Children in Immigrant Families in Ohio
Fact Sheet

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CSDA
The Center for Social and Demographic Analysis
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PROMOTING POSITIVE OUTCOMES for children in immigrant families is critical given that they are among the fastest growing segment of the child population (ages 0-17). This brief is part of a series of 50 state-specific papers intended to provide information about the importance of reducing language and literacy barriers to ensure that children in immigrant families achieve success in school and work settings. The results presented here are combined from the American Community Survey for 2005, 2006, and 2007. Funding was provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Children in immigrant families learning English merit special attention for Ohio's future

Children with at least one immigrant parent account for 6% of all children in Ohio, and 2% of Ohio's children live with English language learner parents only.

Children in immigrant families have diverse national origins

The largest proportion of children in immigrant families in Ohio have origins in East Asia (14%). Close behind are children with origins in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union as well as Mexico (13% each), followed by those with origins in Africa (12%). Many also have origins in South Central Asia (10%) the Middle East, Western Europe, and India (8% each).

Children in immigrant families have deep roots in Ohio

This is reflected in their parents' length of residence and citizenship, their own citizenship, their parents' and their own English fluency, and their families' commitment to homeownership.

Most children in immigrant families have long-term resident parents

Three in five (61%) children in immigrant families in Ohio have parents who have lived in the United States 10 or more years. The proportion is similar for children with mixed-fluency parents (65%) and English fluent parents only (68%) and 42% for those with English language learner parents only.

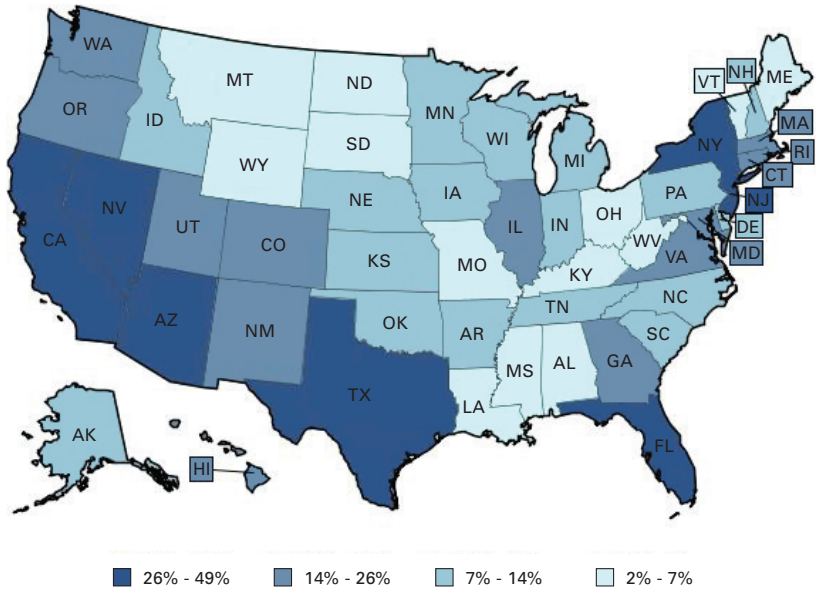
Many children in immigrant families have American citizen parents

Seven of every ten (70%) children in immigrant families in Ohio have parents who are U.S. citizens. The proportion rises from 37% for children with English language learner parents only to 69% for children with mixed-fluency parents and 83% for those with English fluent parents only.

Most children in immigrant families are American citizens

More than four in five (84%) children in immigrant families in Ohio are U.S. citizens. The proportion is about nine in ten for children with English fluent parents only (91%) and mixed-fluency parents (85%), but

Children in immigrant families (Percent – 2007)



KIDS COUNT Data Center, www. kidscount.org/datacenter
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even among children with English language learner parents only, 65% are American citizens.

Children in immigrant families have diverse language environments

Most children in immigrant families grow up in complex language environments that can help promote the development of English language skills. A smaller proportion lives in linguistically isolated households.

More than four in five children in immigrant families in Ohio are U.S. citizens.

The language skills of parents in immigrant families have important implications for language acquisition among children because parents provide the earliest environment in which children learn to speak. The English language skills of parents may also have important implications beyond the role in children's language acquisition. English language learner parents are less likely to find well-paid full-time year-round jobs and may be less able to help their children study for subjects taught in English.

Most children in immigrant families have an English fluent parent

Three of every four (76%) children in immigrant families in Ohio live with at least one English fluent parent, while the others (24%) live with parents who are English language learners only. Of the 76%, about four-fifths live with English fluent parents only, and about one-fifth live with mixed-fluency parents, that is, with one English fluent parent and one English language learner parent.

English fluent parents are more likely to have lived longer in the U.S. In all immigrant families, only 42% of English language learner parents have lived in the U.S. for 10 or more years, while 65% of mixed-fluency parents and 68% of English fluent parents have lived in the U.S. for 10 or more years. This pattern reflects, in part, the fact that the longer immigrant parents live in the U.S. the more likely they are to become proficient in English.

Nine in ten children in immigrant families are English fluent

Eighty-eight percent of children in immigrant families in Ohio speak English exclusively or

very well. Even among children in immigrant families with origins in Mexico, the origin group least likely to speak English fluently, a substantial majority (66%) speak English fluently.

Two in five (40%) children in immigrant families in Ohio speak another language at home and speak English very well. Thus, many children in immigrant families are well-positioned to become fluent bilingual speakers, writers, and readers—if they receive formal training in both English and the native language of their parents.

But many children live in linguistically isolated households

One in six (16%) children in immigrant families in Ohio lives in linguistically isolated households, in which no one over the age of 13 speaks English exclusively or very well.

Two-thirds of children in immigrant families live in family-owned homes

Sixty-eight percent of children in immigrant families in Ohio live in family-owned homes. The proportion ranges from 44% for those with English language learner parents only to 56% for those with mixed-fluency parents and 81% for those with English fluent parents only.

Seven in ten children in immigrant families in Ohio have parents who are U.S. citizens.

Children in immigrant families experience important family strengths

These strengths include having two parents (and often other adult relatives) in the home who have a strong work ethic and are available to care for and nurture their children.

Most children in immigrant families have two parents in the home

Children in immigrant families in Ohio are more likely than children in native-born families to live with two parents. Among children in immigrant families, 86% live with two parents compared to 72% of children in native-born families. Almost nine in ten children in immigrant families live with two parents if they have English fluent parents only (87%). This is greater than the proportion for children with English language learner parents only (76%), which is similar to the proportion for Whites in native-born families (79%).

Children in immigrant families in Ohio are about as likely as Whites in native-born families to have another adult relative in the home (16% vs. 13%). Children in immigrant families with English language learner parents only are the most likely to have such relatives in the home (22%), followed by those with mixed-fluency parents (16%).

Children in immigrant families experience a strong family work ethic

Nineteen of every twenty (94%) children living with a father have a father who works to support the family, among children in immigrant families and native-born families alike. The proportion is very high (91%–96%) for each parental English language fluency group among children in immigrant families.

Three of every four (73%) children in immigrant families in Ohio with a father in the home have a father working full-time year-round, which is similar to the proportion for native-born families (78%). The proportion ranges from 79% for children with English fluent parents only to 66% for those with mixed-fluency parents and 61% for those English language learner parents only.

Two-thirds (65%) of children in immigrant families in Ohio with a mother in the home have a mother working to support the family. This is somewhat less than the proportion for children in native-born families (76%). Children in immigrant families with English fluent parents only and children in native-born families are equally likely to have a working mother (72% vs. 76%), while children with mixed-fluency parents and English language learner parents only are less likely than children in native-born families to have a working mother (47% and 59% vs. 76%).

Two in five children (40%) in immigrant families in Ohio speak another language at home and speak English very well.

Three of every ten (31%) children in immigrant families in Ohio with a mother in the home have a mother employed full-time year-round. Children in immigrant families are 7 percentage points less likely than those in native-born families to have a mother working full-time (31% vs. 38%).

Children in immigrant families experience important challenges

Many children in immigrant families, especially those with English language learner parents only, experience the challenges associated with low parental education, low parental hourly earnings, and high family poverty, which, in turn, can lead to overcrowded housing.

Many children of immigrants have parents with limited education

One of every eight (12%) children in immigrant families in Ohio has a father who did not graduate from high school, and the proportion is similar for mothers. Children in immigrant families with English fluent parents only are half as likely as children in native-born families (4% vs. 10%) to have fathers who did not graduate from high school, but the proportion of children in immigrant families whose fathers did not graduate from high school rises to 18% for children with mixed-fluency parents and 28% for those with English language learner parents only.

One in sixteen (6%) children in immigrant families in Ohio has a father who has completed only 8 or fewer years of school. The proportion rises to 17% for children with English language learner parents only.

Parents with little schooling may be less comfortable with the education system, less able to help their children with school work, and less able to effectively negotiate with teachers and education administrators. It may be especially important for educators to focus attention on the needs of children in immigrant families from Mexico because children in each of these groups are especially likely to have parents who have completed only a few years of school.

Many children of immigrants have parents with low hourly earnings

One of every five (20%) children in immigrant families in Ohio with a father in the home has a father earning less than 200% of the minimum wage, that is, less than $10.30 per hour. (The Federal Minimum Wage increased from $5.15 to $5.85 on July 24, 2007 and to $7.25 on July 24, 2009.) This is two-fifths greater than the proportion among those in native-born families (14%). There is little difference between the children in native-born or immigrant families with English fluent parents only (14% vs. 11%), but the proportion of children in immigrant families whose fathers earn less than 200% of minimum wage rises sharply to 28% for children with mixed-fluency parents and 40% for those with English language learner parents only.

Immigrant groups with high proportions of fathers who have limited educational attainments also tend to have fathers with low hourly wages. Children in immigrant families from Mexico have especially low levels of education among fathers and also have the highest proportion of fathers earning less than 200% of the federal minimum wage (46%).

Many children in immigrant families live below the poverty line

One in six (17%) children in immigrant families in Ohio is officially poor, and the proportion rises to nearly two-fifths (37%) for those with English language learner parents only. Overall, children in immigrant families in Ohio are about as likely as those in native-born families to be poor (17% vs. 16%), and they are more likely than Whites in native-born families to live in poverty (17% vs. 11%). Official poverty rates for children in immigrant families with English fluent parents only and mixed-fluency parents are somewhat com-

About This Series

The Center for Social and Demographic Analysis (CSDA) of the University at Albany, State University of New York, collaborated with the Annie E. Casey Foundation on this project. The Center supports the efforts of population scientists at the University at Albany to conduct innovative research on such demographic topics as immigration, residential segregation, and health disparities. CSDA researchers Donald J. Hernandez, Ph.D., Victoria L. Blanchard, M.S., Nancy A. Denton, Ph.D., and Suzanne E. Macartney, M.A. conducted the analyses on which the series is based and wrote the briefs while the Annie E. Casey Foundation edited, designed and disseminated them.

64% of children in immigrant families with English language learner parents only are living below the 200% poverty level.

parable to the rate for children in native-born families (7% and 20% vs. 16%), but the rate rises to 37% for those with English language learner parents only.

The official poverty rate is even higher for children in immigrant families with origins in Mexico (33%), and the rate increases for those with English language learner parents only (47%).

The official poverty measure is used most often to assess economic deprivation in the U.S., but more than a decade ago a National Research Council (NRC) report urged that the official measure be revised because "…it no longer provides an accurate picture of the differences in the extent of economic poverty among population groups or geographic areas of the country, nor an accurate picture of trends over time" (Citro & Michael, 1995, p. 1). The proportion of families with incomes below 200% of the poverty line is often used in policy discussions.

More than one-third (36%) of children of immigrants in Ohio live in a family with an income below 200% of the official poverty line. Children in immigrant families are about as likely as those in native-born families to have family incomes below 200% of the official poverty line (36% vs. 35%). Among children of immigrants with English fluent parents only, 20% live below the 200% poverty line, compared to 35% for children in native-born families, but the proportion rises to 55% for children of immigrants with mixed-fluency parents and to a very high 64% for children of immigrants with English language learner parents only.

Many children in immigrant families live in overcrowded housing

Families with low wages and below-poverty-line incomes may live with other family members or nonrelatives to share housing costs and make scarce resources go further, leading to overcrowded housing conditions.

One of every six (17%) children in immigrant families in Ohio lives in overcrowded housing. Children in immigrant families are three times more likely than children in native-born families to live in overcrowded housing (17% vs. 6%). Overcrowding is about as prevalent for children in immigrant families with English fluent parents only as for children in native-born families (9% vs. 6%), but as with poverty indicators, the proportion rises greatly for children with mixed-fluency parents (28%) and English language learner parents only (28%).

Children in immigrant families have low early education enrollment

Although data on early education enrollment among children in immigrant families in Ohio is not available, in the United States overall, children in immigrant families are less likely than children in native-born families to be enrolled in pre-k/nursery school at age 3 (28% vs. 35%) and at age 4 (56% vs. 60%). At age 3, the proportion of children in immigrant families enrolled in preschool programs declines from 40% for those with English fluent parents only to 25% for those with mixed-fluency parents and 19% for those with English language learner parents only. Similarly, at age 4, the proportion of children in immigrant families enrolled in preschool programs declines across the three language groups. Groups less likely than Whites in native-born families to be enrolled are children in immigrant families from Mexico and Central America, among others.

Cultural preferences are sometimes cited as a reason for lower enrollment in early education programs among immigrant groups, especially among Hispanics. But recent research indicates that socioeconomic barriers can account for at least one-half and perhaps the entire enrollment gap in early education that separates children in immigrant families from Mexico, for example, and White children

Three-fourths of children in immigrant families whose parents are learning English live in two-parent households (76%).

in native-born families (Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, in press).

These results may be surprising, but it is important to note that these estimates are consistent with the strong commitment to early education in contemporary Mexico, where universal enrollment at age 3 is becoming obligatory in 2008–2009 (OECD, 2006). In fact, in Mexico where preschool is free, 81% of children age 4 were enrolled in 2005, compared to only 71% of White children in U.S. native-born families and 55% of children in U.S. immigrant families from Mexico in 2004 (Yoshikawa et al., 2006).

Policies and programs to foster children's success

Ohio and its local governments, including counties, cities, and school districts, as well as the Federal Government, pursue many policies and programs to foster positive development among children. Such government activities are no less important for children in immigrant families than for those in native-born families, but particularly for children with English language learner parents only, special features may be required to assure that children in immigrant families have the same opportunities to succeed as all children.

There is a need for education policies, programs, and curricula that encourage fluency not only in English but also in the home languages of children and that foster bilingual spoken fluency and literacy (reading and writing). This need exists because language development is critical to the success of children in school, and research has shown that the development of bicultural language skills and identity is related to the successful educational and social integration of children in immigrant families (Espinosa 2007, 2008; Fuller, 2007; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Sam et al., 2006). Two-generation family literacy programs could also foster the educational, economic, and social integration of children and parents in immigrant families.

The successful integration of many children and parents in immigrant families in some communities may require active outreach in the home languages of families by schools, health care facilities, and other organizations and institutions serving children and families. The successful integration of these children and parents will also be fostered by the development of a culturally competent workforce in these organizations and institutions. ◇

Citations

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