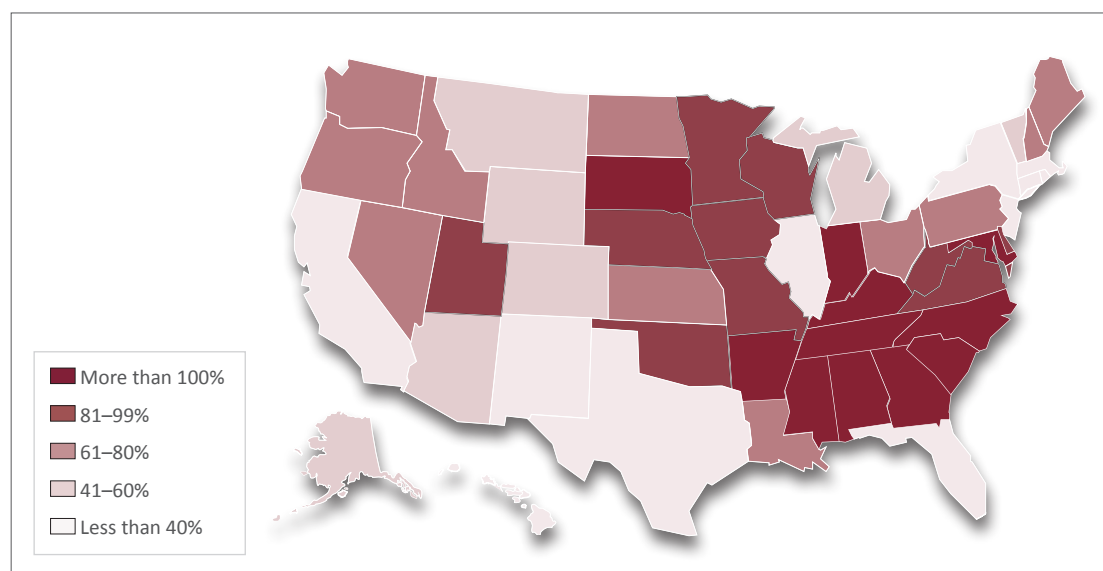


TOWARD A MORE VIBRANT AND YOUTHFUL NATION: LATINO CHILDREN IN THE 2010 CENSUS

Two of the biggest stories to emerge from the 2010 Census have been the growing diversity of America's youth population* and the critical role that today's minority children will play in our nation's future.† Over the past decade, growth in the Latino‡ child population was particularly dramatic. While ten years ago 17% of America's children were Hispanic, today close to one-quarter (23%) of American children are Hispanic,¹ and it is projected that by 2035 one in three children will be Latino. In a majority of states, the Latino child population grew by more than 60%, and in 11 states it more than doubled (see Figure 1).

Without this large increase in the number of Latino children—93% of whom are U.S. citizens—our country's child population would have diminished. The increase of Hispanic youth not only fuels America's overall growth, but also reenergizes our aging population and stands to revitalize economic growth. As our nation's future voters, taxpayers, and consumers, today's Latino children are poised to shape our country's political and economic landscape. Investing wisely in this vibrant group of youth and nurturing their potential will strengthen our country's prosperity and global standing.

Figure 1. Percent Growth in the Hispanic Population Under 18, 2000–2010



Source: NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "American FactFinder," 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, <http://factfinder2.census.gov> (accessed March 2011); and Frank van Cappelle, "StatPlanet," Southern and East Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, <http://www.sacmeq.org/statplanet> (accessed April 2011).

* The terms "children" and "youth" are used interchangeably to classify those under age 18.

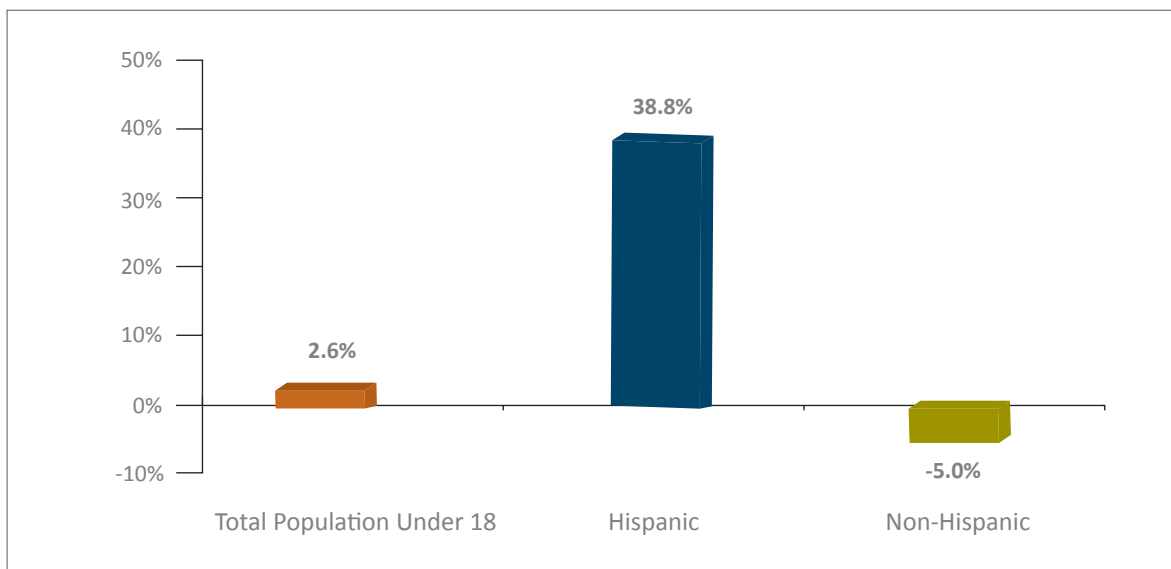
† This fact sheet was prepared by Patricia Foxen, Associate Director of Research, National Council of La Raza (NCLR), and Sara Benitez, Research Analyst, NCLR. The authors thank Liany Elba Arroyo, Associate Director, Education and Children's Policy Project, for her input. Gregory Wersching, Senior Editor, Kari Nye, Senior Development Editor, and Kelly Isaac, Graphic Designer and Production Assistant, edited, designed, and prepared this document for publication.

‡ 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.

Between 2000 and 2010, the Latino child growth rate was greatest among all racial and ethnic groups under age 18; without this population increase, the nation's total child population would have declined.

- In 2010, there were 17,130,891 Latino children living in the U.S., out of a total of 74,181,467 children. Latino children represent 23% of the total child population, compared to 54% for non-Hispanic White youth, 14% for non-Hispanic Black youth, 4.3% for non-Hispanic Asian youth, and 4.7% for non-Hispanic youth who are American Indian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, some other race, or two or more races.
- Between 2000 and 2010, the Latino child population grew by 4,788,632. The growth rate for Latino children over the past decade was nearly 39%, while the non-Hispanic youth population decreased by 5% over the same period (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percent Change in the Population Under 18 by Race/Ethnicity, 2000–2010



Source: NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, “American FactFinder,” 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, <http://factfinder2.census.gov> (accessed March 2011).

The growth in the Latino child population is a nationwide trend. While states with historically large Hispanic populations such as California, Texas, and Florida continue to have the greatest numbers of Latino youngsters, the growth rate for Latino youth—as for the Hispanic population as a whole—has been dramatic in the Southeast and Midwest (see Figure 1).

- In New Mexico and California both, more than half of the child population is Hispanic. Texas, Arizona, and Nevada are each home to a child population that is more than one-third Hispanic (see Table 1).
- The Latino child population more than doubled in 11 states throughout the country and grew between 150% and 200% in several southeastern states: South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, and North Carolina (see Table 2).

Table 1.

Ten States with the Greatest Proportions of Latino Children, 2010			
State	Total Population Under 18, 2010	Hispanic Population Under 18, 2010	Percent of Child Population That Is Hispanic, 2010
New Mexico	518,672	302,077	58%
California	9,295,040	4,756,220	51%
Texas	6,865,824	3,317,777	48%
Arizona	1,629,014	703,946	43%
Nevada	665,008	261,967	39%
Colorado	1,225,609	374,225	31%
Florida	4,002,091	1,104,624	28%
Illinois	3,129,179	723,181	23%
New York	4,324,929	972,522	22%
New Jersey	2,065,214	461,001	22%

Source: NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "American FactFinder," 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, <http://factfinder2.census.gov> (accessed March 2011).

Table 2.

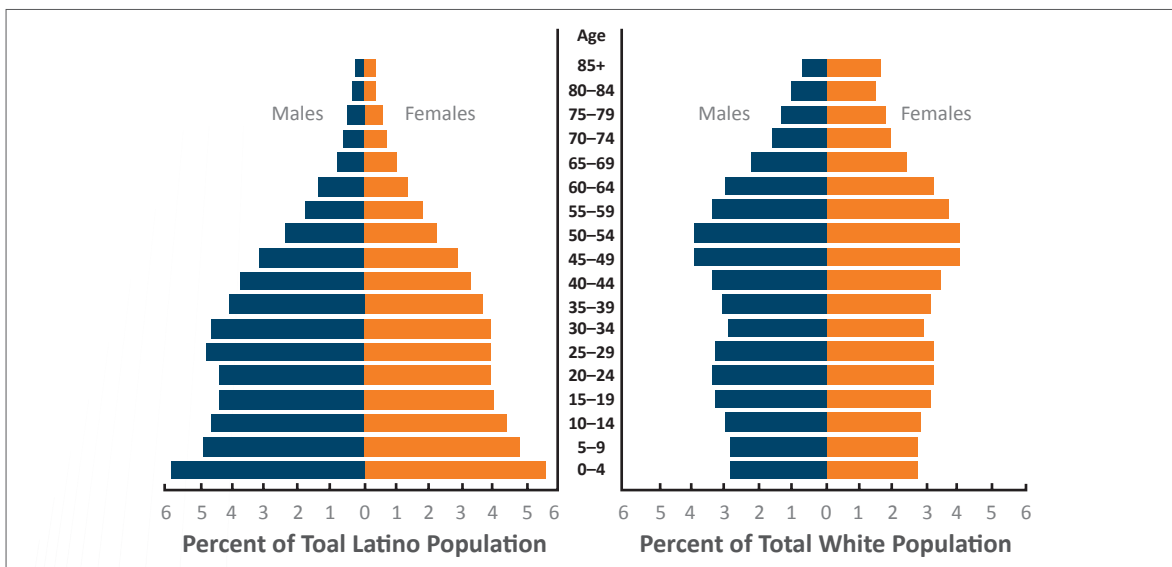
States Where the Latino Child Population More Than Doubled, 2000–2010			
State	Hispanic Population Under 18, 2000	Hispanic Population Under 18, 2010	Percent Change in Hispanic Population Under 18, 2000–2010
South Carolina	27,954	81,506	192%
Tennessee	38,899	108,053	178%
Alabama	24,875	67,266	170%
Kentucky	18,878	49,949	165%
North Carolina	120,090	307,790	156%
Arkansas	32,016	74,956	134%
Georgia	135,969	314,687	131%
Mississippi	12,060	26,504	120%
Maryland	72,096	148,324	106%
South Dakota	4,521	9,202	104%
Indiana	76,154	154,338	103%

Source: NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "American FactFinder," 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, <http://factfinder2.census.gov> (accessed March 2011).

One of the key characteristics of today's Latino population is its youthfulness, particularly when compared to the non-Hispanic White population. The median age of the Hispanic population is 27, compared to 41 for non-Hispanic Whites.

- In 2009, one-third (34%) of the Hispanic population was under age 18 and 11% were under age five, compared to the non-Hispanic White population, of whom only one-fifth was under 18 and 6% were under five.²
- Among Latinos, there are five times as many children under age 15 as persons age 65 and older, whereas the shares of children and the elderly in the White population are roughly equal (see Figure 3).³
- A large portion of Latinos are or will be of child-bearing age (15 to 44), which means that the increase in the Hispanic child population will continue in the years to come.

Figure 3. Age-Sex Pyramids for Latinos and Whites in the United States, 2009



Source: Rogelio Saenz, *Latinos in the United States 2010* (Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, 2010).

Given the Hispanic age distribution, Latino youth will be an increasingly significant portion of tomorrow's workers, consumers, taxpayers, and voters. Latino youth are and will be critical to the nation's economic and political future and are balancing the aging of America as baby boomers enter retirement.

- Today's Hispanic children are tomorrow's American workers; it is estimated that by 2050, 30% of the workforce will be Latino.⁴
- Over the next 40 years, the percent of the total U.S. population over age 65 will grow from 13% in 2010 to 20% in 2050.⁵ As our population ages, Latino children will play an important role in sustaining entitlement programs such as Social Security.
- Each year for the next 20 years, at least 500,000 Latino youth will turn 18, adding ten million potential voters to the population and contributing to a growing Latino electorate for decades to come.⁶

Like all children, Hispanic children need good schools, health care, and safe neighborhoods to become healthy, productive adults. However, many Latino youth currently face challenges that could affect their successful transition to adulthood and impede their future productivity.

- In 2009, 61% of Latino children lived in low-income families (below 200% of the federal poverty level) and 30% of Latino children were poor (below 100% of the federal poverty level), compared to 35% and 16% of White children, respectively.⁷ Economic hardship can adversely affect a child's development in domains that are fundamental to later success.
- In the graduating class of 2008, only 57.6% of Latino children who entered ninth grade graduated with a regular diploma (compared to 78.4% of White children and 82.7% of Asian youth).⁸ Teenagers who do not finish high school are at a severe disadvantage in terms of future employment opportunities and potential earnings.
- In 2009, 58.6% of Hispanic children lived in families in which at least one parent is an immigrant.⁹ Having an immigrant parent—especially an undocumented one—can prevent children from accessing important benefits to which they are entitled. It can also create substantial anxiety for children who fear their parents' detention and deportation.

As the general population in the United States continues to age and baby boomers retire, the rapid increase in our Hispanic child population will reveal itself as one of the country's greatest assets. The well-being and success of Latino children is critical to the nation's future as it undergoes significant demographic change now and in coming years. Hispanic youngsters, however, face a number of substantial challenges that, if not addressed, may impede their ability to become productive adults.

Investing in all children—making sure that they are healthy, living in safe homes and neighborhoods, educated, and prepared to compete in our changing economy—is fundamental to building and maintaining a strong society. Our nation can achieve this goal by implementing policies that help families move out of poverty and provide their children with good schools, quality health care, and stable homes. Moreover, the strength of Latino children depends on the well-being of Latino parents and communities. Ensuring that Hispanic families are strong, productive, and safe rather than scapegoated or marginalized is essential to building the confidence of their children.

Finally, the Latino child population is also increasingly diverse in ways that include generational, geographic, and cultural differences. Understanding the different needs of Latino children—whether they are the first generation to immigrate to the United States, part of the majority born in the U.S. to immigrant parents, or those born into third- and fourth-generation families—is fundamental to formulating viable policies and programs. By investing wisely and supporting policies that help families, our nation will ensure that one of our most precious assets—our children—is prepared to uphold our country's strength and stability.

Endnotes

- 1 Unless otherwise noted, all data in this fact sheet were derived from NCLR calculations using U.S. Census Bureau, "American FactFinder," 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census, <http://factfinder2.census.gov> (accessed March 2011).
- 2 NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2009 1-Year," <http://dataferrett.census.gov/> (accessed June 2011).
- 3 Rogelio Saenz, *Latinos in the United States 2010* (Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, 2010).
- 4 NCLR calculation using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Projected Labor Force Data: Long-Term Projections to 2050, Civilian Labor Force," http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_data_labor_force.htm (accessed June 2011).
- 5 NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "National Population Projections, Released 2008." Washington, DC, 2008, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/summarytables.html> (accessed January 25, 2011), Summary Tables 12 and 20.
- 6 Mark Hugo Lopez and Paul Taylor, *The 2010 Congressional Reapportionment and Latinos* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, 2011), <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/132.pdf> (accessed July 2011).
- 7 NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2009 1-Year."
- 8 Education Counts Research Center, "Graduation Rate for Hispanic Students - Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI), 2008," <http://www.edcounts.org/createtable/step1.php?clear=1> (accessed June 2011).
- 9 NCLR calculation using U.S. Census Bureau, "ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) 2009 1-Year."