Almost one in every five persons under 18 years of age in the U.S. is below the poverty line. Child poverty is a tragic condition that influences life outcomes. To be poor as a child is a disadvantage that operates through education and health outcomes to restrict the ability to escape from poverty. Child poverty is a funnel of failure.

As a region Megalopolis is below the national average. However within the region there are substantial variations; ranging from 3.9% in Hunterdon NJ to 41.9% in the Bronx NY. What stands out from the map is the high level of child poverty in the major urban areas. Washington DC, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston all rank as areas of concentrated child poverty with more than one in three persons aged under 18 below the poverty line.

The map clearly reveals the marked inequality between central cities and suburbs. The former trap many children in poverty while the latter can act as a platform for later success. The map reveals a fundamental cleavage between city and suburb that overlies race and class divisions to produce different life opportunities.

NOTE: 19.9% of persons in the United States under 18 years of age are below the poverty level.

SOURCE: County and City Data Book, 2000. U.S. Census Bureau, 1997 County Data