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Children in Immigrant Families in Wyoming 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 Wyoming's future

Children with at least one immigrant parent account for 5% of all children in Wyoming, and 2% of Wyoming'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 Wyoming have origins in Mexico (54%). Many also have origins in Canada (12%) and East Asia as well as Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (9% each).

Children in immigrant families have deep roots in Wyoming

This is reflected in their citizenship and their English fluency.

Most children in immigrant families are American citizens

More than four in five children (86%) in immigrant families in Wyoming are U.S. citizens.

Nine in ten children in immigrant families are English fluent

Ninety-one percent of children in immi-

grant families in Wyoming speak English exclusively or very well.

Two-fifths of children (40%) in immigrant families in Wyoming 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 (click on "data").

Policies and programs to foster children's success

Wyoming 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



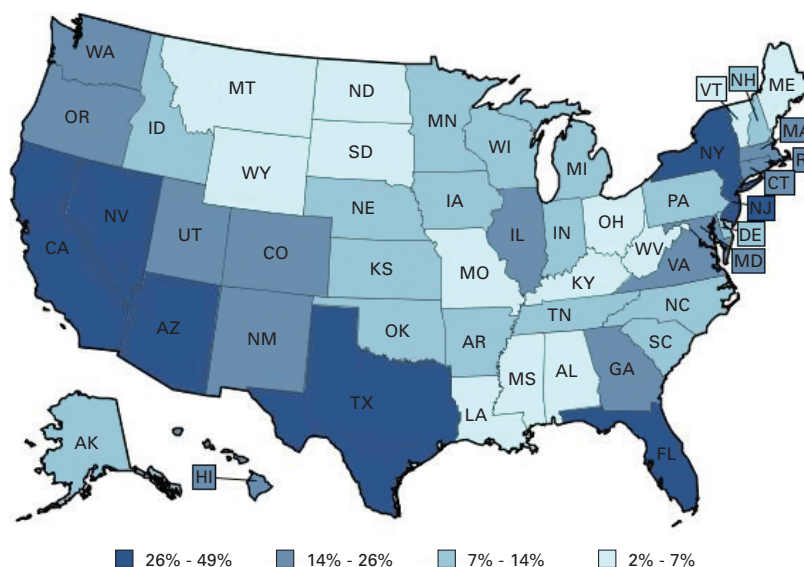
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Children in immigrant families (Percent – 2007)



KIDS COUNT Data Center, www.kidscount.org/datacenter
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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.