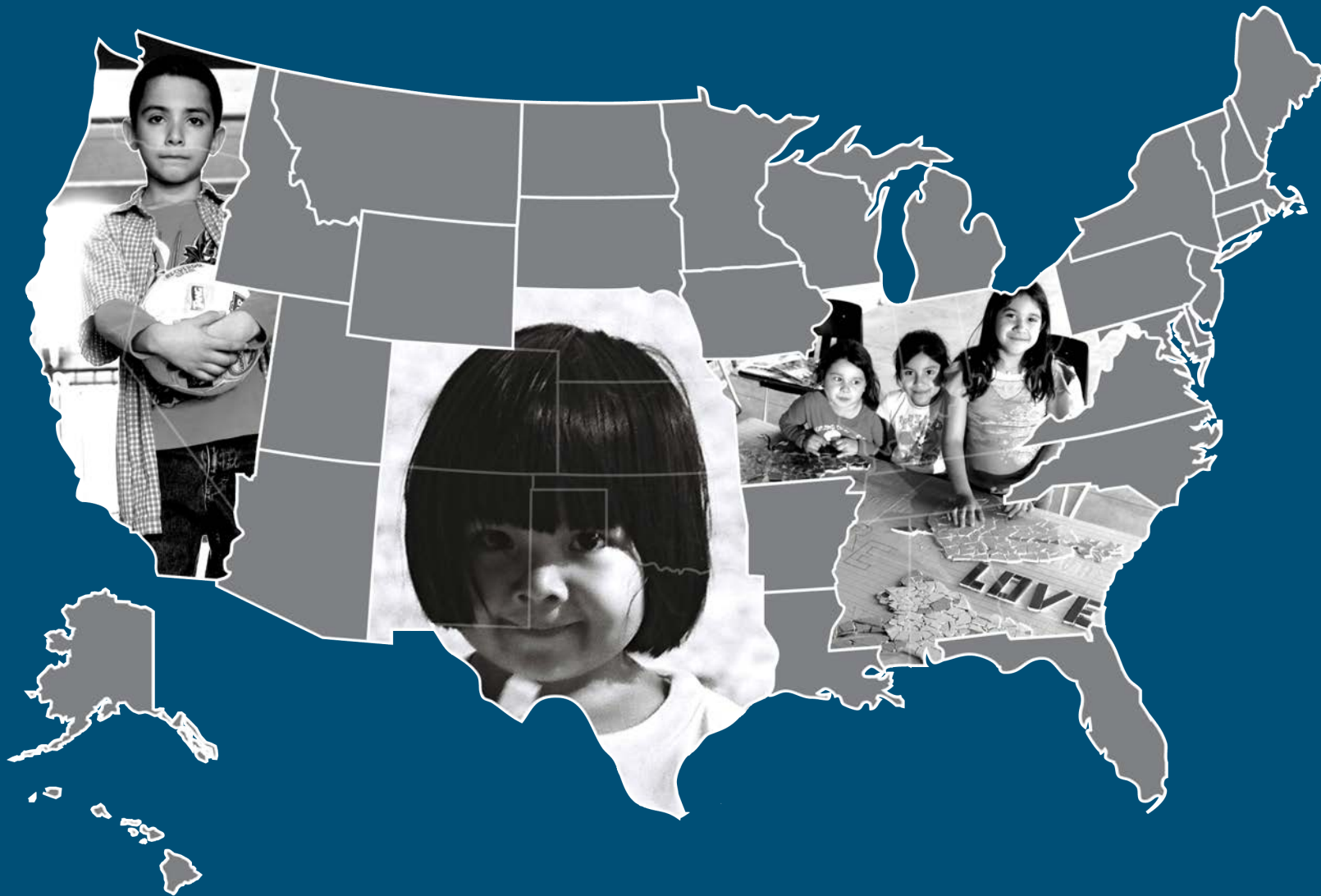


AMERICA'S FUTURE: Latino Child Well-Being in Numbers and Trends



The National Council of La Raza (NCLR)—the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States—works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Through its network of nearly 300 affiliated community-based organizations, NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in 41 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. To achieve its mission, NCLR conducts applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy, providing a Latino perspective in five key areas—assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, education, employment and economic status, and health. In addition, it provides capacity-building assistance to its Affiliates who work at the state and local level to advance opportunities for individuals and families.

Founded in 1968, NCLR is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan, tax-exempt organization headquartered in Washington, DC. NCLR serves all Hispanic subgroups in all regions of the country and has regional offices in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, and San Antonio.

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America's Future:

Latino Child Well-Being in Numbers and Trends

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April 28, 2010

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Foreword

Latino children and youth should be a top priority for all Americans concerned about our country's future. Currently, one out of five American children is Latino, and it is estimated that by 2035, one-third of the child population under age 18 will be Latino. The rapid increase of our Latino child population over the past two decades attests to a major demographic shift in the U.S. In addition, a full 92% of Hispanic children and youth are U.S. citizens. This growing population thus represents a significant portion of our future workers, taxpayers, parents, citizens, voters, and leaders. Latino youngsters are household and community influencers who—given their potential English-language fluency, familiarity with American culture and institutions, and exposure to mainstream media—are poised to lead the successful integration of Latinos into U.S. society. Clearly, investing in Latino children and youth is essential to ensuring that they are healthy, educated, and confident; their well-being is fundamental to our nation's future.

Last year, the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) convened a highly successful forum titled “Investing in Our Future: The State of Latino Children and Youth,” in order to better understand some of the challenges and barriers that Latino children face. While a number of positive developments in the situation of Hispanic children and youth were examined at this convening—including increasing college attendance and better access to health care—there was a broad consensus that improvements in these areas are too slow, and that a significant portion of Latino children are struggling in contexts characterized by poor neighborhoods, underresourced schools, inadequate nutrition, and highly punitive immigration and law enforcement policies. One of the outcomes of that forum was

this data book. The data book was produced in partnership with the Population Reference Bureau and aims to clearly assess the state of Latino children through the compilation of current, regularly updated national and state-level data.

This unique document, which provides a broad, comprehensive view of Hispanic child well-being around the country and over time, makes it clear that not only do Latino children face many of the difficulties experienced by other poor and minority youth, a large portion also cope with the challenges inherent in being children of immigrants. At NCLR, we know what a crucial difference informed and effective policy and program initiatives can make in the lives of children. We also know that our youth are strong and resilient and can thrive with adequate support and equal opportunity. We urge the readers of this data book to join us in advocating for a better future for Latino children, and we hope that the information provided here will serve as a tool for all those who seek to join us in this fight for America's future.



Janet Murguía
President and CEO
National Council of La Raza

Executive Summary

The demography of our nation is changing at an accelerated pace. Over the past 20 years, the number of Latino children under age 18 living in the United States has doubled, making them one of the fastest-growing segments of the national population. By 2035, one-third of all American children and youth will be Latino, and it is projected that by 2050, one-third of the overall population will be Hispanic. Today's 16 million Latino children and youth—92% of whom are U.S. citizens—thus represent a crucial segment of our country's future workers, taxpayers, parents, citizens, voters, and leaders.

This data book, produced by the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the Population Reference Bureau (PRB), is *the first publication of its kind* to offer a comprehensive overview of the state of Latino children by integrating a range of key factors and outcomes in the areas of demography, citizenship, family structure, poverty, health, education, and juvenile justice. It provides an overview of current national and state-level trends for Latino children under age 18 relative to non-Hispanic White and Black children, documenting both regional variations and changing trends since the year 2000. The data described in this document tell a compelling but unfortunately alarming story, pointing primarily to the numerous obstacles and inequalities that currently impede Latino children's paths toward a successful adulthood and that may hinder the broader integration of Latinos into U.S. society if left unattended. Some disturbing national trends revealed in the report include the following:

- **Despite a predominantly hardworking adult population, the majority of Latino children continue to live in poor and low-income families; many live in high-poverty neighborhoods that are socially and economically isolated from more affluent communities.** Although Latino children make up 22% of the total population under age 18, they account for 33% of all children living in poverty. It is projected that by 2030, 44% of all poor children

will be Latino if the trend remains constant. Moreover, 59% of Latino children live in low-income families, which is more than twice the proportion of White children in such families. Children in low-income families have worse health and educational outcomes, are more likely to live in single-parent homes, and are more likely to experience violent crime, compared to children in more affluent families.

- **Most Latino children are U.S. citizens, yet a majority live in immigrant families, which often results in significant barriers to services and the potential separation of children from their parents.** While 92% of Latino children are U.S. citizens, 58% of all Latino children live in immigrant families with at least one foreign-born parent. Having an immigrant parent can prevent children from accessing important benefits to which they are eligible, including education and health services; this is especially true for children of undocumented parents who may fear contact with federal and state agencies. Moreover, many children of both legally residing and undocumented parents live with the continuous fear of their parents' possible incarceration or deportation.
- **Latino children are disadvantaged in the educational system early on, and only 55% graduate from high school with a regular diploma.** Latino children are currently underrepresented in early childhood education programs, placing them at a disadvantage early on relative to other children, particularly if they do not live in English-dominant households. By the time they reach eighth grade, 42% score below basic reading levels. Only 55% of Latino youth and 51% of Black youth who enter ninth grade complete twelfth grade with a regular diploma, compared with about 76% of Whites. Teenagers who drop out of high school are at a severe disadvantage in terms of future employment opportunities and potential earnings.

- **One out of five Latino children—primarily children of immigrants—does not have access to health insurance. While in many respects healthier than other children, Hispanic children are faring significantly worse than other racial/ethnic groups on several important health indicators, including teen pregnancy, childhood obesity, and access to health care.** In 2008, 19% of Latino children lacked health insurance, compared with 10% of Blacks and just 7% of Whites. Children without health insurance are 18 times more likely than children with continuous private health coverage to have unmet needs for medical care. In addition, in 2008, 41% of Latino and Black children were overweight or obese, compared with 27% of White children, putting them at high risk of diabetes, asthma, cardiovascular disease, and other health problems.
- **Latino children and youth are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system and are increasingly placed in adult facilities.** There is a conspicuous lack of current, comprehensive, nationwide juvenile justice statistics for the Latino youth population. Nonetheless, in 2006, there were more than 19,000 Latino youth incarcerated in the United States, mostly for nonviolent offenses. Based on current incarceration rates, about one in six Latino males—and one in three Black males—will be imprisoned at some point during their lives.

Clearly, it is within our nation's interest to make sure that Latino children are safe, healthy, and educated, and have the same opportunities to excel and contribute to our national well-being as all other American youngsters.

In addition to describing more than 25 indicators of Latino child well-being at the national level, the data book also reveals the wide diversity of the Latino child and youth population across the country, with many of the indicators varying considerably across states and regions, and perhaps even more significantly by generation and degree

of integration. Latino children in new immigrant gateway states of the Southeast, for example, which have experienced a very rapid increase in first- and second-generation Latino children over the past ten years, have high numbers of children in low-income families and linguistically isolated households, but also lower rates of overweight and incarceration, relative to several states with more established Latino communities.

The data book also points to some overall positive trends for Hispanic children. Maternal education, for example, which has a significant impact on child well-being, has sharply increased over the past decade. However, the overall picture presented here shows clearly that Latino children, who represent a vital part of our country's future, are in need of significant help. Given the rapid pace at which the Hispanic child and youth population is growing, and the fact that the Latino population is one of our most youthful, hardworking, and enthusiastic assets, it is imperative to find solutions to the problems signaled by these numbers. Reversing these alarming trends is achievable through a swift, targeted, and comprehensive approach focused on greater investment in policy and program initiatives that have been proven to enhance children's lives in the various areas discussed here.

A web version of the data book, which provides raw and regularly updated data for each of the state-level indicators described, also serves as a research and advocacy tool for those seeking to delve further into the information presented here. Data can be accessed and downloaded at www.nclr.org/latinochildwellbeing.

Introduction

There are more than 16 million Latino* children† under age 18 living in the United States, and nine out of ten are U.S.-born citizens. Since 2000, the number of Latino children has increased by 30%, and their numbers have doubled since 1990, making them one of the fastest-growing segments of the U.S. population.¹ Hispanic youth—our future workers, voters, taxpayers, and consumers—are poised to become a critical factor in the country's economic, social, and political well-being.

The Hispanic American population is marked by its social strengths, including cohesive families and communities, a youthful population, a commitment to the health and welfare of their children, and a strong work ethic.² However, Latino children also face unique and substantial challenges, and their circumstances can vary widely depending on their generational status, citizenship, family structure, education, and English-language ability. There are also important regional and state-level differences in the health and well-being of Latino families, with implications for policymakers trying to improve outcomes for Latino youth.

This data book provides an overview of national and state-level differences and key trends since 2000 in the well-being of Hispanic children. The circumstances of Latino children are compared with those of White and Black children to identify disparities across racial/ethnic groups and areas in need of improvement. The first section of the report covers basic demographic trends and the

geographic distribution of the Latino youth population. The remainder of the report, divided into five sections, covers several key areas of well-being and “risk factors” for Latino children and families: nativity status and citizenship, family structure and income, education and language, health, and juvenile justice.

Our goal in producing this report is to highlight areas of concern that must be addressed by our policies and programs in order to ensure the well-being of current and future generations of Latino children. Attending to the needs of these children will certainly lead to improved opportunities for Latino communities. On a broader scale, moreover, the situation of Hispanic children and families is inextricably bound to the success of our entire nation, as underscored by this report.

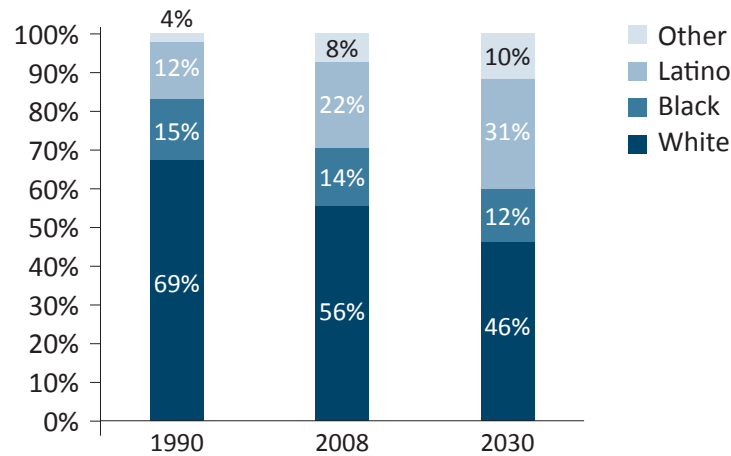
Population Trends and Geographic Distribution

Latinos are the largest minority group in the country, and their numbers are projected to increase rapidly relative to Whites and Blacks in the coming decades. Today, Hispanic children account for more than one-fifth (22%) of children under age 18, and by 2030, they are projected to make up nearly a third (31%) of the child population (see Figure 1). Whites, who currently make up 56% of the population under age 18, are projected to drop below 50% of the child population in 2023, and could make up only 46% of the population under age 18 by 2030.³

* The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race.

† In this report, “children” are classified as those under age 18; the terms “children” and “youth” are used interchangeably. Unless otherwise specified, the data presented for Whites and Blacks exclude persons of Hispanic origin. Most of the data in this report are derived from federal data sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, the National Center for Health Statistics, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Estimates are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. Survey-based estimates are generally only presented for states with sizeable Latino populations or at the regional level in order to improve the reliability of the data. NCLR's website includes an online version of this report as well as detailed state-level data tables for each of the variables presented here. The online data tables compare recent state-level trends among Latino, White, and Black youth. Data are presented in a series of Excel files and are available for download on www.nclr.org. The tables are updated as new data become available.

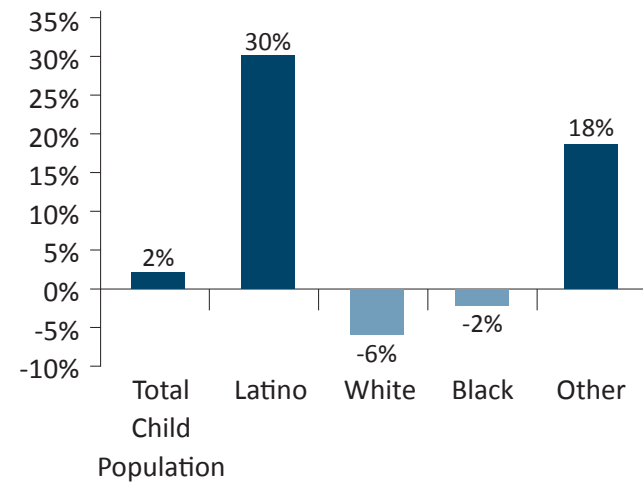
Figure 1
Distribution of the U.S. Population Under Age 18 by Race/Ethnicity, 1990, 2008 and 2030 Projections



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Annual State Resident Population Estimates for 6 Race Groups (5 Race Alone Groups and One Group with Two or more Race Groups) by Age, Sex, and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008." Washington, DC, 2009, <http://www.census.gov/popest/datasets.html> (accessed September 2009); National Center for Health Statistics, "Bridged-race intercensal estimates of the July 1, 1990–July 1, 1999, United States resident population by county, single-year of age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin." U.S. Census Bureau with support from the National Cancer Institute. Washington, DC, 2004, http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race/data_documentation.htm#inter1 (accessed September 2009); U.S. Census Bureau, "Projected Population by Single Year of Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: July 1, 2000 to July 1, 2050." Washington DC, 2009, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/downloadablefiles.html> (accessed September 2009).

While the number of Latino youth has increased sharply since 2000, the number of White and Black youth has declined (see Figure 2). In fact, the total population under age 18 in the United States would have declined between 2000 and 2008 without the population increase of Latino youth. As of 2008, there were 16.1 million Latino youth living in the United States, compared with 10.5 million Black youth, 41.6 million White youth, and 5.8 million children in "other" race groups, which include American Indians, Asian Americans, and other groups.⁴

Figure 2
Percent Change in the Population Under Age 18 by Race/Ethnicity, 2000 to 2008



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Annual State Resident Population Estimates for 6 Race Groups (5 Race Alone Groups and One Group with Two or more Race Groups) by Age, Sex, and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008." Washington, DC, 2009, <http://www.census.gov/popest/datasets.html> (accessed Sept. 25, 2009).

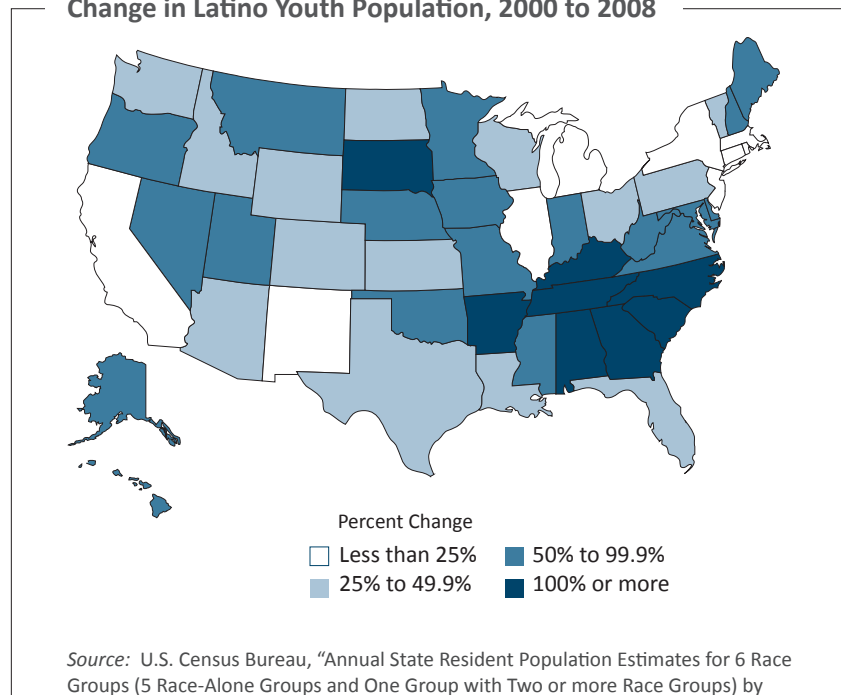
The sharp contrast in population growth rates among different racial/ethnic groups reflects two main factors. First, relatively high levels of immigration from Latin America have contributed to a young age structure in the Latino population, compared with other racial/ethnic groups. Immigrants tend to be young, which creates population momentum through a large number of births. In 2008, more than a third of the U.S. Latino population (34%) was under age 18, compared with 28% of Blacks and only 21% of Whites. Second, the fertility rate among Latinas is 3.0 births per woman, compared with 2.1 births per woman among Blacks and 1.9 among non-Hispanic Whites.⁵ In the United States, "replacement-level" fertility, or the rate needed for children to replace their parents in the population, is around 2.1 births per woman.

Historically, the Latino population has been highly concentrated in the Southwest and West, and in a few metropolitan areas outside these regions, such as Chicago, Miami, and New York. But increasingly, Latino families are dispersing to other parts of the United States, especially the South.* As of 2008, about 14% of the total Latino population had arrived in the United States during the previous ten years. However, in several states in the South, including Alabama, Kentucky, North Carolina, Mississippi, and South Carolina, more than 30% of Latinos had arrived within the previous decade.

Nine of the ten states with the fastest-growing populations of Latino children between 2000 and 2008 were also located in the South (see Map 1). South Carolina had the fastest growth, with a 150% increase in Latino children since 2000. In contrast, the states with more established Latino populations experienced much slower growth: The number of Latino youth increased by only 4% in New York and 6% in New Mexico since 2000. New Mexico is the only state where Latinos made up a majority (55%) of the population under age 18 in 2008. However, California is next in line to pass the 50% threshold.

Map 1

Change in Latino Youth Population, 2000 to 2008



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Annual State Resident Population Estimates for 6 Race Groups (5 Race-Alone Groups and One Group with Two or more Race Groups) by Age, Sex, and Hispanic Origin: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008." Washington, DC, 2009, <http://www.census.gov/popest/datasets.html> (accessed September 2009).

Of the 16 million Latino children in the United States, over half (55%) still live in just three states—California, Florida, and Texas. And despite the recent dispersal of Latino families to new destinations, just four states—Arizona, California, Florida, and Texas—account for 50% of the increase in the Latino youth population between 2000 and 2008. These figures are important because they show that Latino families remain highly concentrated in traditional “gateway” states. Cities in these states have served as important destinations for several generations of immigrants and have the largest Hispanic communities in the country. “New gateway” states—those such as South Carolina which have experienced extremely rapid immigration growth over the past ten to 15 years and tend to have more suburban immigrant settlement patterns—are also important. The issues faced by first- or second-generation Latino children in those areas may, however, be very different from those confronting youth living in more established Latino communities.⁶

The Census Bureau projects that the number of Latino children could increase to more than 27 million (nearly one-third of the population under age 18) by 2030. However, future trends in Latino population growth are uncertain. The latest population estimates from the Census

* In this report, states are grouped into four regions according to categories defined by the U.S. Census Bureau: Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. We also make reference to some of the census divisions that subdivide the four regions: New England, Mid-Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, Mountain, and Pacific. For information about which states are included in each of these geographic areas, visit the Census Bureau’s site at www.census.gov/geo/www/us_regdiv.pdf.

Bureau show that Latino population growth has dropped below the peaks reported earlier in the decade;⁷ this slowdown could diminish U.S. racial and ethnic change in the coming years (see Box 1).

Box 1

Recent Immigration Trends

The slowdown in Latino population growth reflects the recent decline in international migration to the United States. At the beginning of the decade, the Census Bureau estimated net international migration at about 1.2 million per year. Since the onset of the recession, that annual number has been revised to less than 900,000. Because a large number of immigrants to the United States arrive from Latin and Central America and Mexico, a sustained drop in immigration levels could slow the pace of Latino population growth.

Although the causes of changes in international migration patterns are complex, this recent decline in immigration to the U.S. may be a byproduct of several recent trends, in particular the loss of jobs in construction, manufacturing, and other lower-wage sectors that are often filled by recent immigrants (especially Latinos), and the changing political climate and public sentiment following the September 11, 2001 tragedy, which has led to heightened U.S. border security.

Nativity Status and Citizenship

Latino children whose families have resided in the United States for several generations face fewer economic and cultural barriers compared with those who are more recent arrivals. First- and second-

generation* Hispanic children are more likely to be poor and reside with parents who did not graduate from high school and who have difficulty speaking English.⁸ Having an immigrant parent may also hinder children's ability to access important benefits to which they are entitled, including education and health services. This is especially true for children of undocumented parents who may avoid contact with federal and state agencies out of fear of being deported.⁹ In addition, U.S. citizen children of both undocumented and legal immigrants often live in deep fear of permanent familial separation or deportation.^{10,11} The subset of Latino youth who were themselves born outside of the United States face additional challenges. Foreign-born Hispanic youth have higher poverty rates, are less likely to speak English well, have higher dropout rates, and are more likely to become teen parents, compared with second- or third-generation Latino youth.¹²

Yet research has also shown that acculturation brings its own problems, as third-generation Latino children fare much worse on certain indicators (health problems, living in single-parent families) compared with first- and second-generation Latino youth.¹³ These generational differences contribute to the disparities in the well-being of Latino children residing in different parts of the country and have important implications for policymakers.

Generational Status of Latino Children

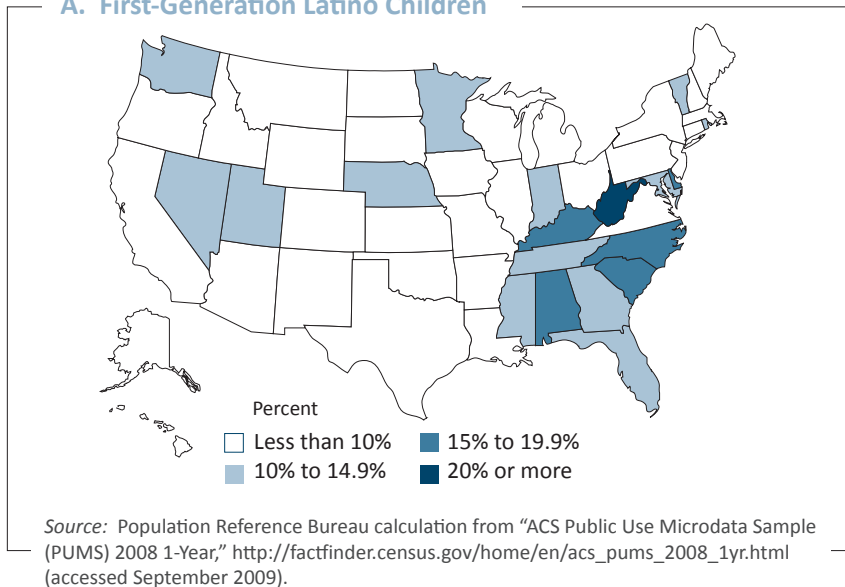
In 2008, only 9% of Latino children were first-generation U.S. residents, but nearly half (49%) were second-generation U.S. residents with at least one parent born outside of the United States. About 42% were third-and-higher-generation U.S. residents. The share of third-and-higher-generation Latino youth has increased during the past three decades and is projected to increase further as the size of the native-

* In this report, first-generation Latino children are classified as those who were born outside of the United States. Second-generation children are those who are U.S.-born, but who reside with at least one parent born outside of the United States. And third-and-higher-generation Latino children include those who are U.S.-born and live with U.S.-born parents. Data on generational status are from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, which does not provide information about the nativity status of parents who are living outside of a child's residence.

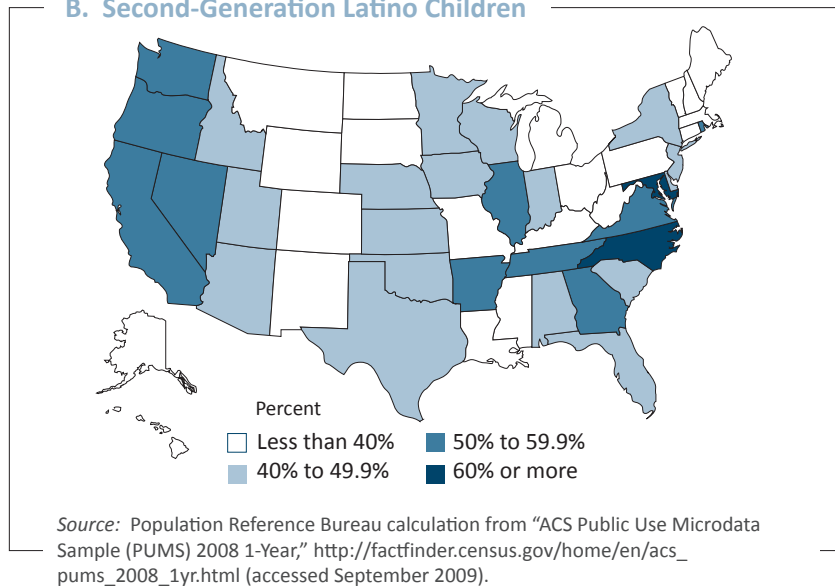
Map 2

Generational Status of Latino Youth, 2008

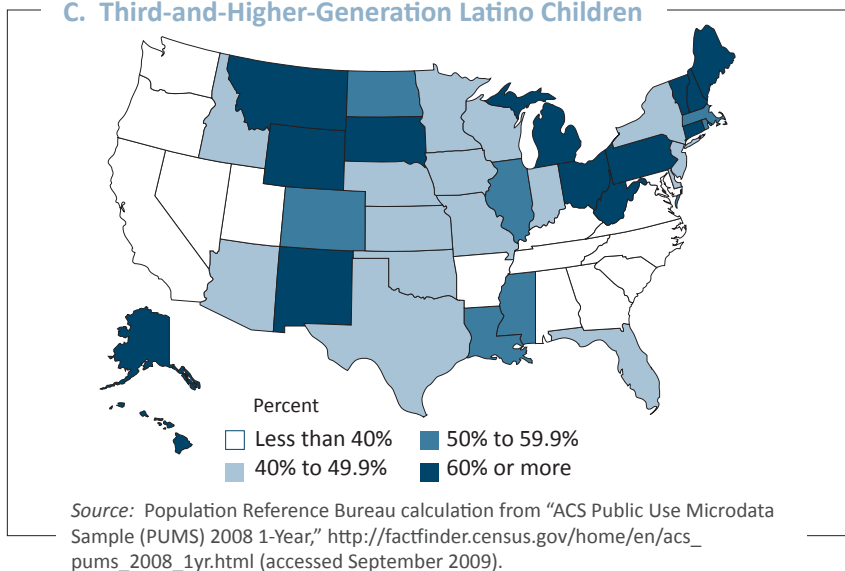
A. First-Generation Latino Children



B. Second-Generation Latino Children



C. Third-and-Higher-Generation Latino Children



born Latino population increases over time. However, the generational status of Latino youth varies widely across different parts of the United States (see Map 2).

In 2008, states in the southeastern United States had the highest proportions of first-generation Latino children. Recent immigrants to these states have been attracted by jobs in poultry processing, furniture manufacturing, and commercial agriculture,¹⁴ as well as construction and service jobs associated with recent population growth in the region. Second-generation Hispanic children were most highly concentrated in North Carolina and the Mid-Atlantic and Pacific Coast Regions. Many of the parents of these youth arrived in the United States during the late 1990s, a period of particularly strong economic growth. Third-and-higher-generation Latino children had the highest concentrations in the Northeast and several states in the

Northern Midwest and Mountain West. The Northeast includes many families and children from Puerto Rico who are U.S. citizens by birth. In the South, Louisiana and Mississippi also stood out from neighboring states because of their high proportions of third-and-higher-generation Latino youth populations.

These regional differences in generational status are important because they can help explain the diverse characteristics and policy needs of Latino youth living in different parts of the country. In general, first- and second-generation Latino youth have worse educational and economic outcomes than children whose families have lived in the United States for several generations. However, generational status is not always a good predictor of state-level outcomes. For example, Maryland has a much higher proportion of first- and second-generation Hispanic children (75%) compared with Connecticut (34%), yet Latino children in Maryland are more likely to live in married-couple families and less likely to be poor, compared with Connecticut's Latino youth population.

Citizenship

One of the ways generational status affects outcomes for Latino children and families is through its close association with citizenship. In the United States, citizenship provides the right to vote and hold elected office, access to services provided through the federal government, the ability to travel freely to other countries, and protection from being deported.¹⁵ Citizenship is either conferred to persons who were born in the United States or acquired through the naturalization process.

Among the 31 million Latinos ages 18 and older living in the United States, only 63% were U.S. citizens in 2008. This means that more than one-third of the voting-age Latino population is ineligible to vote because they lack citizenship. In contrast, 91% of Latino children under age 18 were born in the United States, and 92% are currently U.S. citizens.¹⁶

The share of Latino youth who are U.S. citizens has increased with the growth of the Latino population living in the United States. Since 2000, there has been a five percentage point increase in citizenship rates of Latino youth. It is expected that citizenship rates will increase even further as Latino youth become adults and start families of their own.¹⁷ Citizenship rates among Latino youth still trail those of White children (99%) and Black youth (98%), but this gap is expected to narrow over time.

There are substantial state-to-state variations in the citizenship rates of Latino children, which reflect current and historical immigration trends in different parts of the United States. States with the lowest rates of citizenship are located in the South (see Map 3). Alabama and Delaware, neither of which have large Latino communities, have the lowest citizenship rates among Latino youth (83% each). States with the highest citizenship rates also have relatively small Latino populations, including Alaska, Montana, and North Dakota. In the Northeast, high rates of citizenship reflect the large number of Latino families of Puerto Rican descent. More than a third of Latinos in the Northeastern United States (36%) are Puerto Rican, compared with 5% of Latinos in the rest of the United States.¹⁸ Among states with large Latino youth populations (100,000 or more), Connecticut, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania have the highest citizenship rates (95% each), and Georgia and North Carolina have the lowest rates (86% each).

The rapid rise in citizenship rates in several new-frontier states has been striking. In Georgia and North Carolina, the share of Latino children who are citizens increased by 12 percentage points in each state in just eight years. There was a five percentage point gain in Tennessee and an eight percentage point increase in South Carolina. Among states with the fastest-growing Latino populations, Alabama is unusual because the share of Latino youth who are citizens dropped between 2000 and 2008, from 86% to 83%. This suggests that most of the Latino population growth in that state, which has relatively few Latino families, resulted from immigration from Latin America rather than births.

Table 1
Distribution of Latino Children in Immigrant Families by Nativity Status and Family Type, 2008

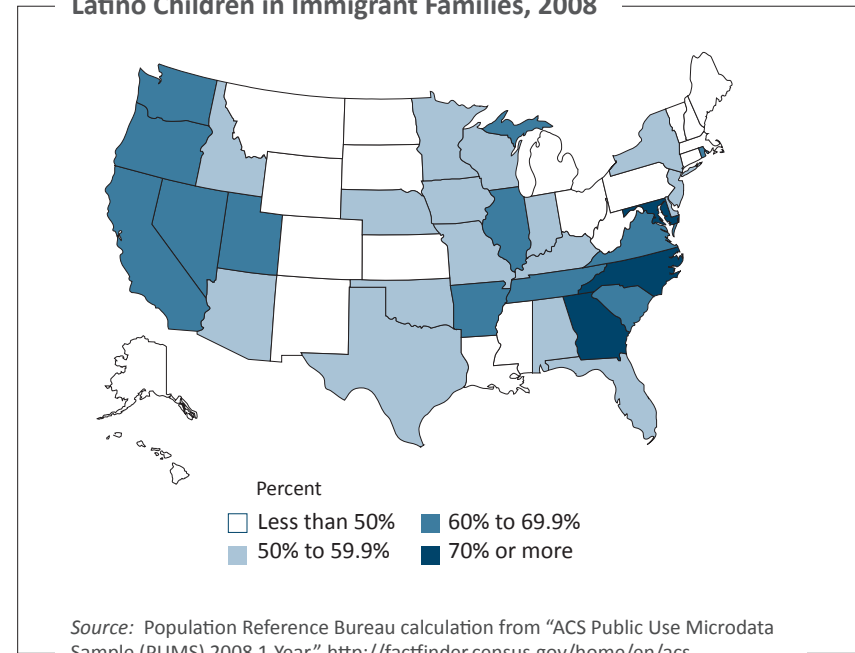
	Number (000s)	Percent
All Latino children	16,002	100
U.S.-born children with U.S.-born parents	6,763	42
Latino children in immigrant families	9,239	58
Foreign-born children	1,402	9
U.S.-born children with foreign-born parents	7,836	49
In married-couple families with one or more foreign-born parents	5,616	35
Both parents foreign-born	3,963	25
One parent foreign-born (mixed-nativity)	1,652	10
In single-parent families with foreign-born parent	2,221	14

Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from “ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year,” http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

proportions of Latino children in immigrant families include North Carolina (77%), Maryland (75%), and Georgia (73%) (see Map 4). There are relatively few Latino youth in immigrant families in the Northeast (which includes many Puerto Rican families who are U.S. citizens by birth) and in the Mountain West and Midwest.

Since 2000, the national share of Latino children in immigrant families has remained constant at 58%, but many states have experienced significant changes in this measure. Among states with sizable Latino youth populations (100,000 or more), Indiana experienced the largest increase in the share of Latino children living in immigrant families—an 11 percentage point increase. Several states that have been hit hard by the recession experienced decreases in the share of Latino youth in immigrant families, including Florida (five percentage point

Map 4
Latino Children in Immigrant Families, 2008



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from “ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year,” http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

decrease), California (four percentage point decrease), and Nevada (three percentage point decrease). It’s likely that the declining share of immigrant families in these states reflects the severe job losses and housing market declines, which has reduced demand for immigrant workers.

Family Structure and Income

The social and economic well-being of all children is largely determined by their parents’ circumstances. Family structure, parental education, and income are all key factors that help shape children’s opportunities and development. Most Latino children live in two-parent families with at least one parent in the labor force. However, Latino parents have less education, lower wages, and fewer worker protections, on

average, compared with White parents. Although Latino children make up about one-fifth of the total child population, they account for one-third of children living in low-income families. During the recent recession, Latino and Black families have been disproportionately affected by the housing crisis and unemployment, putting minority youth further at risk of falling behind their White peers.²¹

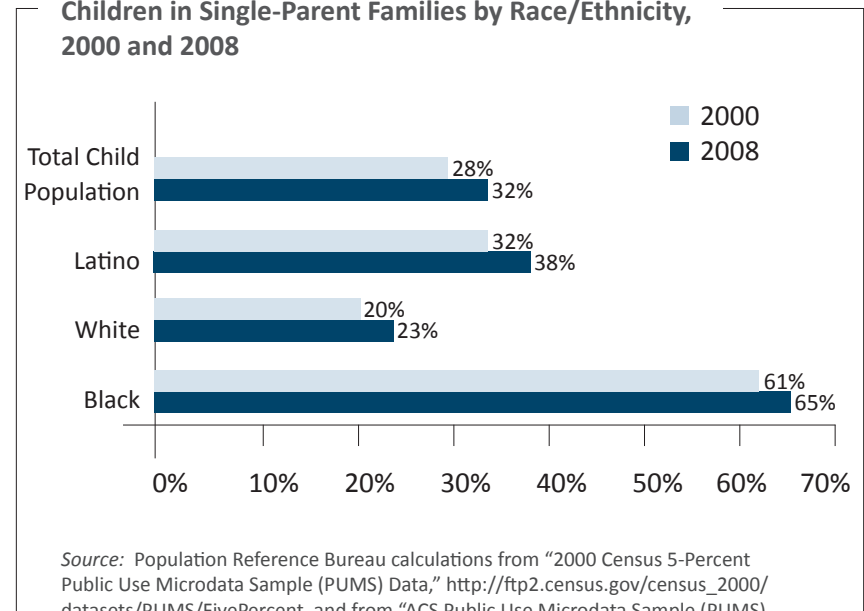
Family Structure

Children growing up in single-parent families typically do not have access to the economic resources and “social capital” available to children growing up in two-parent families.²² In the United States, the number of single-parent families has risen dramatically over the past three decades, causing concern among policymakers and the public. While social and cultural norms—or the presence of a cohabiting partner—can mediate the effect of single-parent families on children, Latino children growing up in single-parent families are still at an economic disadvantage relative to children growing up with both parents present in the household. Across all racial and ethnic groups, children living with one parent are more likely to be poor and less likely to graduate from high school, compared with children in two-parent families.

The proportion of Latino youth in single-parent families is higher than the U.S. average and is increasing. In 2008, 38% of Latino children lived in single-parent families (see Figure 3). This represents a six percentage point increase over the share in 2000 (32%). In the United States, the share of all children in single-parent families increased from 28% to 32% during the same period. There were also increases

in the share of White and Black youth in single-parent families, but Latino youth experienced the largest jump since 2000. Rates for Latino children are still well below those of Black children, two-thirds of whom (65%) lived in single-parent families in 2008. Since the 1970s, the rise in single-parent families has been linked to the rising age of first marriage, an increase in nonmarital births, the rising divorce rate, and an increase in cohabitation among young adults.²³

Figure 3
Children in Single-Parent Families by Race/Ethnicity, 2000 and 2008

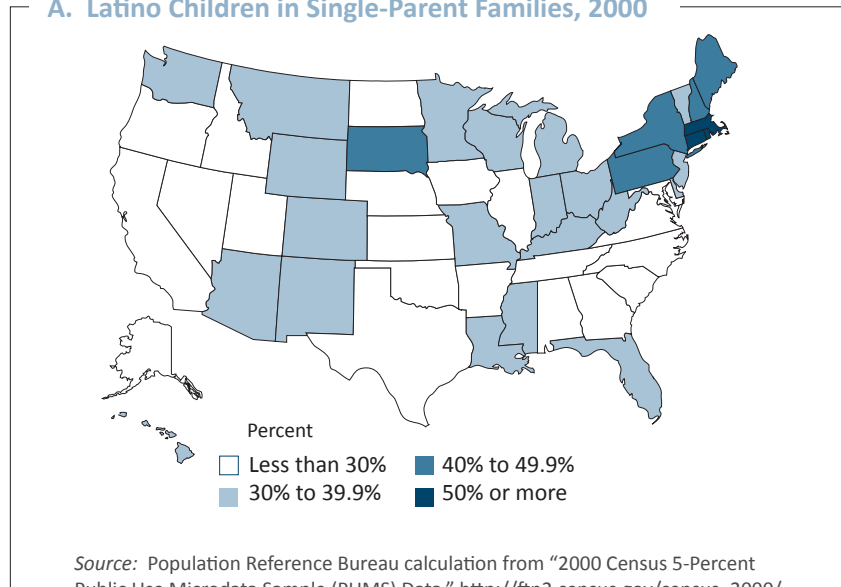


Source: Population Reference Bureau calculations from “2000 Census 5-Percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Data,” http://ftp2.census.gov/census_2000/datasets/PUMS/FivePercent, and from “ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year,” http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

Map 5

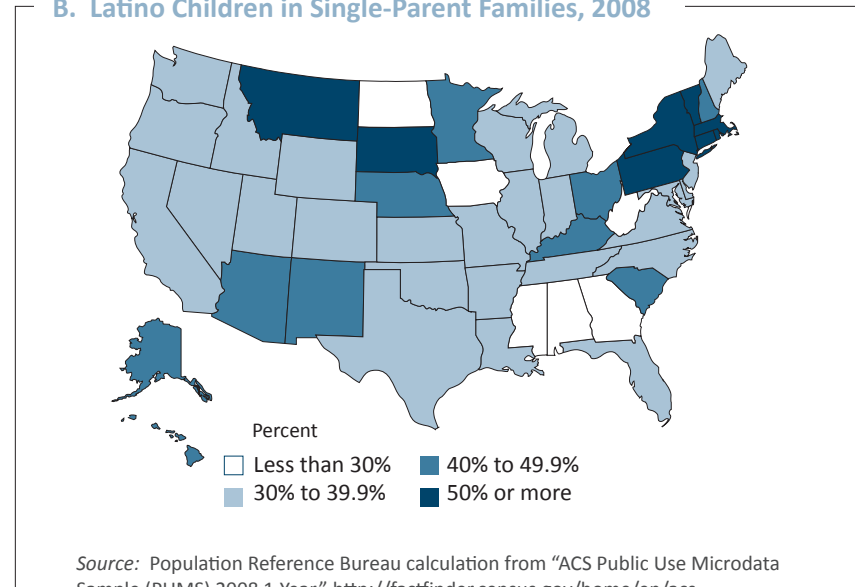
Latino Children in Single-Parent Families, 2000 and 2008

A. Latino Children in Single-Parent Families, 2000



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from "2000 Census 5-Percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Data," http://ftp2.census.gov/census_2000/datasets/PUMS/FivePercent (accessed September 2009).

B. Latino Children in Single-Parent Families, 2008



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from "ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year," http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

The Northeast United States has relatively high concentrations of third-and-higher-generation Latino children, who are more likely to live in single-parent families compared with those who are more recent arrivals to the United States.²⁴ In 2008, more than 50% of Latino youth in Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont lived in single-parent families. Rates are lowest—less than 30%—in several states with relatively small, mostly first- and second-generation Latino populations, including Alabama, Iowa, Mississippi, North Dakota, and West Virginia (see Map 5). Nationwide, about 28% of first- and second-generation Latino children lived in single-parent families, compared with 48% of third-and-higher-generation Latino youth.²⁵

Between 2000 and 2008, the share of Latino children in single-parent families increased in 42 states and the District of Columbia. This

increase is significant because it puts more Latino children at risk of living in low-income families, which are often associated with single-earner households. However, while Latino children in single-parent families are clearly more likely to live in poverty than those who live with both parents, Latino children in two-parent families also have substantially higher poverty rates than either White or Black children who live with both parents. This suggests that both single- and two-parent Latino families are struggling to move out of poverty.²⁶

Low-Income Families

Economic hardship can adversely affect a child's development in ways that are fundamental to later success in life. Children growing up in poor and low-income families have worse health and educational outcomes, are more likely to experience parental divorce and live in

single-parent families, and are more likely to experience violent crime compared with children growing up in more affluent families.²⁷ For many children, poverty persists into adolescence and adulthood and is associated with greater risk of dropping out of school, teenage parenthood, and lower earnings for young adults.²⁸ Many Latino and Black children are doubly disadvantaged because they live in high-poverty neighborhoods that are socially and economically isolated from more affluent communities. In 2007, more than one-third of Latino children lived in high-poverty neighborhoods (communities with poverty rates of at least 20%).²⁹

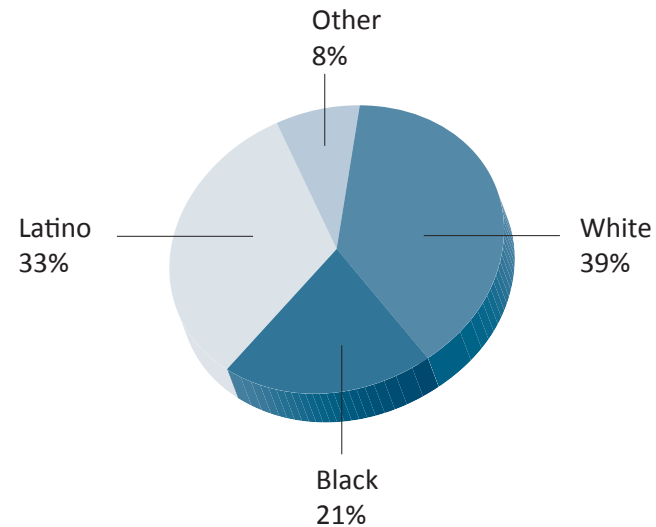
Typically, children are classified as poor if they live in a family with yearly income below the official poverty threshold. In 2008, the poverty threshold for a family of four, including two children, was \$21,834. The low-income threshold is typically defined as 200% of the poverty threshold, or \$43,668 for a four-person family. Poverty and low-income thresholds are used to determine eligibility for need-based programs, including Head Start, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the National School Lunch Program.

Relatively high employment rates keep most Latino families out of deep poverty, but many Latino parents, especially first-generation immigrants from Latin America, work in low-wage service, manufacturing, and agricultural occupations with few benefits or worker protections.³⁰ In 2008, 10% of Latino children lived in deep poverty (below 50% of the poverty threshold), 28% were poor (below 100% of poverty), and 59% were in low-income families (below 200% of poverty). These rates have held fairly steady since 2000.

The share of Latino youth in low-income families (59%) was about the same share as Black children (60%), and more than twice the proportion of White children (27%). While Hispanic children make up 22% of the total population under age 18, they account for 33% of children living in low-income families (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Distribution of Low-Income Children by Race/Ethnicity, 2008



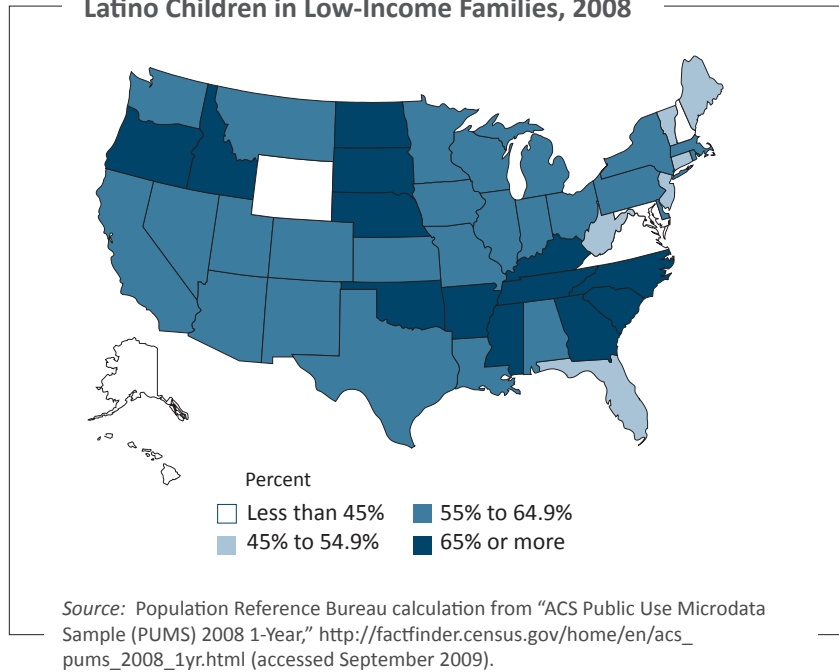
Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from "ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year," http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

Among states with at least 100,000 Latino youth, North Carolina had the highest share of Latino children in low-income families in 2008 (73%) (see Map 6). In contrast, roughly two-fifths of Latino youth in Maryland (41%) and Virginia (40%) lived in low-income families. Higher Latino family incomes in the Mid-Atlantic states are associated with high proportions of married-couple families, high levels of educational attainment and labor force attachment, and a high proportion of Latinos who speak English in that region.

Michigan, which has the highest unemployment rate in the country, had a 17 percentage point increase in the share of Latino children in low-income families between 1999 and 2008. California was among the states with a drop in low-income families since 1999, which likely

Map 6

Latino Children in Low-Income Families, 2008



reflects declining immigration to that state (newer Latino immigrants tend to have less education and lower incomes relative to longer-term U.S. residents) rather than improving economic conditions. Between 2000 and 2008, California experienced a four percentage point drop in the share of Latino children in immigrant families and a three percentage point decrease in the share of Latino children in low-income families (from 60% to 57%). Nationwide, the proportion of Latino children in low-income families stayed about the same between 1999 and 2008.

Another way to assess income disparities is to compare the poverty gap between Latino children and White children in different states. At the national level, there is a 17 percentage point difference between the poverty rates of Whites and Latinos. However, in several states in New England—Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island—and Pennsylvania, the poverty gap is 25 percentage points or more. Maryland and Virginia are among the states with the lowest child poverty gaps between Whites and Latinos, less than ten percentage points.

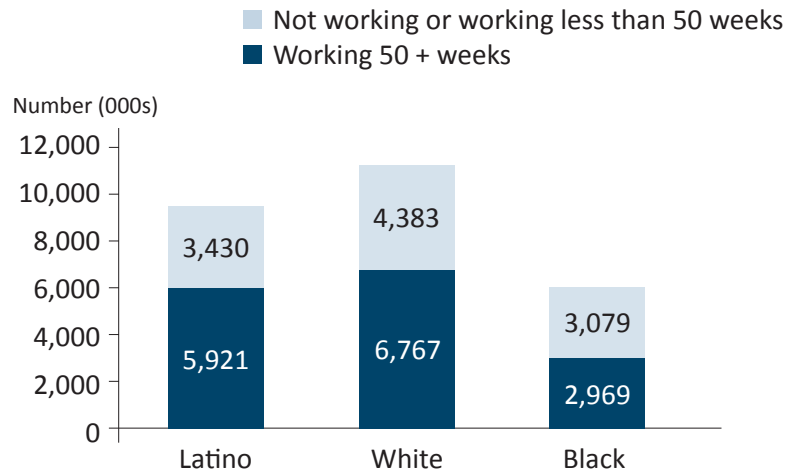
Low-Income Working Families

Working fulltime does not always ensure enough income to provide for a family's basic needs. In fact, the majority of low-income families in the United States include at least one full-time worker.³¹ Low-income families often face significant challenges in their efforts to balance the demands of work and family. Parents with young children need to find affordable child care while they are at work, but many low-income parents work multiple jobs or during off-peak hours, making it difficult to find high-quality, affordable care.³² Low-income working families devote a higher share of income to housing costs, have less education, and are also less likely to have employer-sponsored health insurance, compared with higher-income families.³³ Most low-income workers are employed in low-skilled jobs with few benefits and few opportunities for advancement.

Low-income working families are defined as those with at least one parent working 50 or more weeks per year, with income below 200% of the official poverty threshold. Among children in low-income families, Latinos and Whites were more likely than Blacks to have parents who were working. In 2008, there were 9.4 million low-income Latino youth and 5.9 million (63%) had a parent working

Figure 5

Children in Low-Income Families by Parental Employment Status and Race/Ethnicity, 2008



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from “ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year,” http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

year-round. In contrast, there were 6.0 million Black youth in low-income families, and less than half (49%) had a parent working year-round (see Figure 5).

Overall, nearly two-fifths of Latino children (39%) lived in low-income working families, compared with 17% of White children and 32% of Black children. Low-income working families were most common in the South, where Latinos are more likely to be working in low-wage jobs. In 2008, Arkansas and North Carolina had the highest proportions of Latino children in low-income working families (55% each). States with relatively affluent Latino populations, such as Maryland and Virginia, had relatively low proportions of Latino children in low-income working families.

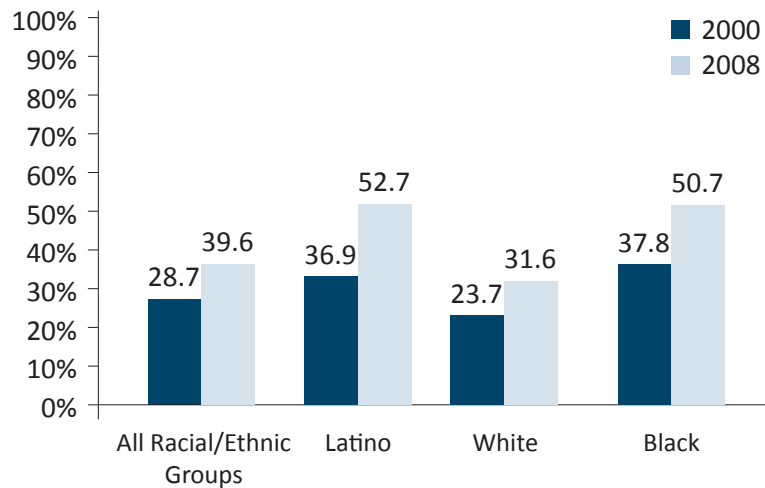
Housing Affordability

The concentration of the Latino population in coastal California and other high-cost urban areas—combined with their relatively low incomes—puts a large number of Latino families at risk of severe housing-cost burdens.³⁴ The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development considers housing “affordable” if total expenses (rent or mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, utilities, and other related payments) account for less than 30% of total household income. Paying 30% or more of income on housing may leave insufficient resources to cover other basic expenses, including food, child care, and health care costs. High housing costs also put homeowners at greater risk of falling behind on mortgage payments and foreclosure.³⁵ At the height of the recession, nearly one in ten (9%) Latino homeowners said they had missed a mortgage payment during the previous year.³⁶

In 2008, more than half of Latino children (53%) lived in unaffordable housing, compared with 51% of Blacks and 32% of Whites (see Figure 6). Renters, who tend to have lower incomes, are most at risk of living in unaffordable housing, but costs have increased substantially for Latino homeowners in recent years with the rise in homeownership and mortgage lending among lower-income families.³⁷ During the pre-recession rise in housing prices, Latinos in many large metropolitan areas were more than twice as likely as Whites to have high-cost mortgages.³⁸

A lack of affordable housing has also contributed to Latino families “doubling up” and living in crowded living conditions. In 2008, crowding (defined as more than one person per room) occurred in 13% of Latino-headed households, while only 3% of households nationwide were identified as being crowded.³⁹

Figure 6
Children in Families with a High Housing-Cost Burden,
2000 and 2008



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculations from “2000 Census 5-Percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Data,” http://ftp2.census.gov/census_2000/datasets/PUMS/FivePercent, and from “ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year,” http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

There was a sharp increase in families’ housing-cost burdens across all racial/ethnic groups between 2000 and 2008, but Latinos experienced a 16 percentage point increase, more than that of Whites or Blacks. Despite the decline in home prices during the past few years, housing-cost burdens have continued to increase—especially among lower-income homeowners—because of the rise in utility costs and the inability of many families to refinance high-cost mortgages or sell their homes.⁴⁰ Further complicating families’ ability to access decent and safe housing is the rise of foreclosures. Between 2009 and 2012,

approximately 1.3 million Latino homeowners are expected to lose their home.⁴¹ Children who live in homes that have been foreclosed are likely to experience a negative disruption in family relationships, academic performance and resources, and social networks.⁴²

Between 2000 and 2008, there were widespread increases in unaffordable housing for Latino families across the country (see Map 7). In 2000, there were no states where the majority of Latino children lived in unaffordable housing, but by 2008 there were 18 such states. Among states with at least 100,000 Latino children, Maryland had the biggest increase in unaffordable housing since 2000 (a 29 percentage point increase) followed by Georgia and Virginia (23 percentage points each). Latino children in New Mexico experienced one of the smallest increases in unaffordable housing (five percentage points). Among states with sizable Latino populations, California, Connecticut, Maryland, and New Jersey had the highest shares of Latino youth living in unaffordable housing in 2008 (more than 60% each).

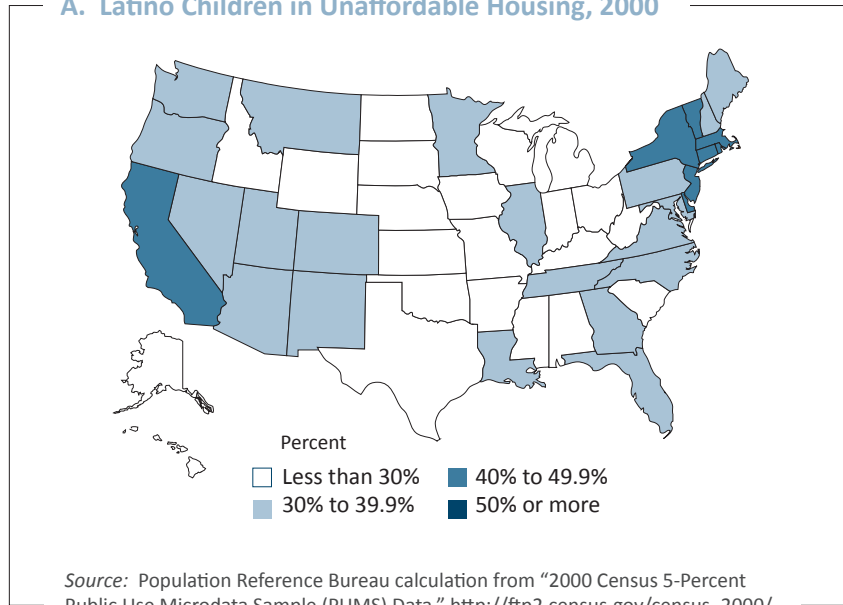
Education and Language

Education is perhaps the most important factor shaping children’s health and development. For young children, mothers’ educational attainment is especially important for language acquisition and school readiness.⁴³ Parents with more education spend more time reading to their children, which has positive effects on children’s language and cognitive skills. Differences in maternal education levels between White women and Latinas help explain why, by age two, young Latino children lag behind White children in vocabulary and problem-solving skills.⁴⁴ Latino teens continue to lag behind their White peers—with higher dropout rates and lower test scores—putting Latino youth at a severe disadvantage in terms of future employment opportunities and potential earnings.

Map 7

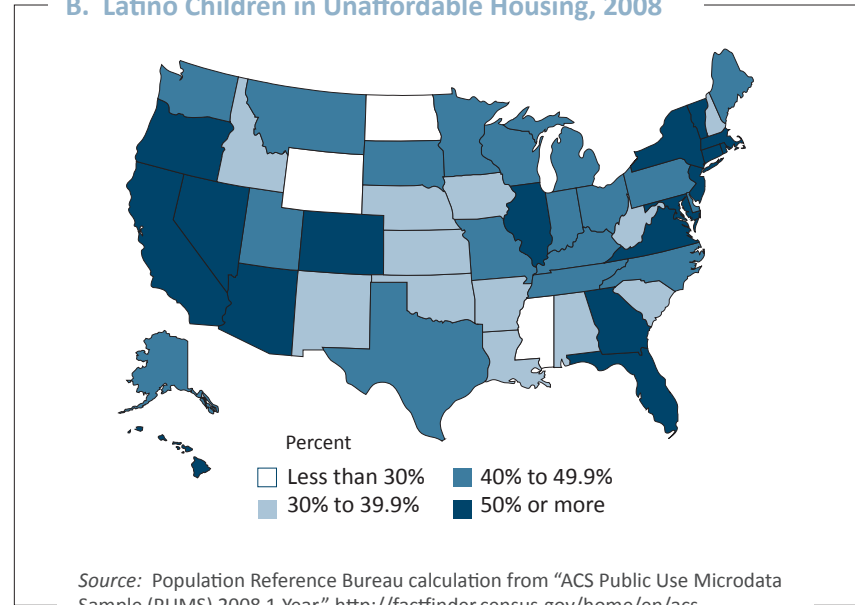
Latino Children in Unaffordable Housing, 2000 and 2008

A. Latino Children in Unaffordable Housing, 2000



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from “2000 Census 5-Percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Data,” http://ftp2.census.gov/census_2000/datasets/PUMS/FivePercent (accessed September 25, 2009).

B. Latino Children in Unaffordable Housing, 2008



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from “ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year,” http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

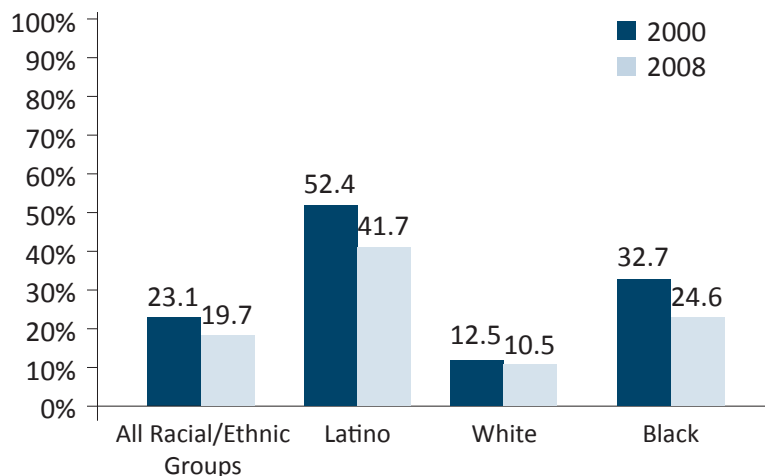
Maternal Education

In 2008, more than two-fifths of Latino children under age 18 (42%) lived with mothers who did not graduate from high school. This is higher than the share of Black children (25%) and more than four times the percentage of White children (10%). However, maternal education levels have increased sharply among Latina mothers since the beginning of the decade, which has reduced the size of the racial/ethnic education gap. Between 2000 and 2008, there was a ten percentage point drop in the share of Latino children living with mothers who did not graduate from high school (see Figure 7), compared with an eight percentage point drop among Black mothers and a three percentage point drop among White mothers.

In 2008, states with the lowest levels of maternal education were located in the South, including Arkansas, Delaware, North Carolina, and Tennessee (see Map 8). Many Latino parents in these states arrived in the U.S. with limited education and now face several obstacles to furthering their schooling, including high levels of residential mobility, limited understanding about the U.S. school system or continuing education programs, and limited access to education resources.⁴⁵ Family responsibilities and high levels of labor force participation among Latino immigrants also limit the time available to take adult education classes.

Figure 7

Children Living with Mothers Who Did Not Graduate from High School, 2000 and 2008



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculations from “2000 Census 5-Percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Data,” http://ftp2.census.gov/census_2000/datasets/PUMS/FivePercent, and from “ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year,” http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

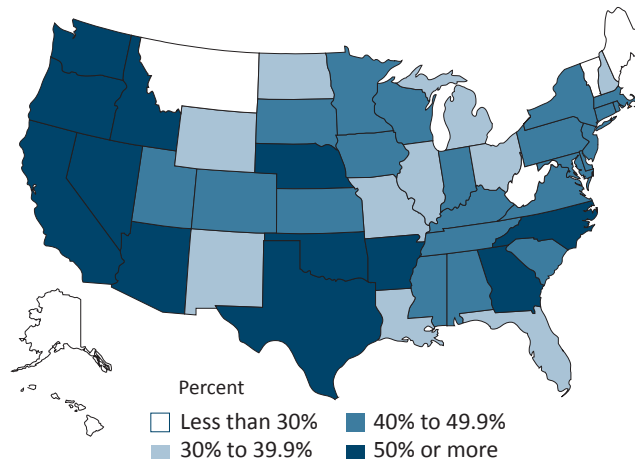
In 2008, states with higher proportions of U.S.-born Latinos—in the Northeast and the Northern Great Plains—had among the highest levels of maternal education (see Map 8). In Florida, which has a large, well-educated Cuban American population, only 24% of Latino children lived with mothers who did not graduate from high school.

Between 2000 and 2008, maternal education levels increased in 44 states and the District of Columbia. There were only six states where maternal education decreased, and all were located in the South: Alabama, Delaware, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

Map 8

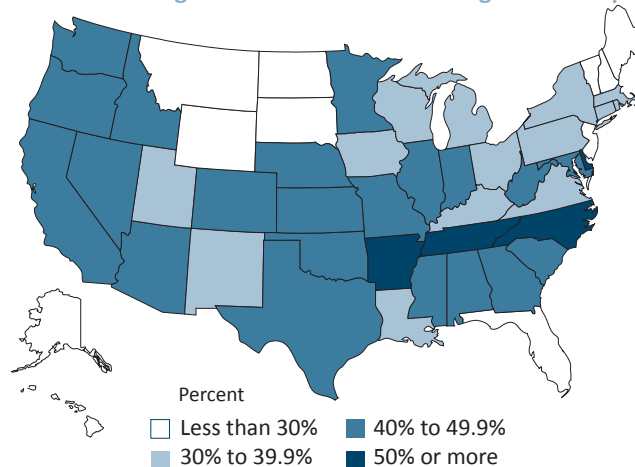
Maternal Education Levels of Latino Youth, 2000 and 2008

A. Latino Children Living with Mothers without a High School Diploma, 2000



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from “2000 Census 5-Percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) Data,” http://ftp2.census.gov/census_2000/datasets/PUMS/FivePercent (accessed September 25, 2009).

B. Latino Children Living with Mothers without a High School Diploma, 2008



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from “ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year,” http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

Linguistic Isolation

Children's success in school is also closely tied to their parents' ability to speak English. Limited English proficiency can limit job opportunities, earnings, access to health care, and the ability of parents to interact with the school system or help their children with homework.⁴⁶ Although many Latino adults and teens who arrive in the United States from other countries have difficulty learning English, most young Latino children grow up learning English as their primary language. In 2008, 17% of Latino children ages five to 17 had difficulty speaking English very well. However, nearly one-quarter of Latino children under age 18 (23%) lived in "linguistically isolated" households where no one ages 14 years and older spoke English very well. Children in linguistically isolated households are often called upon to act as translators for parents or older siblings, which can create significant stress or lead to misunderstandings about a child's level of English-language proficiency.⁴⁷

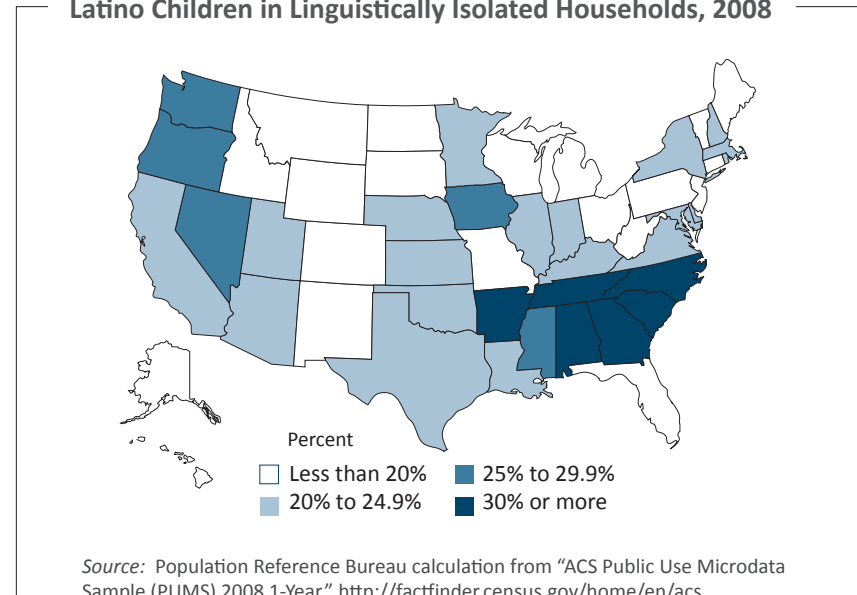
In 2008, California had over one million Latino children living in linguistically isolated households, more than any other state. But states in the Southeast—with the exception of Florida—had the highest proportions of children living in such households (see Map 9). In Alabama, nearly half of all Latino children (47%) were linguistically isolated.

High School Completion

Because of their strong attachment to the labor force, young Latino dropouts have relatively high employment rates and earnings compared to White and Black dropouts.⁴⁸ In 2008, mean earnings for 18- to 24-year-old Latinos with nine to 12 years of schooling (no diploma) was \$12,647, compared with \$8,373 for White dropouts and \$10,025 for Black dropouts in the same age group.⁴⁹ However, dropping out of high school translates into lower lifetime earnings—

Map 9

Latino Children in Linguistically Isolated Households, 2008



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from "ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year," http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

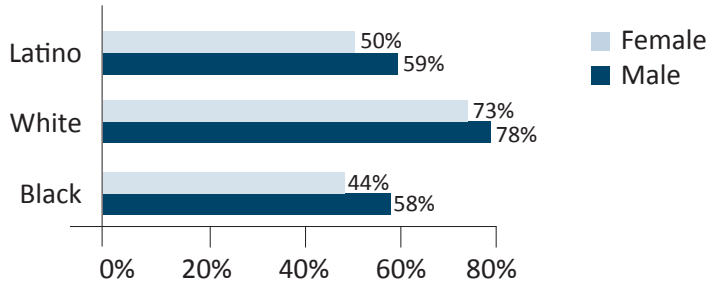
up to \$400,000 less—compared with those who graduate from high school.⁵⁰ Dropouts are also more likely than high school graduates to end up in prison and have worse health outcomes as adults, even after controlling for income.⁵¹ The prospects for high school dropouts have even further deteriorated with the economic downturn. Between 2008 and 2009, there was a sharp increase in youth unemployment rates, and by the beginning of 2010, more than a third of Latino teens ages 16 to 19 were unemployed.⁵²

Estimates of high school graduation among Latino youth can vary widely depending on the method and source of data used to make the calculations. In this report, we use an on-time high school completion rate developed by staff at the Urban Institute, called the Cumulative

Promotion Index (CPI). The CPI provides an estimate of the proportion of students entering the ninth grade who complete high school on time with a regular diploma.*

Latino youth are less likely than Whites to complete high school on time. About 76% of Whites who enter ninth grade complete twelfth grade on time with a regular diploma, compared with only 55% of Latino youth and 51% of Black youth. Male youth are less likely than female youth to complete high school, especially among Latinos and Blacks (see Figure 8). There is a nine percentage point gap between the high school completion rate of male and female Latino teens.

Figure 8
High School Student Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2006



Source: Education Counts Research Center Database, "Graduation Rates (Cumulative Promotion Indices) for Students by Race and Gender, 2006," Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, <http://www.edcounts.org/createtable/step1.php> (accessed September 2009).

Among states with sizable Latino populations, high school completion rates are highest in New Jersey (67%) and Maryland (65%) and lowest in Nevada (36%) and Georgia (41%). Low high school completion rates have been linked to concentrated poverty and racial/ethnic segregation in school districts. Nearly 90% of highly segregated schools are in areas of concentrated poverty with high levels of student turnover, less

qualified teachers, and high concentrations of students with health, emotional, and behavioral problems.⁵³

Student Achievement

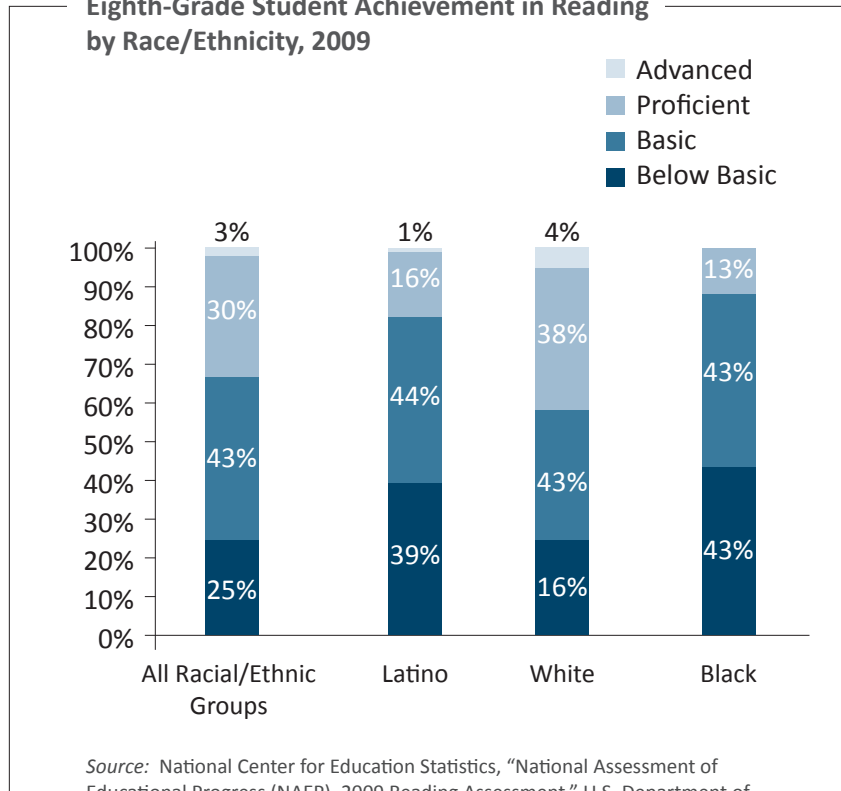
Student achievement in school is an important measure of cognitive development and ability to communicate and learn.⁵⁴ One way to track student progress is through their performance on standardized tests, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). In 2009, nearly two-fifths of Latino eighth graders (39%) scored "below basic" reading levels, 44% read at basic levels, 16% were proficient, and 1% was advanced (see Figure 9).⁵⁵ Reading scores among Latino children are comparable to those among Black students, but well below those of Whites. California and Nevada had among the highest proportions of Latino youth scoring below basic reading levels, while Latino students in Florida, Maryland, and Virginia had among the least in that group.

One of the key challenges for educators is the large and growing number of Hispanic English language learners (ELLs), who consistently score lower on standardized tests compared to other demographic groups.⁵⁶ Today, there are about five million ELL students in U.S. schools, and 80% are Spanish-speaking Latinos.⁵⁷

One way to improve test scores is to promote school readiness through high-quality early education programs, such as Early Head Start, which has been shown to improve young children's literacy and cognitive development.⁵⁸ However, Latino children are currently underrepresented in center-based child care and other pre-kindergarten programs. In 2005–2006, more than one-fourth (27%) of Latino four-year-olds lacked regular (nonparental) arrangements for child care, compared with 18% of White preschoolers and 16% of Black preschoolers.⁵⁹

* The CPI is useful because it does not rely on high school dropout records, which are often unreliable; however, CPI has also been criticized because it does not account for student transfers, grade retention, or mortality.

Figure 9
Eighth-Grade Student Achievement in Reading
by Race/Ethnicity, 2009



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2009 Reading Assessment." U.S. Department of Education, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata> (accessed April 2010).

Health

The Latino child poverty rate is nearly as high as that of Black children, yet Latinos have substantially lower infant mortality rates and fewer babies suffering from low birth weight than do Blacks.⁶⁰ In the adult population, researchers have also observed lower-than-expected rates of mortality and chronic illness among Latinos compared to other racial/ethnic groups. This phenomenon, often referred to as the "Hispanic paradox," has been linked to the health behaviors and

diet of the Latino population, the selectivity of healthy migrants to the United States, and protective social factors in Hispanic communities that improve health behaviors, monitoring, and outcomes.⁶¹ However, Latino children are losing ground relative to other racial/ethnic groups on several important indicators of health and well-being, including teen pregnancy, childhood obesity, and access to health care. Policymakers need to address these issues to ensure the health and productivity of Latino youth as they reach adulthood.

Teen Pregnancy

Teen pregnancies and births can have long-term negative consequences for both teen mothers and their children. Adolescent mothers have higher rates of poverty, unemployment, high-risk pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and dropping out of school, compared with women who start having children at later ages.⁶² Most teen pregnancies are unintended, and children of teen mothers are more likely to have lower test scores in school, have chronic health and behavior problems, be incarcerated as a young adult, and become teen parents themselves.⁶³

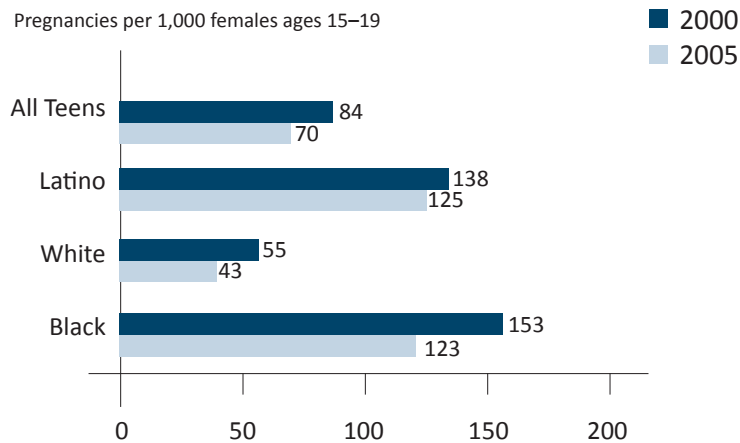
The Latina teen pregnancy rate has dropped in recent years but is higher than that of other racial/ethnic groups (see Figure 10). In 2005, the Latina teen pregnancy rate (125 pregnancies per 1,000 Latina teens ages 15 to 19) was nearly three times the rate of non-Hispanic White teens (43), and slightly higher than that of Black teens (123).⁶⁴ In 2000, the pregnancy rate among Black teens was higher than that of Latina teens, but the Black teen pregnancy rate dropped sharply between 2000 and 2005 and fell below that of Latina teens. The drop in the teen pregnancy rate may reflect higher rates of contraceptive use as well as higher proportions of teens who are delaying sex.⁶⁵ However, this decline may be temporary; between 2005 and 2006, the teen birth rate increased—especially among Black teens—after falling steadily for more than a decade.

The Latina teen pregnancy rate is highest—exceeding 200 pregnancies per 1,000 teens—in several new-frontier states in the South, including Alabama, Delaware, South Carolina, and Tennessee (see Map 10).^{*} In Alabama, the Latina teen birth rate (228 pregnancies per 1,000 teens) was more than four times the rate for White teens (56) and more than twice the rate for Black teens (95).

Overweight and Obesity

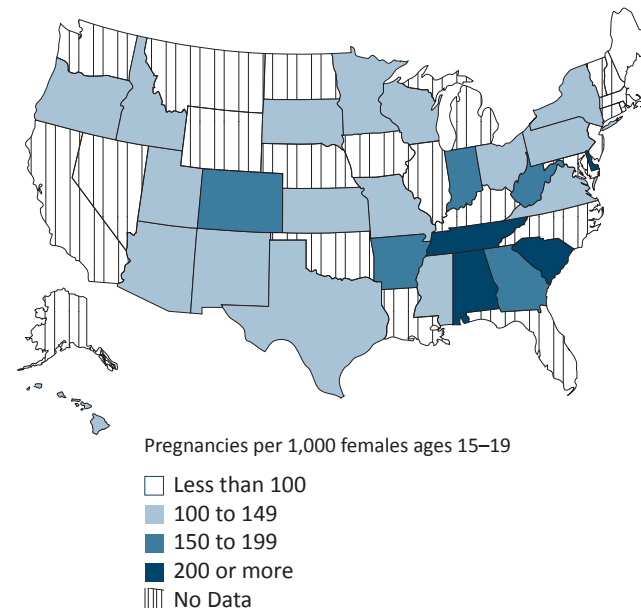
High rates of overweight and obesity put Latino youth at higher risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, asthma, hypertension, and other health problems.⁶⁶ Over the past 30 years, the share of overweight or obese children ages six to 11 has nearly tripled, while

Figure 10
Teen Pregnancy Rate by Race/Ethnicity, 2000 and 2005



Source: Kathryn Kost, Stanley Henshaw and Liz Carlin, *U.S. Teenage Pregnancies, Births and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity* (New York, NY: Guttmacher Institute, 2010), <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTPTrends.pdf> (accessed February 2010), Table 3.4; The Alan Guttmacher Institute, *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity And State-by-State Information*, (New York, NY: Guttmacher Institute, 2004), <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTPTrends.pdf> (accessed February 2010), Table 4.

Map 10
Latina Teen Pregnancy Rate, 2005



Source: Kathryn Kost, Stanley Henshaw, and Liz Carlin, *U.S. Teenage Pregnancies, Births and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity* (New York, NY: Guttmacher Institute, 2010), <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTPTrends.pdf> (accessed February 2010), Table 3.4.

^{*} Data are not available for 23 states and the District of Columbia.

the rate among adolescents has doubled.⁶⁷ In 2007, 41% of Latino and Black children were overweight or obese, compared with 27% of White children.⁶⁸ Children ages ten to 17 are classified as being overweight or obese if their body mass index falls above the eighty-fifth percentile.

Among states with large Latino populations, Washington had the highest share of Latino youth who were overweight or obese (57%), followed by Pennsylvania (54%) and Wisconsin (52%). North Carolina had the lowest rate (28%). Relatively low rates of overweight in the Southeast may reflect the large number of first- and second-generation Latino families in those states. The prevalence of obesity among Latino children has been found to increase with acculturation and the amount of time spent in the United States, clearly underscoring the need to consider these processes in designing effective child nutrition and exercise policies and programs.⁶⁹

Children without Health Insurance

Lack of access to health care is one of the most serious problems facing Latino children and families in the United States. Children without health insurance coverage are less likely to have a regular source of health care or access to prescription medicine.⁷⁰ They are also 18 times more likely than children with continuous private health coverage to have unmet needs for medical care, putting them at higher risk of being hospitalized.⁷¹

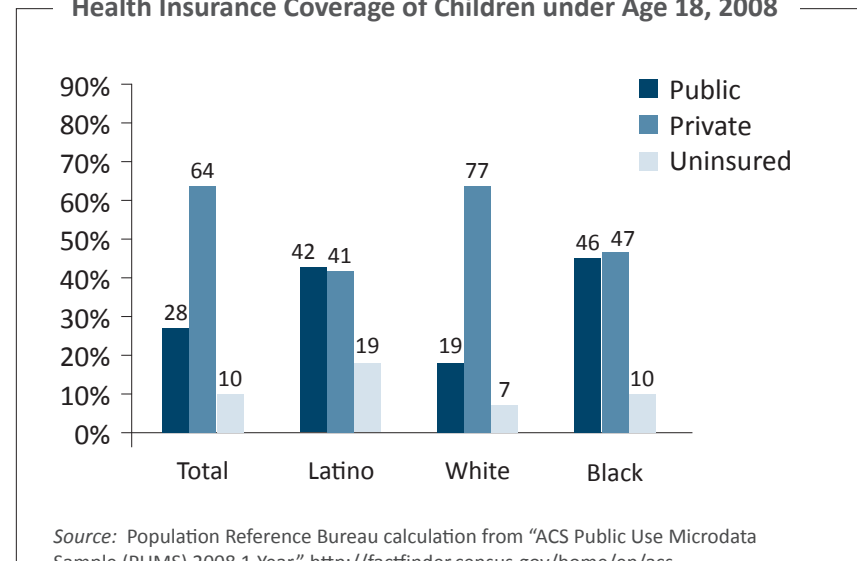
In 2008, 19% of Latino children lacked health insurance, compared with 10% of Blacks and just 7% of Whites (see Figure 11).⁷² Among Latino children who had health insurance, nearly half were covered through public health insurance programs such as Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program, which provide affordable care for low-income working families. Only 36% of Latino children had health care through their parents’ jobs. Most Latino children have

secure parental employment (parents working full time, year-round), but a high proportion of Latino workers are in jobs that do not provide health insurance coverage and other benefits.⁷³

In 2008, Nevada and Utah had the highest proportions of Latino youth without health insurance (34% each), followed by Idaho and South Carolina (30% each). Patterns of health insurance coverage mirrored those of several other indicators, with relatively high coverage rates in states with many third-and-higher generation Latino children, and low coverage rates in states with mostly first- and second-generation Latino youth (see Map 11). Massachusetts, which passed a bill in 2006 that required all residents to purchase health insurance, had one of the highest coverage rates in the country (98%).

Figure 11

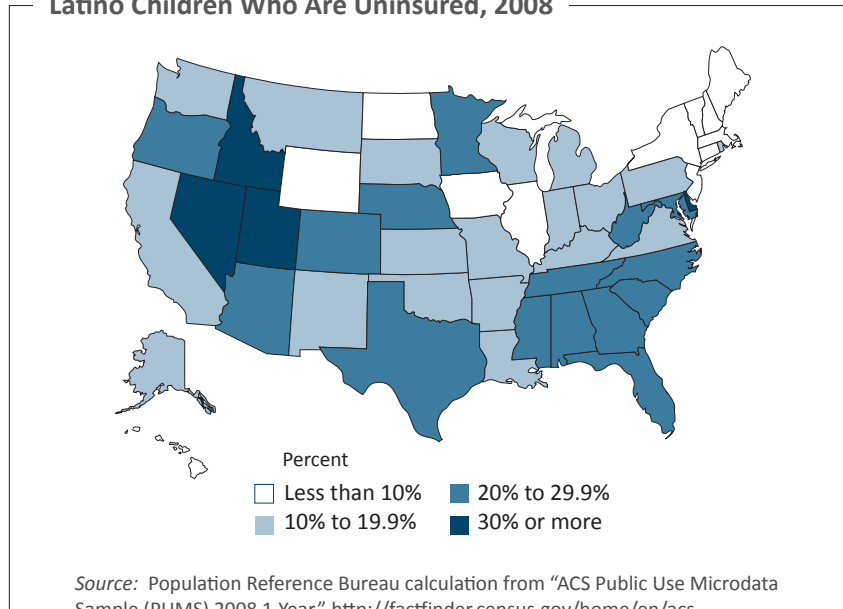
Health Insurance Coverage of Children under Age 18, 2008



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from “ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year,” http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

Map 11

Latino Children Who Are Uninsured, 2008



Source: Population Reference Bureau calculation from “ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2008 1-Year,” http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/acs_pums_2008_1yr.html (accessed September 2009).

Children with a Medical Home

In order to stay healthy, children require periodic visits to health professionals to monitor physical and cognitive development. Children who have a regular doctor are more likely to receive preventive, family-centered, efficient care and less likely to be hospitalized or visit the emergency room.⁷⁴

The concept of “medical home” combines several characteristics of health care in order to define a standard for high-quality medical care. In the National Survey of Children’s Health, children are classified as having medical homes if their care meets all of the following criteria:

- The child has a personal doctor or nurse who knows him or her well and a usual source of sick care.
- The child can get referrals for specialty care and access to therapies or equipment.
- The family is very satisfied with the communication among their child’s doctors.
- The family gets help coordinating care when needed.
- The child’s doctors spend enough time with the family, listen to their concerns, respect their values and customs, provide any information they need, and make the family feel like a partner in their child’s care.
- An interpreter is available when needed.⁷⁵

In 2007, more than three-fifths of Latino children (62%) did not have a medical home, compared with 56% of Black children and 32% of White children. Among those states with sizable Latino populations, the share of Latino children without a medical home was highest—exceeding 70%—in Pennsylvania, Nevada, and Utah, and lowest in Michigan (46%) and Ohio (39%).⁷⁶ For many Latino families, the major barrier to accessing a medical home is their lack of health insurance coverage.

Juvenile Justice

Incarceration disrupts key life transitions and reduces an individual’s long-term earning capacity.⁷⁷ Over their lifetimes, incarcerated youth will perform worse in school, earn lower wages, experience more health problems, and are more likely to be imprisoned as adults.⁷⁸ In 2006, there were more than 19,000 Latino youth in residential placement facilities in the United States, mostly for nonviolent offenses.⁷⁹ However, there is a large gap between the reality and public perception of Latino youth in the juvenile justice system. In

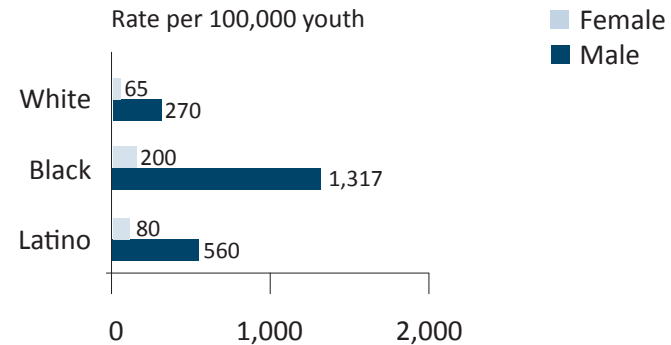
part, this gap may reflect media coverage of juvenile crime, which has focused heavily on violent offenses, but another major problem is the lack of comprehensive juvenile justice statistics for the Latino youth population.*

Unlike the other indicators presented in this report, the juvenile justice data are unique because there are 51 separate juvenile justice systems in the United States, each with its own laws and procedures for handling youth victimization and arrests. The most comprehensive source for arrest data is the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports. However, the FBI's database does not break down data for Latino youth. The National Crime Victimization Survey has been a useful source of data on crime victimization for special populations, including Latinos and teenagers. However, the sample size is not large enough to report state-level estimates.† Latino youth in the juvenile justice system are too often undercounted or their circumstances are misreported, a problem that makes them invisible to policymakers and the public. The numbers that we do have are alarming—better data are urgently needed so that policymakers can craft appropriate policy responses.

In 2006, incarceration rates were highest among Black males (1,317 per 100,000 youth) and lowest among White females (65 per 100,000 youth). Rates for Latino youth fall between those of Blacks and Whites, at 560 for males and 80 for females (see Figure 12). Among all youth in residential placement facilities in 2006, about 39% were in detention centers, 32% were in long-term secure facilities, 20% were in group homes, and 10% were in reception/diagnostic centers, boot camps, shelters, and ranch/wilderness camps.⁸⁰ However, these numbers underestimate the actual number of incarcerated youth.

Indeed, a recent report found that one in four incarcerated Latino youth was held in an adult prison, which is less likely to offer age-appropriate educational, health, and counseling services.⁸¹ Based on current incarceration rates, about one in six Latino males—and one in three Black males—will be imprisoned at some point during their lifetimes.⁸²

Figure 12
Youth in Residential Placement Facilities, 2006



Source: Melissa Sickmund, T.J. Sladky, and Wei Kang, "Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Databook," National Center for Juvenile Justice, <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/cjrp> (accessed February 2010); National Center for Health Statistics, "Bridged-race intercensal estimates of the July 1, 2000–July 1, 2006, United States resident population by county, single-year of age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin." U.S. Census Bureau with support from the National Cancer Institute. Washington, DC, 2007, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/dvs/popbridge/popbridge.htm> (accessed September 2009).

* In this report, we present data from the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, a one-day count of juvenile offenders held in residential placement facilities throughout the United States. The census is intended to enumerate juveniles under age 21 who have been charged with an offense or court-adjudicated for an offense and who have been assigned a bed in a residential facility because of that offense.

†The Bureau of Justice Statistics is investigating the possibility of increasing the sample size of the National Crime Victimization Survey to produce estimates for some states and metropolitan areas, according to a presentation given at the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics on September 11, 2009.

Conclusion

This data book takes a broad demographic perspective on the situation of Latino children in our country, outlining both time trends and geographic patterns and approaching child well-being from a comprehensive angle. A more in-depth interpretation of the data and relationships reported herein must take place within the context of the larger body of research on the themes outlined, and some of this research has been cited in previous pages. The wide-ranging perspective presented here, however, offers a particular contribution toward supporting policymakers and child advocates who seek to improve the situation of Latino youth in the U.S. First, the data clearly highlight the massive demographic shift represented by the current growth in the Latino child population across the country, showing more specifically how Latino children have been faring relative to other American children through time. By looking backward and assessing the present, these numbers indicate that the future for Latino children is clearly at great risk, and that a concerted effort to change the course of negative trends in specific areas is therefore imperative.

In addition to outlining the indicators of Latino child and youth well-being which are of immediate concern, one of the most significant stories told by these data is the regional and generational diversity of Latino child and youth populations throughout the country. The situation of Latino children often varies by state, region, and generation. As the data show, Hispanic children in states with large emerging Latino populations (such as those in the Southeast) which have a high proportion of first- and second-generation children of immigrants, often face different issues than Hispanic children in states or regions with more established Latino populations. However, the recency of a state's immigrant population does not explain everything; for example, children in states such as Maryland and Virginia, which have a high proportion of first- and second- generation children, fare significantly better on several economic variables than those in other states. This suggests that other factors such as Hispanic educational

attainment, labor force attachment, and specific state-level policies affecting children are also likely to be contributing to regional and state differences in Latino child well-being.

The numbers presented here sound an alarm on the urgency of the situation for Latino children and suggest the need for further research into regional and other variations. Nonetheless, it is also clear that the course signaled by these data can be shifted, with swift and appropriate interventions. Indeed, NCLR has worked for years on specific policy recommendations and programs in health, education, juvenile justice, and poverty reduction, many of which have been proven to enhance the situation of Latino children when enacted. Examples include the Children's Health Insurance Program of 1997, which by 2004 decreased uninsurance among Hispanic children by more than 25%, and the reauthorization of Head Start in 2007, which expanded the program to potentially include an additional 10,700 Latino families.

In addition to highlighting the need for an enhanced commitment to effective, targeted policies and programs that can reach larger numbers of Latino children, this report also emphasizes the need to take a holistic approach to assessing the present and future well-being of Latino children. Indeed, behind each of the indicators discussed in this data book lies a range of complex dynamics that take place every day in homes, schools, hospitals, communities, and streets. For many Latino children and families, issues of poverty, health, language, immigration status, education, and juvenile justice are intimately interrelated and tend to interact in complex ways. The compilation of this broad range of information on the state of Latino children, which will be updated by NCLR regularly, is a crucial step toward supporting national, state-level, and local initiatives that will make a difference in Latino children's lives and, in doing so, strengthen our national well-being.

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