

## LATINO ISSUES AND UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL

### "Emerging" Hispanic Communities

The phenomenon of "emerging" Hispanic communities was illustrated by the 2000 Census, which showed that over the last decade dramatic shifts have occurred in the Hispanic immigrant population. Many Latinos have recently settled in parts of the country where their presence had been virtually nonexistent. For example, "emerging" Hispanic states such as North Carolina, Arkansas, and Georgia have experienced large increases in their Hispanic immigrant child population under age five. Moreover, a large share of these children are English language learners (ELLs). Under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), K-12 public schools in these states will be held accountable for helping them learn English and meet rigorous academic standards. Unfortunately, few of these states have experience and expertise in providing services to Latino and ELL children and their families. NCLR believes that access to high-quality preschool programs can help prepare these children for the first day of school, and assist parents in understanding their roles and responsibilities in our nation's public schools. Quality preschool programs can be a path to ensure success for these children and the schools that serve them. Indeed, children who are school-ready with parents who are actively involved in their education are more likely to be successful and meet NCLB standards.

### Top 10 States with the Fastest-Growing Latino Child Population Ages 0-4, by Percent Growth, 1990-2000

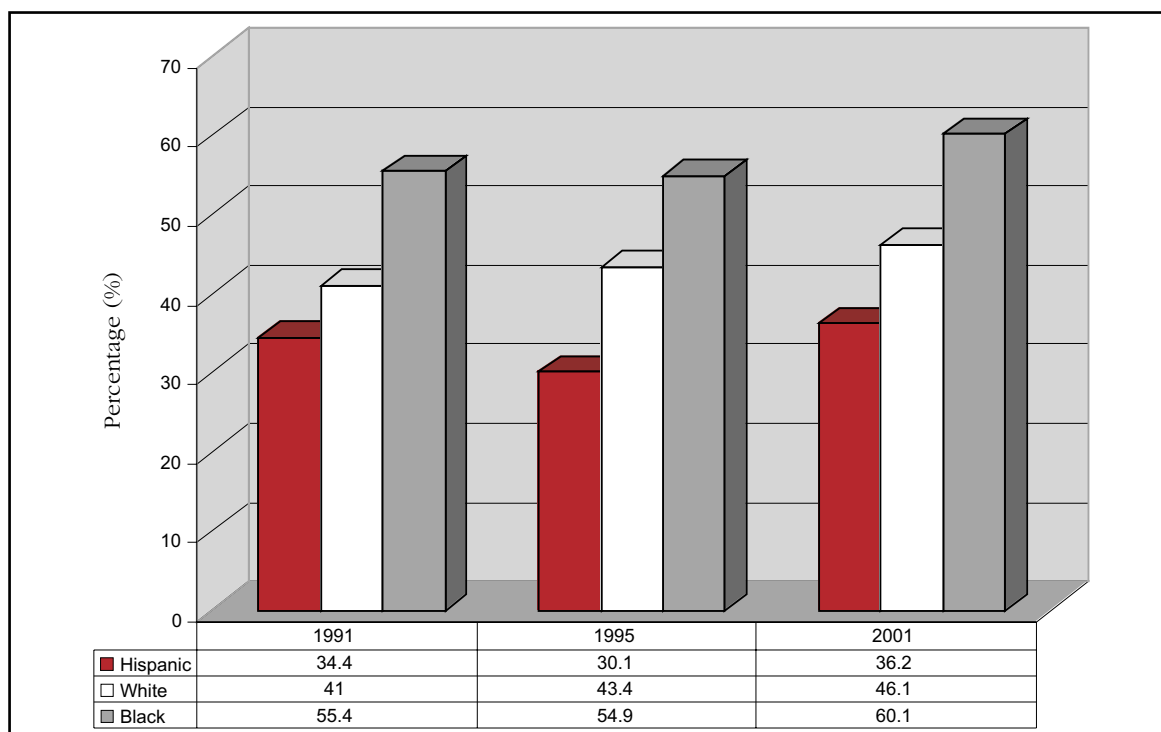
STATE	PERCENT GROWTH
1. North Carolina	417.3
2. Arkansas	392.2
3. Georgia	342.2
4. Tennessee	339.2
5. Alabama	260.8
6. Nevada	238.5
7. South Carolina	194.0
8. Kentucky	193.2
9. Iowa	187.0
10. Minnesota	159.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

## Access for Latino Children

Research has consistently shown that access to high-quality early childhood programs can have a positive impact on the school careers of children, particularly those from low-income households. Unfortunately, Latinos are less likely than their African American and White peers to participate in early childhood education programs. For example, in 2001, fewer than four in ten (36.2%) poor Hispanic children ages three to five were enrolled in early childhood care and education programs, while 60.1% of poor Black and 46.1% of poor White children of the same age group were enrolled in these programs. NCLR believes that high-quality, universally accessible preschool programs provide an opportunity to ensure that Hispanic children arrive at the kindergarten door ready to learn. As states continue to invest in and expand preschool services, efforts must be made to ensure the participation of Hispanic, English language learner, and immigrant children in these programs.

### Percentage of Low-Income Children Ages 3-5 Enrolled in Center-Based Early Childhood Care and Education Programs, by Race/Ethnicity 1991, 1995, 2001



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. National Household Education Surveys Program, "Parent Interview" Survey, selected years.