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children in  
immigrant families  
in South Dakota  
are U.S. citizens.**

# Children in Immigrant Families in South Dakota Fact Sheet

September 2009

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 South Dakota's future**

Children with at least one immigrant parent account for 4% of all children in South Dakota, and 2% of South Dakota'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 South Dakota have origins in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (21%), followed by those with origins in Africa and Mexico (15% each). Many also have origins in East Asia (12%) and Central America (9%).

## **Children in immigrant families have deep roots in South Dakota**

This is reflected in their citizenship and their English fluency.

## **Most children in immigrant families are American citizens**

Seven in ten children (70%) in immigrant families in South Dakota are U.S. citizens. The proportion is more than four in five for children with English fluent parents only (84%).

## **Four-fifths of children in immigrant families are English fluent**

Seventy-seven percent of children in immigrant families in South Dakota speak English exclusively or very well.

## **One-third (36%) of children in immigrant families in South Dakota 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 parent or parents.

Given the limited sample of immigrant families in this state, additional analyses are not possible. However, as more data is collected by the American Community Survey in the future, further analyses will become available. Meanwhile, additional indicators from Census 2000 can be accessed at [www.albany.edu/csda/children](http://www.albany.edu/csda/children) (click on "data").

## **Policies and programs to foster children's success**

South Dakota and its local governments, including counties, cities, and school districts, as well as the Federal Government, pursue

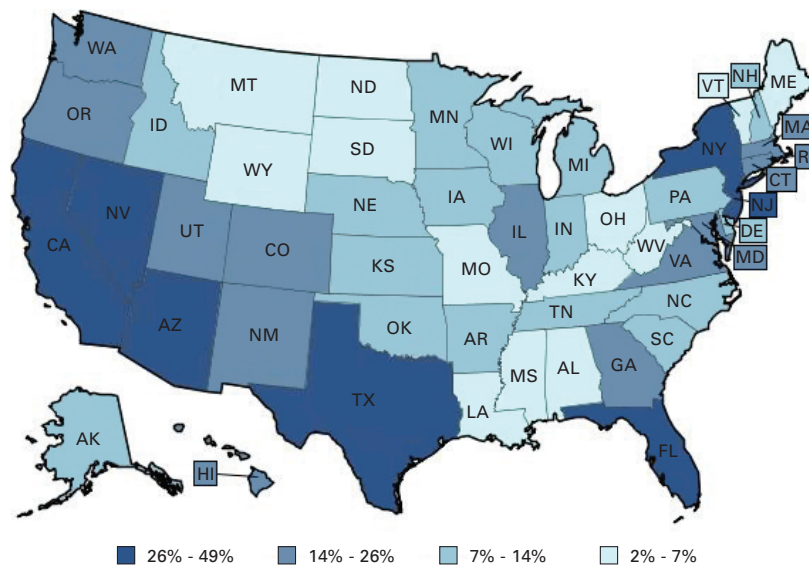


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### Children in immigrant families (Percent – 2007)



**KIDS COUNT Data Center, [www.kidscount.org/datacenter](http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter)**  
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**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. ♦**

## 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.