Wisdom Reporting

America's Forgotten Children
The Kaplan Index

A public service report highlighting the tenuous situation of America's children during remote learning

Millions of school children in the U.S. are being failed by the education system during Covid-19

93% of school children in the United States are lacking some combination of care, internet connectivity or suitable large-screen devices to make remote learning work.

Over three-quarters of these school children, 38 million, are struggling with multiple disadvantages, most notably the lack of a full-time caregiver.

This comes as government data shows 73% of students Grades 1-12 are still in some sort of remote learning situation due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Congress has approved a third stimulus payment, but finance is not the only problem. Many students with fast internet connections and suitable devices for education, have no one at home to support their learning, or ensure they are even logging on.

The problem is most severe in Southern States such as Oklahoma, New Mexico and Mississippi where high birth rates and many single parent homes mean even fewer children have support at home.

Race is a dividing factor. Black and Hispanic American children are less likely to have the support, tools, or infrastructure to succeed in remote learning.

As well as financial support from the government, we need new working models, employer support and new ideas to support parents of school-aged children during this crisis.

Education facilities also need to adjust, both their teaching style and the way they support students, focusing on the most at-risk children. Teachers need training on how to engage kids through online classes as well as identifying and helping those who are falling behind due to remote learning.
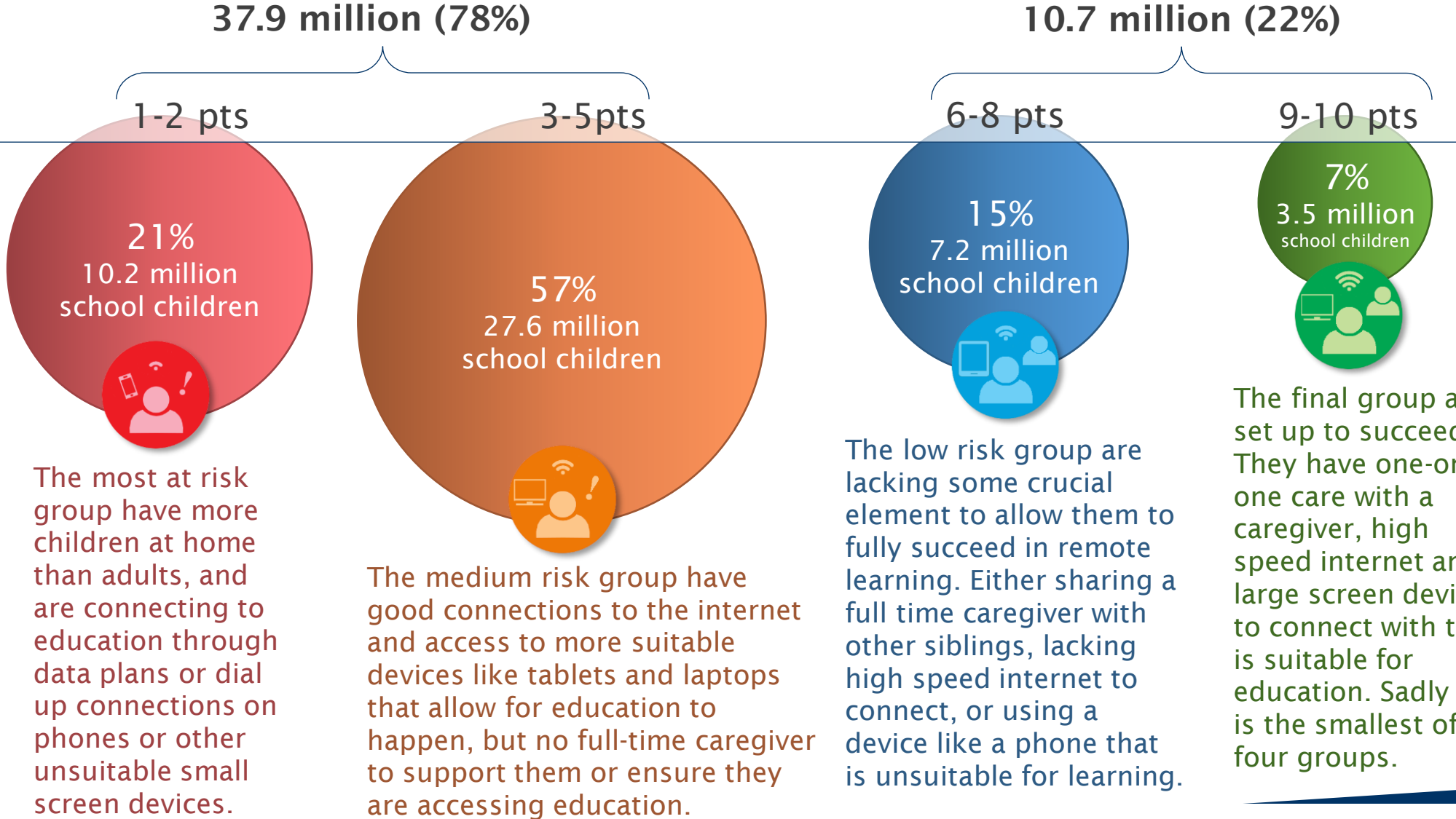
Some organizations are already taking up the challenge. NH based Signum University, for example is offering teachers training in remote teaching techniques, and also after school classes for kids with specially trained teachers to keep an interest in learning, even online. This report urges every American to consider what they can do.

38 million U.S. school children do not have the internet connectivity, suitable devices, or the at-home care that they need to succeed in home-education

37.9 million (78%)

10.7 million (22%)

Kaplan Index

A score assigned to each U.S. student (Grade 1-12) on a scale from 1 to 10 based on their access to a full time care giver, internet connection and access to a suitable device for online learning.

Each of the 48.6 million students from Grade 1-12 are represented in our groups.

1-2 pts

21%
10.2 million
school children

The most at risk group have more children at home than adults, and are connecting to education through data plans or dial up connections on phones or other unsuitable small screen devices.

3-5pts

57%
27.6 million
school children

The medium risk group have good connections to the internet and access to more suitable devices like tablets and laptops that allow for education to happen, but no full-time caregiver to support them or ensure they are accessing education.

6-8 pts

15%
7.2 million
school children

The low risk group are lacking some crucial element to allow them to fully succeed in remote learning. Either sharing a full time caregiver with other siblings, lacking high speed internet to connect, or using a device like a phone that is unsuitable for learning.

9-10 pts

7%
3.5 million
school children

The final group are set up to succeed. They have one-on-one care with a caregiver, high speed internet and a large screen device to connect with that is suitable for education. Sadly this is the smallest of the four groups.

Money isn't the only problem, or the only solution

The average annual income of workers within the households of each group is not a predictor of risk

Every $ symbol = $5000

$11,545

$25,781

$13,842

$17,041

Most at risk ← Kaplan Index → Least at risk
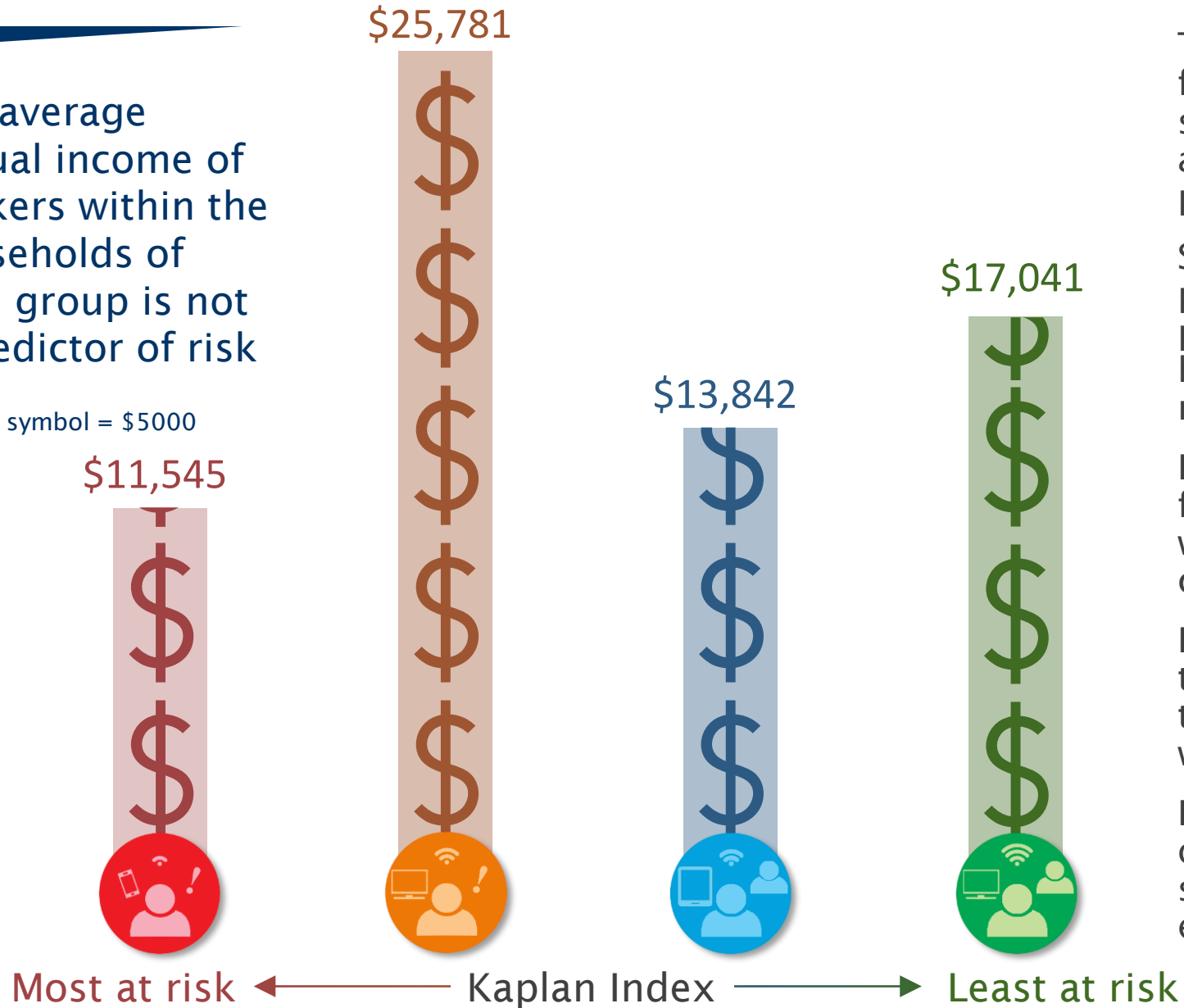
The most at-risk students are those whose families have the lowest incomes, but students in households with the highest average incomes are also at risk, where all possible caregivers are also working.

So far, the Federal response has been to provide more money through stimulus programs. This is a good first step, but as has been highlighted by the Kaplan Index, money is not the only problem.

Employers also need to be involved, giving flexible and condensed hours, remote working opportunities, and where possible child-care options.

Educators need additional training on how to create meaningful lessons remotely. How to identify and engage with remote learners who are struggling.
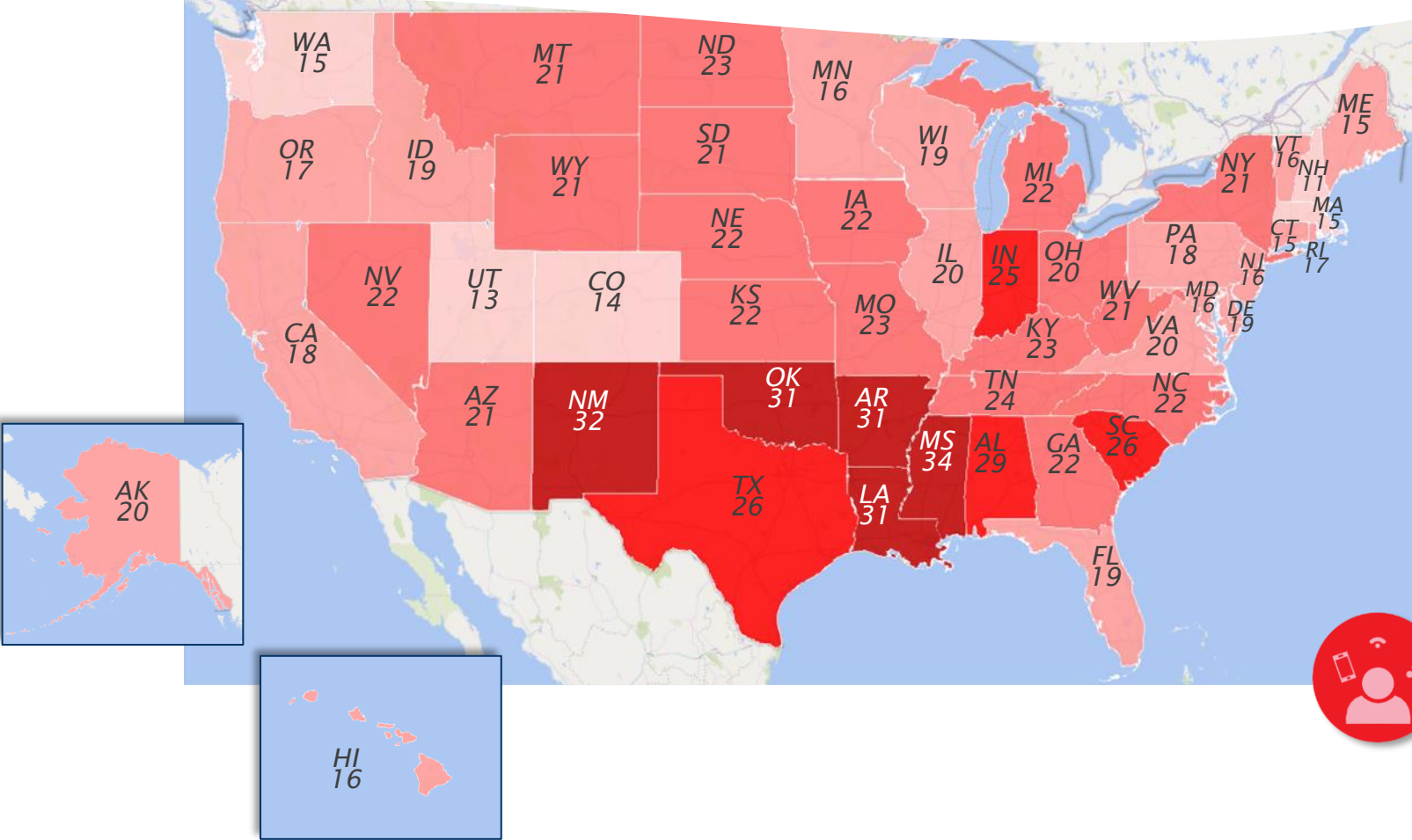
Finally, our children need a host of learning options, with flexible times, methods and styles that allow them to continue their education in ways that work for them.

Mississippi, New Mexico, and other nearby states have about a third of each State's school age population lacking connectivity, technology, and personal care

Percentage of students in the highest risk (red) group by state

Legend:
- More than 30%
- 26% to 30%
- 21% to 25%
- 16% to 20%
- 15% or less

Map values:
WA 15, MT 21, ND 23, MN 16, ME 15, OR 17, ID 19, WY 21, SD 21, WI 19, NY 21, VT 16, NH 11, MA 15, MI 22, CT 15, RI 17, NE 22, IA 22, PA 18, NJ 16, NV 22, UT 13, CO 14, KS 22, IL 20, IN 25, OH 20, WV 21, MD 16, DE 19, CA 18, MO 23, KY 23, VA 20, AZ 21, NM 32, OK 31, AR 31, TN 24, NC 22, MS 34, AL 29, GA 22, SC 26, TX 26, LA 31, FL 19, AK 20, HI 16

When we look at where support is most needed, the southern states of New Mexico, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas stand out as a block.

Higher birth rates and a higher likelihood of single parents who are also working, mean that children are at home either alone, or with a single adult looking after multiple children.

Without support these children are losing years of education that will disadvantage both them personally, and their state's economic outlook for years to come.

Children in rural areas are more at risk and need more support

Percentage of students in the highest risk (red) group in Georgia

More than 30%	26% to 30%	21% to 25%	16% to 20%	15% or less
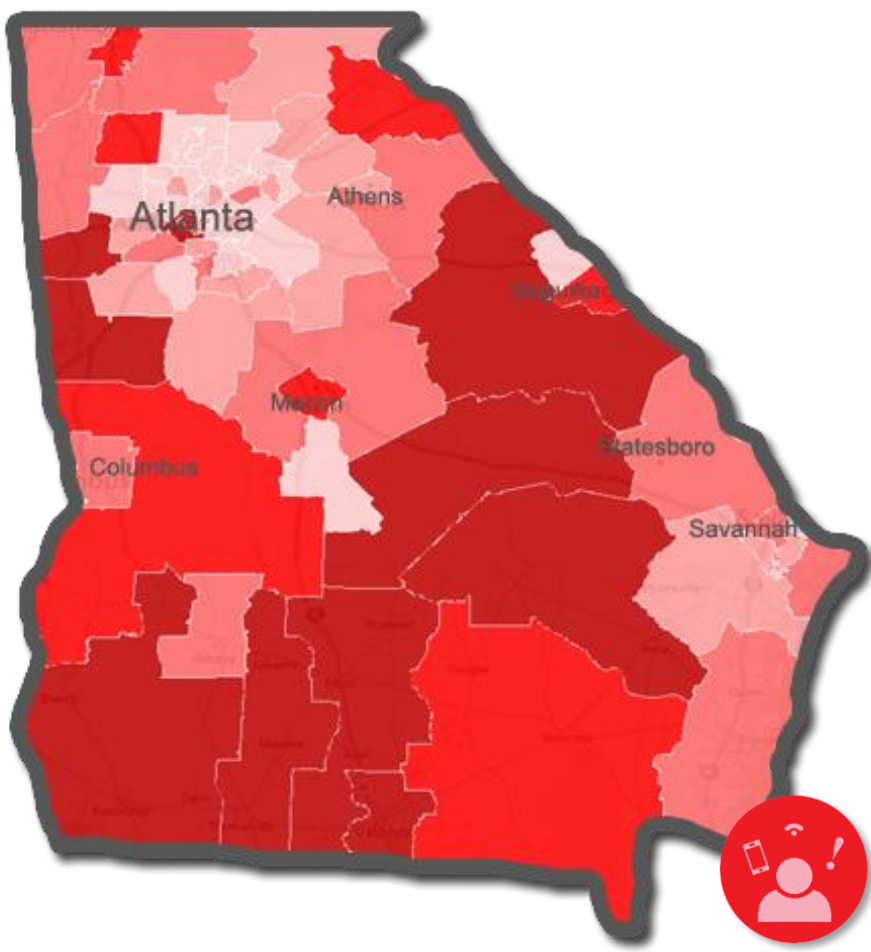
Georgia is a clear example of the wider trend across states

Our analysis showed that children in more densely populated areas, cities and suburbs, are more likely to have access to the infrastructure, suitable devices, and at-home care than children in rural areas.
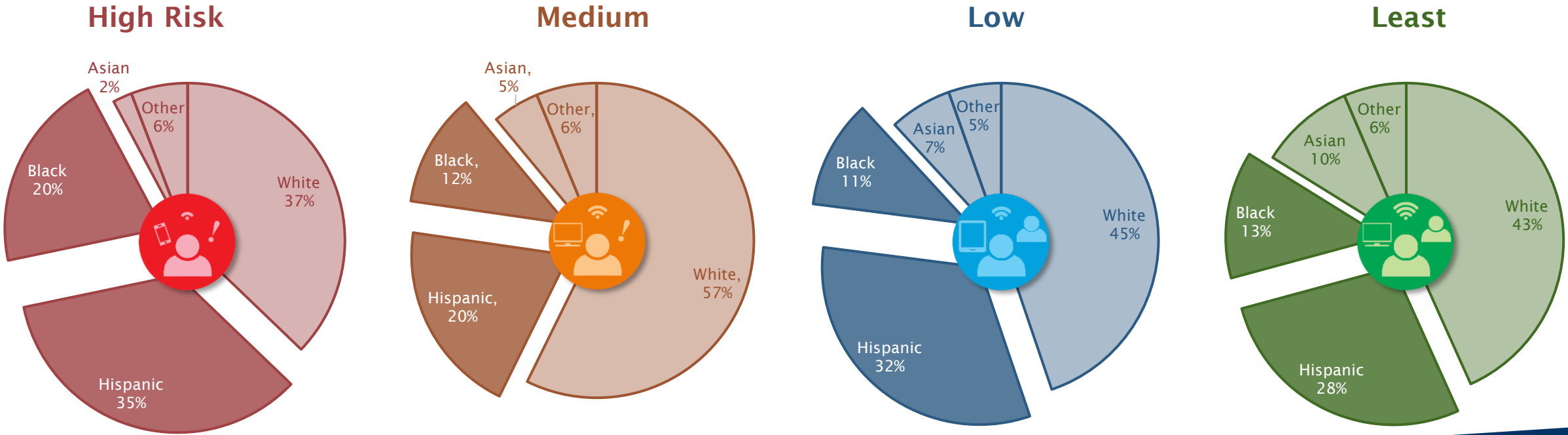
This can be seen in States like Georgia, where nearly half of children in rural areas are in the most at-risk groups, but those in and around Atlanta and other cities are more likely to have better infrastructure, access to more suitable devices, and have adults at home who can care for them.

Other factors like race also play a part, leading to areas like South Atlanta still having more than 30% of children at the highest risk.

Black/African American, and Hispanic students are most at risk

In the most at-risk group, with no full-time caregiver, poor internet connections and unsuitable devices for connecting to remote education, Black and African American students at 20% are a larger proportion than in any other group. Similarly Hispanic students make up over a third (35%) of those in the most at-risk group. Support options need to be geared to take this into account and provide additional support where needed.

The percentage of students identifying by race and ethnicity in each risk group

High Risk

- Asian 2%
- Other 6%
- White 37%
- Black 20%
- Hispanic 35%

Medium

- Asian, 5%
- Other, 6%
- White, 57%
- Black, 12%
- Hispanic, 20%

Low

- Other 5%
- Asian 7%
- White 45%
- Black 11%
- Hispanic 32%

Least

- Other 6%
- Asian 10%
- White 43%
- Black 13%
- Hispanic 28%

Study Methodology

All of the 2019 statistics in this report were taken from the publicly available pums 1-year data files for 2019 released by the American Community Survey in 2020.

Data showing the number of students in remote learning was taken from Week 25 of the Household Pulse Survey with data collected February 17 – March 1, 2021

Sex, age, race, origin, occupation, state, and education are self-reported and taken directly from the data files. In some cases, they were grouped for fuller analysis. State used was the home address of the student.

Students were defined as 3-to-18 year-olds attending grade 1 through 12. Caregivers are adults who are part of the same household as the student and are not working.

The Kaplan Index was created by scoring each student along three factors.
1. The quality of their internet connection
2. The screen size and capacity of the device available within their household
3. The number of caregivers available within the household as a ratio of number of students

For further inquiries about the report, how to use the data, permission to use these visuals or any queries about creating custom reports, please contact **info@wisdomreporting.com**.