

material resources, which includes poor nutrition, insufficient clothing, poor sanitation, and deteriorating housing. *Invisible poverty* refers to social and cultural deprivation, such as limited employment opportunities, lack of or inferior health care services, and an absence of public services.

An *absolute standard* of poverty attempts to delimit a basic set of resources needed for adequate existence. A *relative standard* reflects the median standard of living in a society and is the term used in referring to childhood poverty in the United States—in other words, what appears to be deprivation in one area may be the standard or norm in another. Growth in the number of poor children over the past decade has not been attributable to an increase in the number of families receiving government assistance but to the growing ranks of the working poor. Approximately 20% of children in the United States live below the national poverty threshold, which is currently estimated at \$23,550 for two adults and two children ([US Department of Health and Human Services, 2013](#)). In addition, 20% of children live in neighborhoods where more than 20% of the population lives below the federal poverty threshold. Taken together, such information tells us that not only might resources be limited in a family home but also the community surrounding that home, which can affect opportunities for child growth and development (i.e., safe, thriving schools and places to play).

A disproportionate number of African-American, Native American, and Hispanic children are affected by poverty, which reveals an intersection of race and poverty ([Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013](#)). According to 2010 data, 38% of African-American children, 35% of Native American children, and 32% of Hispanic children live in poverty, compared with the national average of 22%. Specifically, African-American children and Hispanic children are nine and six times more likely to live in poverty than non-Hispanic Caucasian children, respectively ([Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013](#)). The experience of poverty in childhood can have enduring effects on developmental, health, and educational status, among other indicators. Thus nurses can work to assist children living in poverty by offering support to their parents, other caring adults, and the community.

A high correlation between poverty and illness has long been