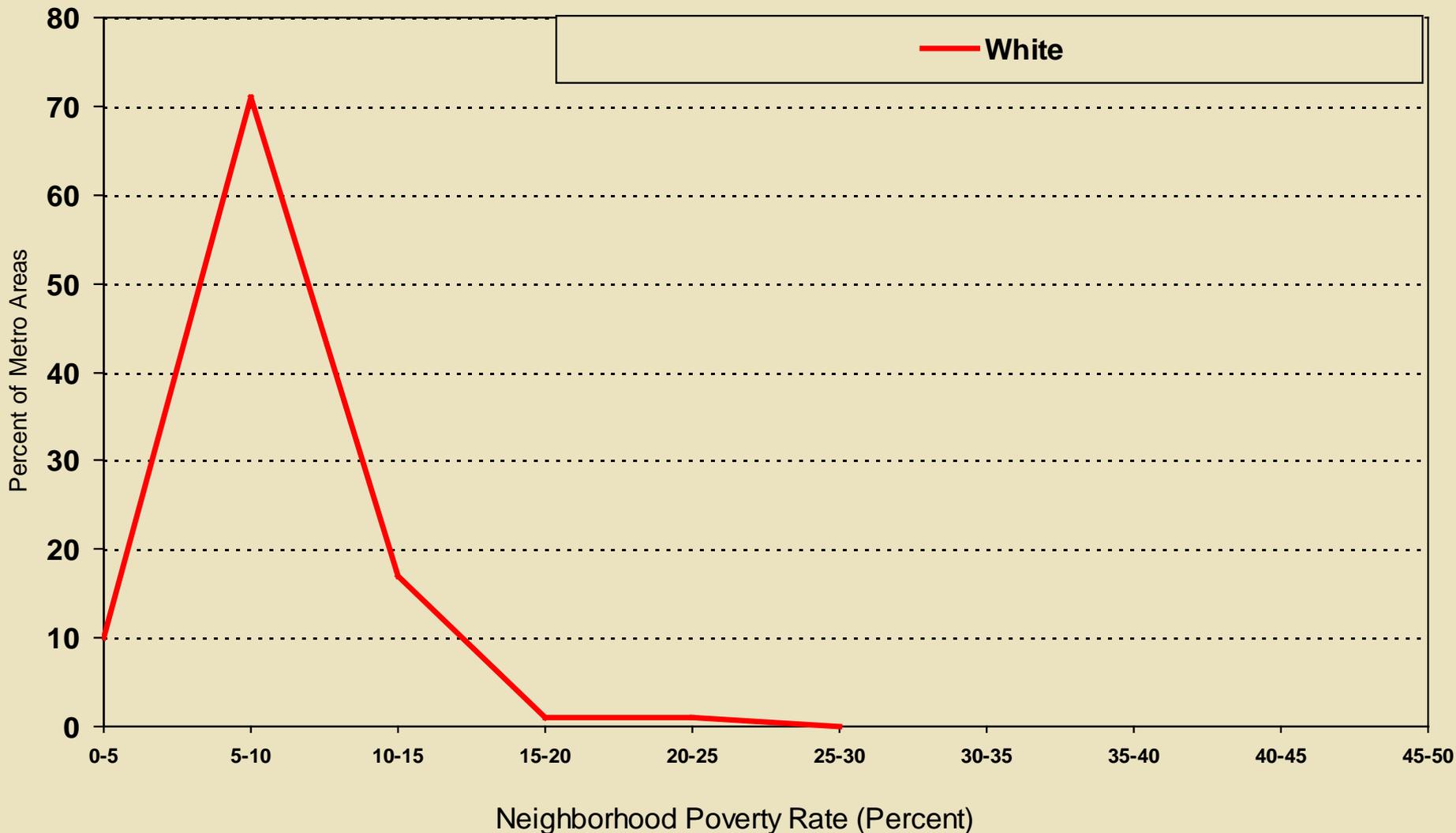
Black and Hispanic children are highly residentially segregated

Average Metropolitan Dissimilarity from Whites,
Largest 100 MSAs, 2000



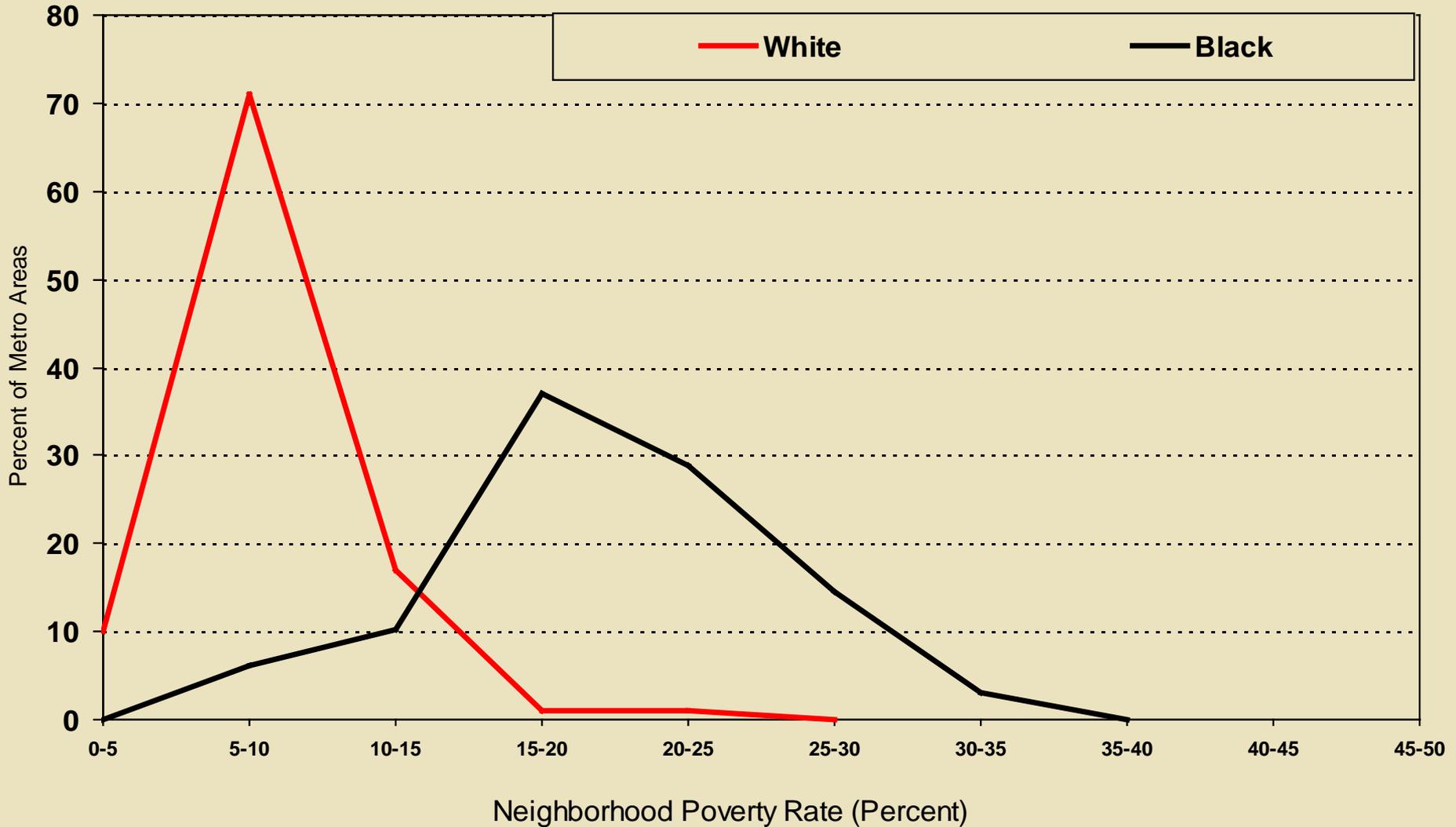
*Weighted by 2000 MSA minority child population (e.g. NH blacks);
Includes MSAs with over 5,000 minority population*

Childrens' Exposure to Neighborhood Poverty Distributions by Race/Ethnicity 100 Largest Metro Areas: 1999



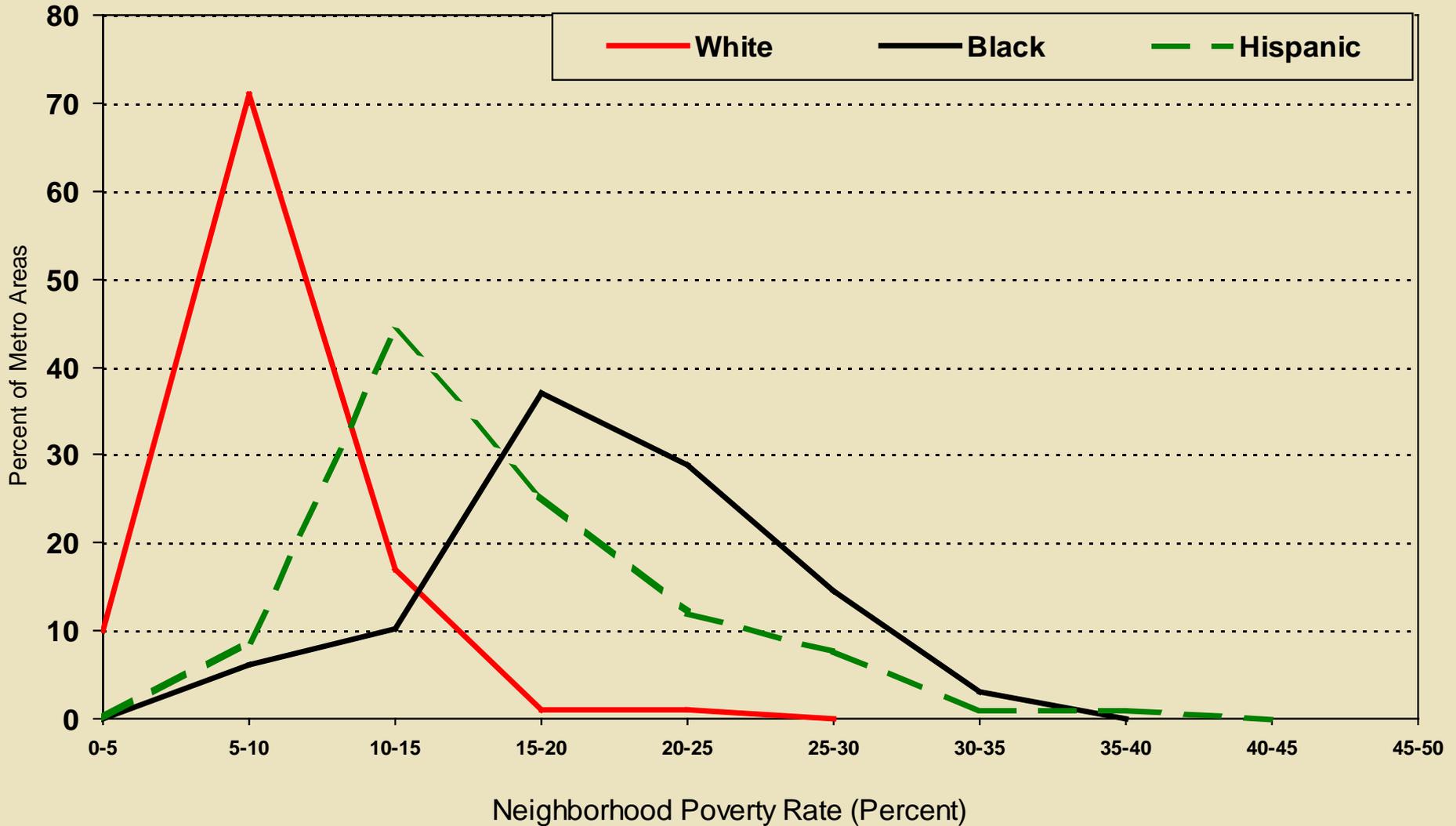
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Source: DiversityData analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File 3 data.

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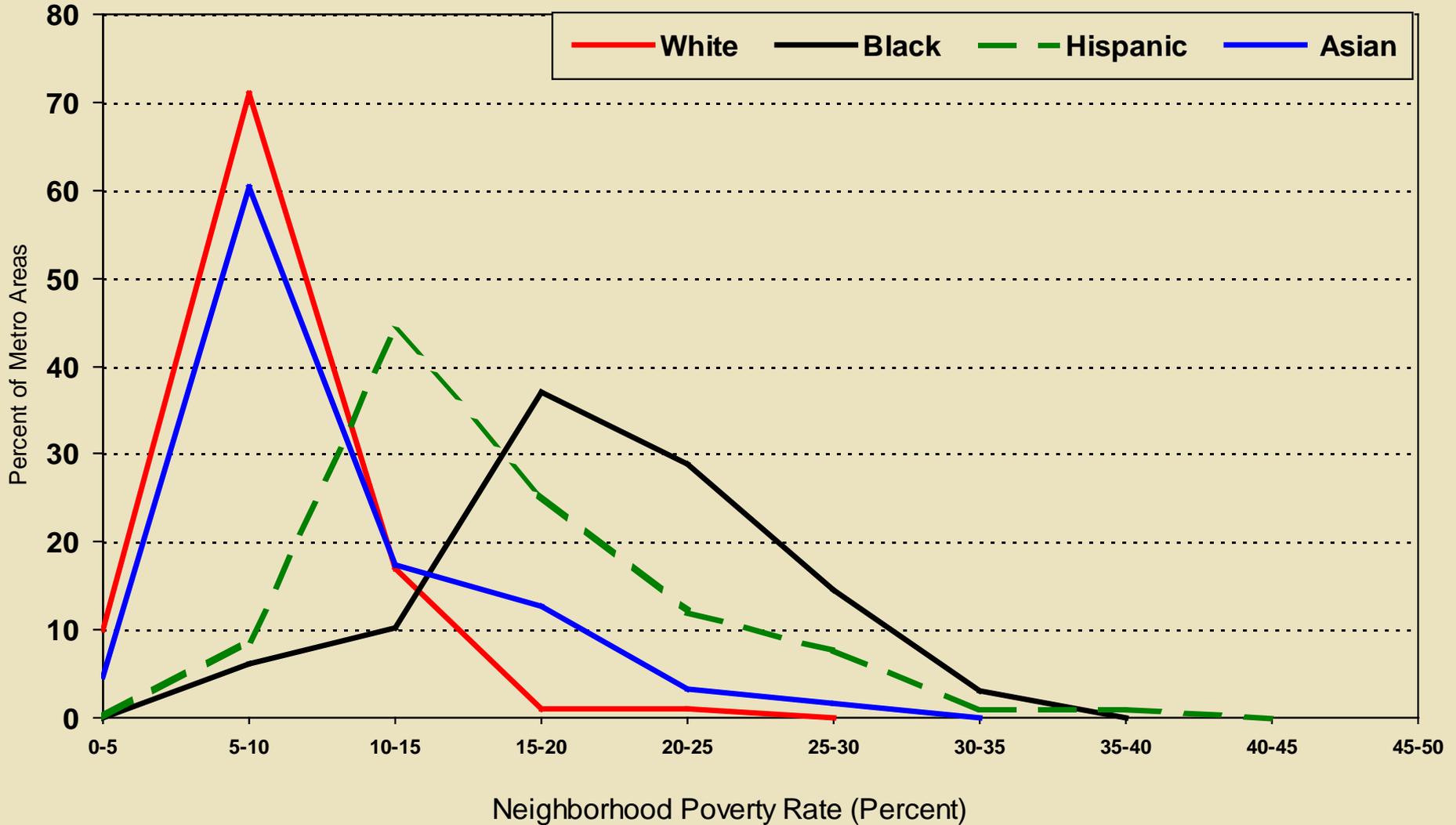
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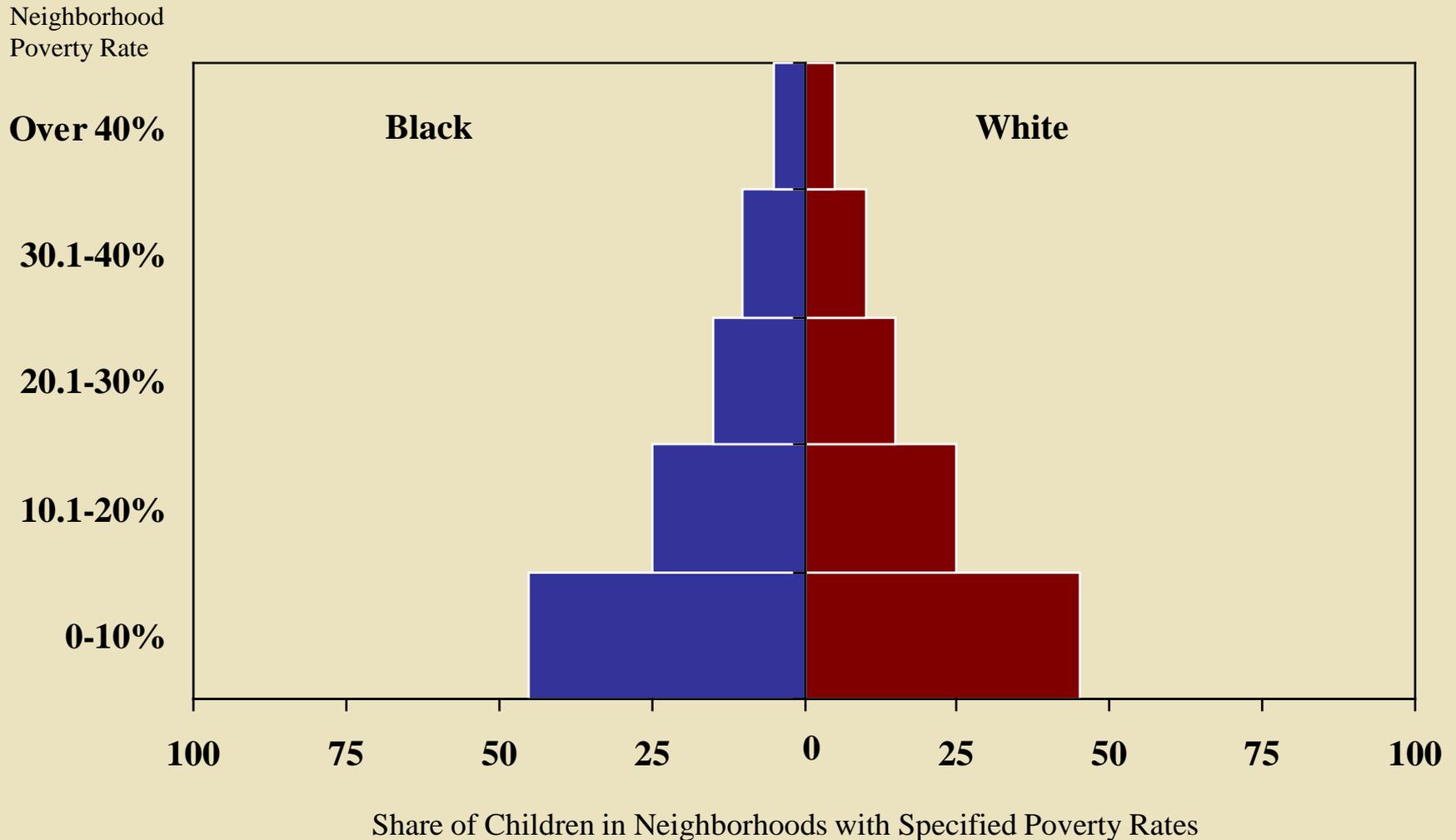
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Large disparities across neighborhoods within metro areas

- In Chicago, nearly 75% of poor white children lived in low-poverty neighborhoods.
- On the other hand, less than 10% of poor black children lived in low-poverty neighborhoods.
- These different distributions signal dramatically different access to neighborhoods of opportunity.

Pyramid Graph: Theoretical Equal Neighborhood Environment for 2 Groups: A Mirror Image



Metro Chicago

Poverty Composition of Neighborhoods of Black v. White Children

Neighborhood
Poverty Rate

Over 40%

Black

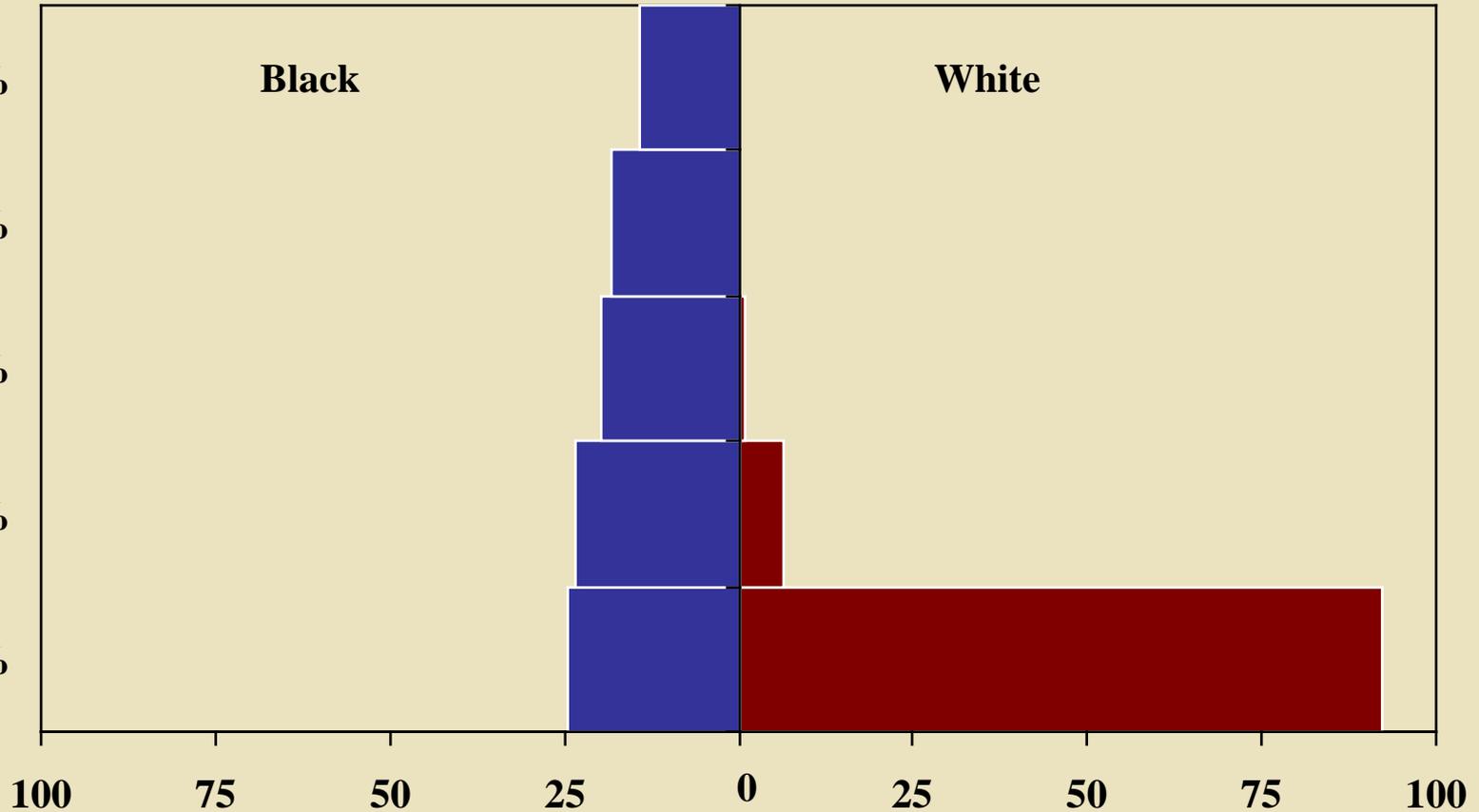
White

30.1-40%

20.1-30%

10.1-20%

0-10%

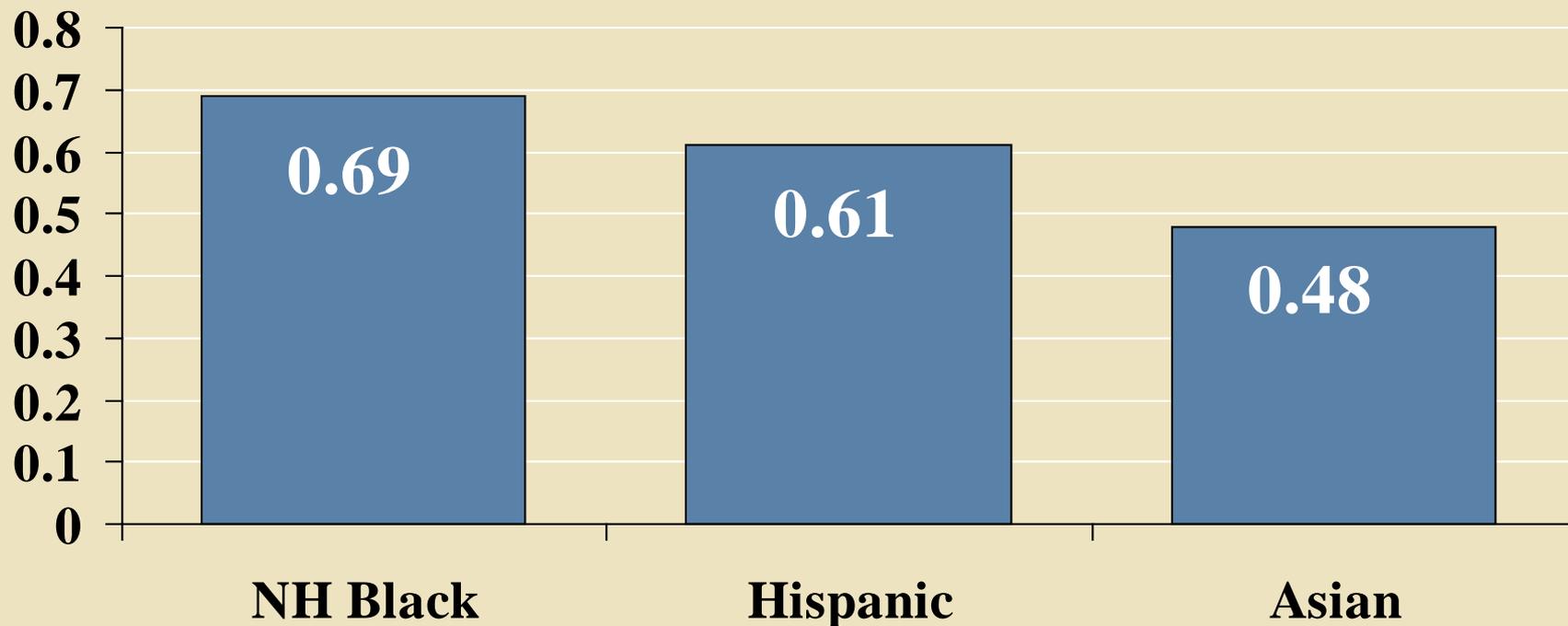


Share of Children in Neighborhoods with Specified Poverty Rates



Black and Hispanic children attend highly segregated schools

Average Metropolitan School Dissimilarity from Whites, Largest 100 MSAs, 2000



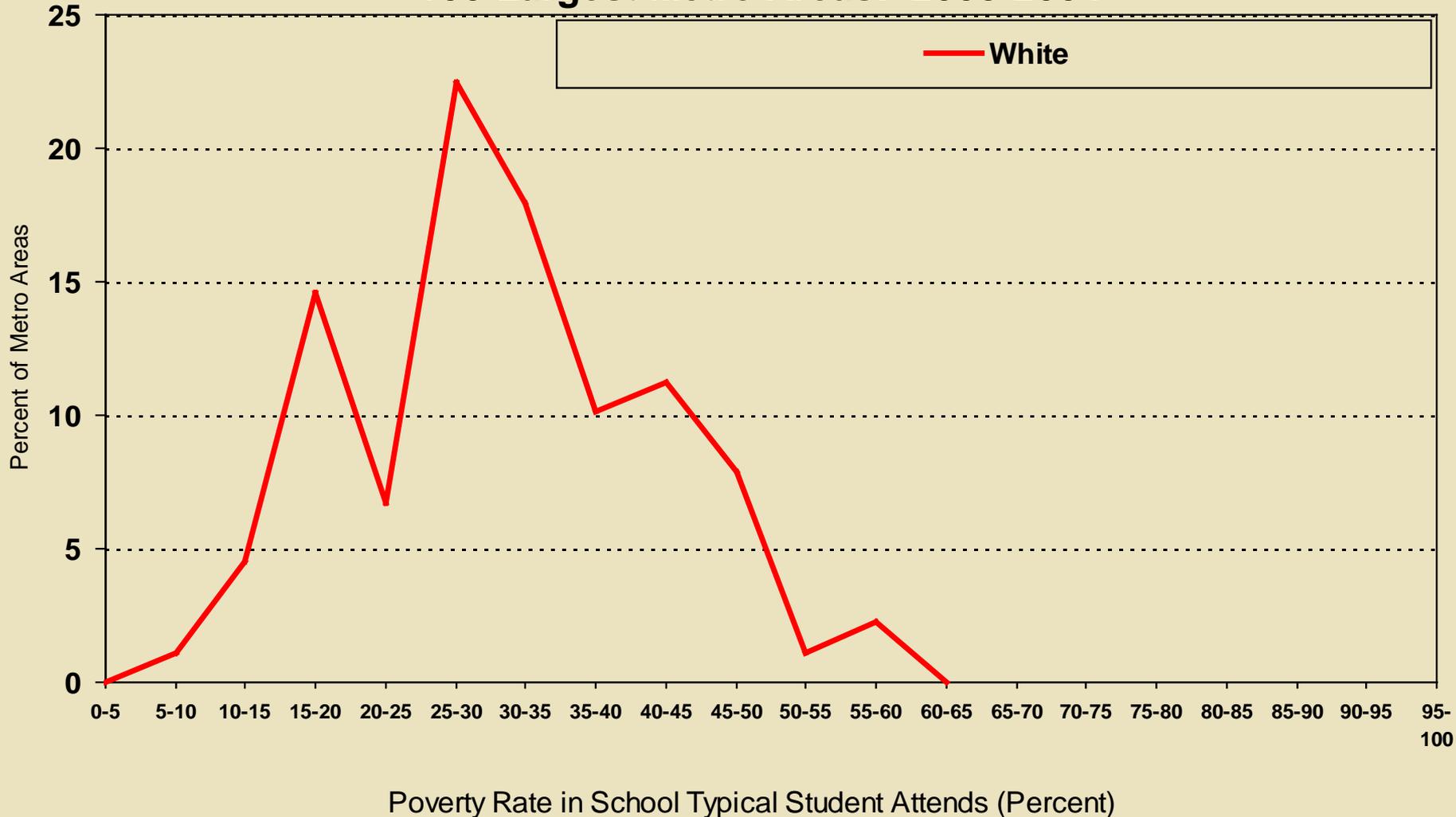
*Weighted by 2000 MSA minority school enrollment (e.g. NH blacks);
Includes MSAs with over 5,000 minority population in CCD data*



School poverty aggravates disadvantage for black and Hispanic children

- Children in public elementary school are highly segregated.
- Most prevalent school poverty rate experienced by average child was 25-30% for white and Asian children.
- Most prevalent school poverty rate was 60-65% for average black child, and 55-60% for average Hispanic child.

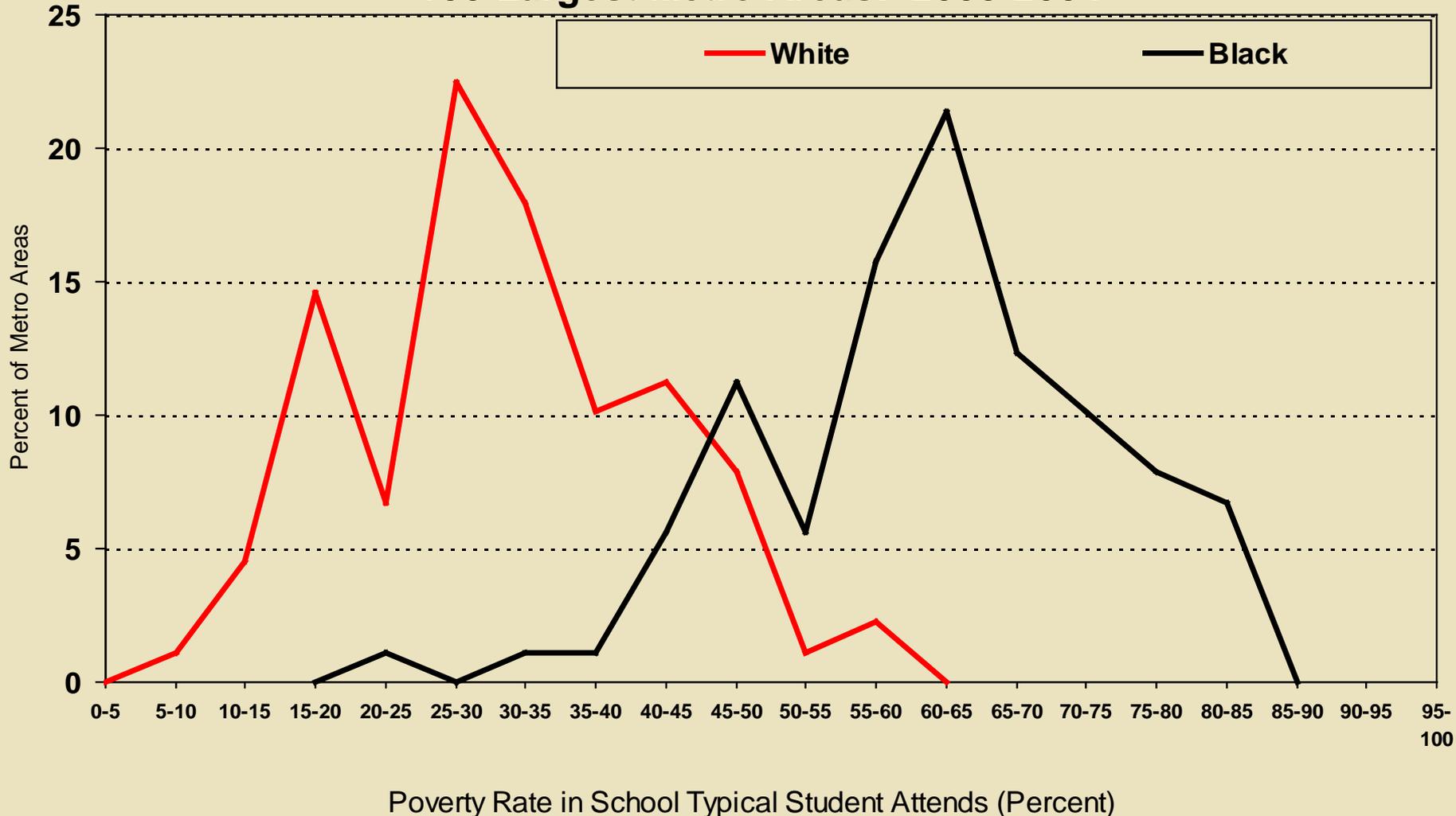
School Poverty Rates for Public Primary School Students Distributions by Race/Ethnicity 100 Largest Metro Areas: 2003-2004



Note: Poverty defined as being eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Source: DiversityData analysis of National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 2003-04.

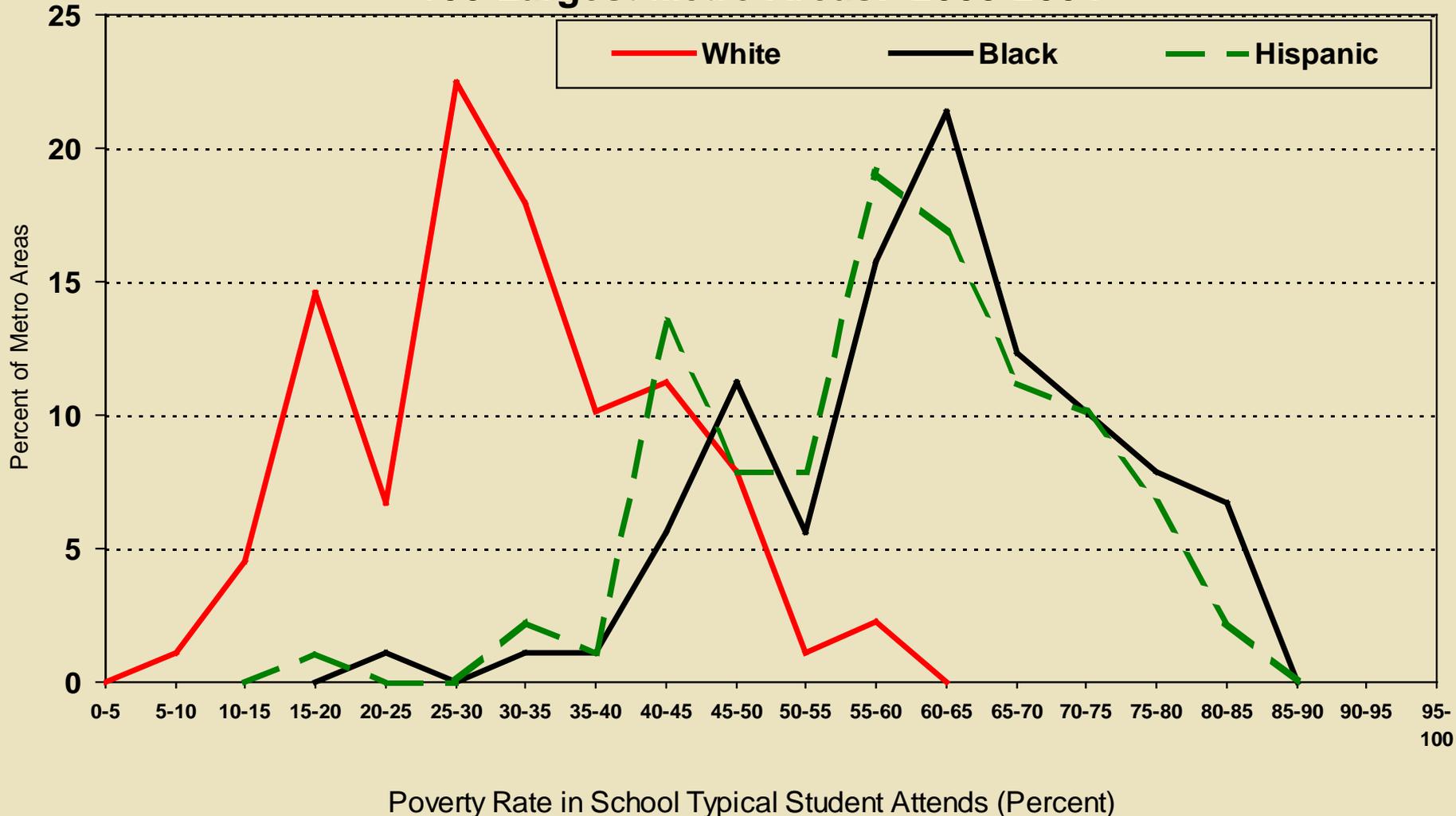
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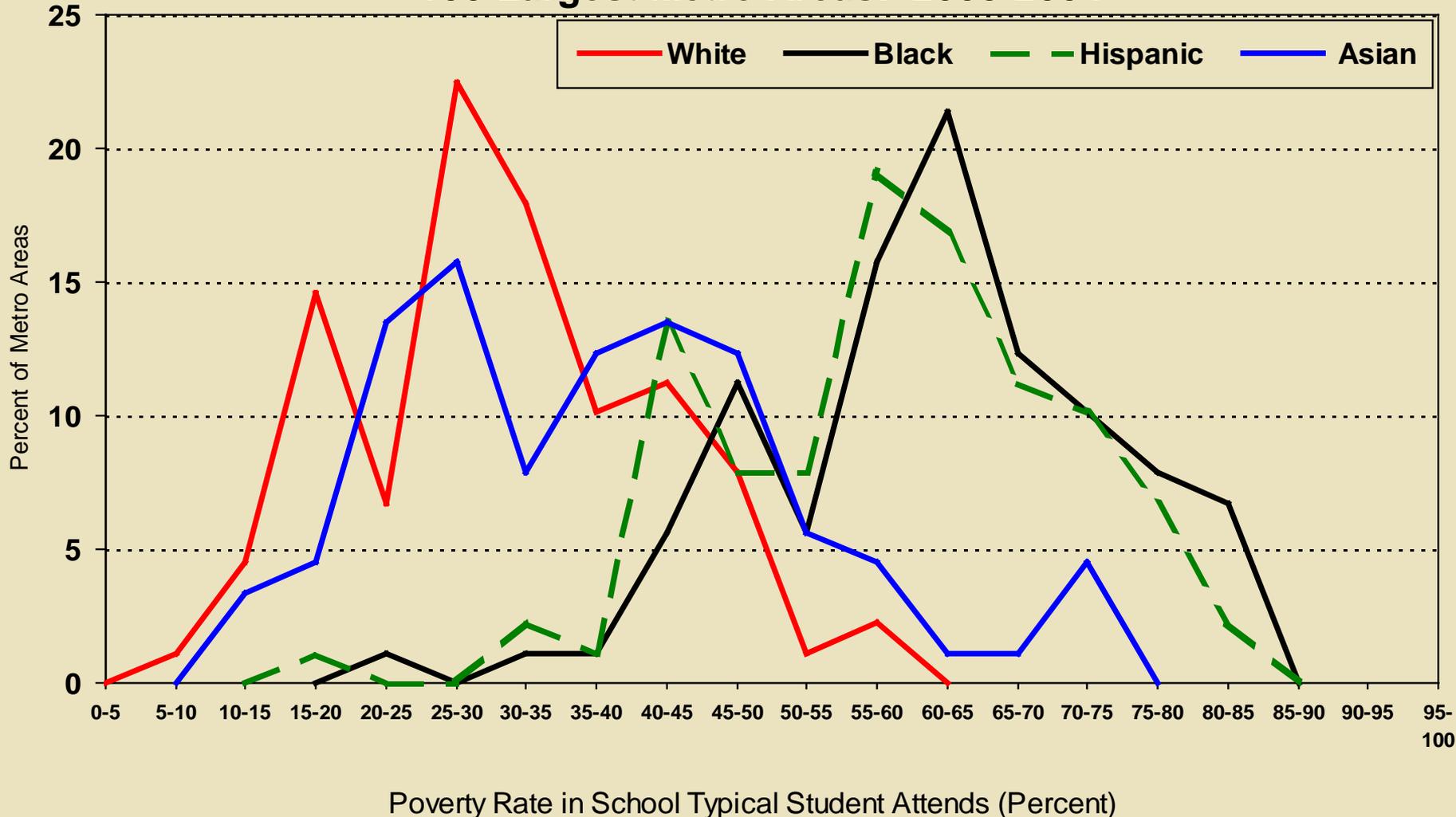
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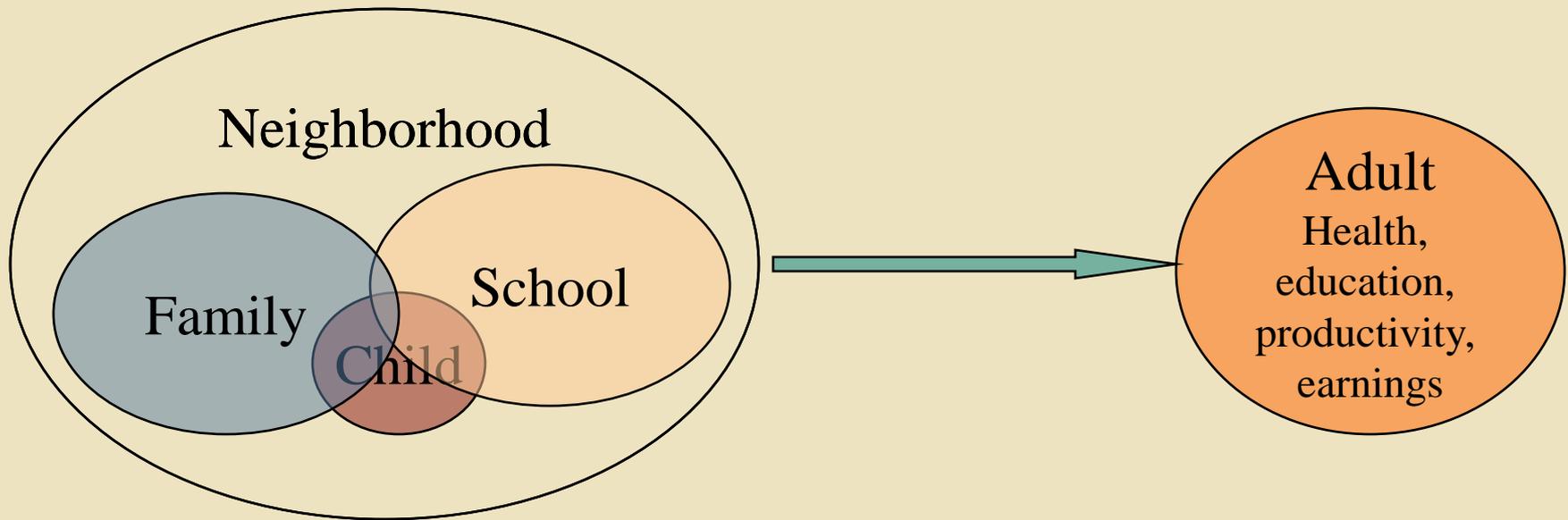
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Policy Implications



Influences on Child Health and Development





Children:

Early childhood development

- Comprehensive early childhood development programs improve educational and social outcomes in childhood and adulthood.
 - e.g. Perry Preschool and Abecedarian programs
- Include high-quality, active learning preschool (and school) program, and support for at-risk families (parent training and home visits).



Families:

Child poverty alleviation

- Federal government wields greatest levers, including increased eligibility and benefits under social and health programs.
- U.S. has second highest child poverty rate among developed countries, and makes less use of government transfers to mitigate child poverty than most other countries.



Neighborhoods: Housing choice and mobility

- Improve access of children in black and Hispanic families to affordable housing in suburban communities.
- Policies to reduce residential segregation include expanding neighborhood choice in the HUD Section 8 Voucher program, fair housing enforcement, inclusionary zoning, and increased availability of rental housing.



Schools:

Voluntary integration programs

- Sever connection between living in segregated, high poverty neighborhoods and attending segregated, high poverty schools by adopting voluntary school integration plans.
- Voluntary integration tools however, are currently in jeopardy as U.S. Supreme Court deliberates their constitutionality.



Metropolitan wide policies

- Metropolitan areas cut across traditional jurisdictions that may vary widely in tax base and resources.
- Regional equity policies to improving access to neighborhoods and schools with resources and to equalize resources across the entire metropolitan area.



Conclusion

- Disadvantaged conditions within families, neighborhoods and schools disproportionately hurt black and Hispanic children, and hinder their life chances and economic potential.
- Protecting children and improving opportunities is morally compelling and produces high social returns on this investment. The Obama Administration stimulus packages provide a down payment on these investments in children.
- Many other policy solutions can be leveraged to ensure America's children are not left behind.



www.diversitydata.org

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