



# SOCIAL POLICY REPORT

GIVING CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT KNOWLEDGE AWAY

Volume XXII, Number III

2008

## **CHILDREN IN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES: LOOKING TO AMERICA'S FUTURE**

Donald J. Hernandez, Nancy A. Denton, & Suzanne E. Macartney  
Department of Sociology & Center for Social and Demographic Analysis  
University at Albany, State University of New York

### Abstract

Children in immigrant families account for nearly one-in-four children in the U.S. They are the fastest growing population of children, and they are leading the nation's racial and ethnic transformation. As a consequence, baby-boomers will depend heavily for economic support during retirement on race-ethnic minorities, many of whom grew up in immigrant families. Because the current circumstances and future prospects of children in immigrant families are important not only to these children themselves, but to all Americans, this report uses data from Census 2000 to portray the lives of children with immigrant parents and highlights policy and program initiatives that will foster the future success of these children.

This report begins by discussing the diverse origins and destinations of children in immigrant families. It then highlights substantial evidence that children in immigrant families have deep roots in the U.S. reflected in their own citizenship, as well as their parents' citizenship and length of residence in this country, their own and their parents' English fluency, and their family commitment to homeownership. Based on a new alternative to the official poverty measure, the report continues by discussing economic challenges confronted by many immigrant families. It also portrays additional immigrant strengths and challenges associated with family composition, parental education and employment, and access for children of immigrants to early education and the later years of schooling. Looking toward fostering a successful future for these children, the report identifies promising policy and programmatic initiatives for language and literacy training, and for assuring access to education, health, and other essential services, and it identifies immigrant-related questions that should be asked in all research studies involving children and families.

## SOCIAL POLICY REPORT

### Editor

Lonnie Sherrod, Ph.D.  
sherrod@srcd.org

### Associate Editor

Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Ph.D.  
brooks-gunn@columbia.edu

### Director of SRCD Office for Policy and Communications

Mary Ann McCabe, Ph.D.  
mmccabe@srcd.org

### Managing Editor

Amy D. Glaspie



### GOVERNING COUNCIL

Arnold Sameroff	Suniya Luthar
Aletha Huston	Ann Masten
Greg J. Duncan	Robert B. McCall
Judith G. Smetana	Ellen E. Pinderhughes
Oscar Barbarin	Elizabeth Susman
Patricia Bauer	Lonnie Sherrod
Marc H. Bornstein	Mary Ann McCabe
Melanie Killen	Alisa Beyer

### POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Cheryl Boyce	John Ogawa
Dale Farran	Cassandra Simmel
Barbara H. Fiese	Louisa Tarullo
Bonnie Leadbeater	Lonnie Sherrod
Amy Lowenstein	Mary Ann McCabe
Karlen Lyons-Ruth	
Joseph Mahoney	

### PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Anne D. Pick	Joan Grusec
Ann Easterbrooks	Arnold Sameroff
Sandra Graham	Gene Sackett
William Graziano	Judith G. Smetana
Brenda Jones Harden	Lonnie Sherrod
Amy Jo Schwichtenberg	

## FROM THE EDITOR

This SPR article by Hernandez et al uses data from Census 2000 to describe the current situation of children in immigrant families in the U.S. These authors make the staggering point that children of immigrant families account for nearly one-in-four children in the U.S. today and are the fastest growing population of children, leading the nation's racial and ethnic transformation. Furthermore, current baby-boomers will depend heavily during retirement on these children who have grown up in immigrant families. As a result, policies that affect children in immigrant families are important to all Americans.

The paper discusses economic challenges confronted by many immigrant families as well as their strengths. It is critical that we as a nation design policy and programmatic initiatives for immigrant children and families that focus on language and literacy training, and ensure access to education, health, and other essential services. The paper, together with the four commentaries, identify several strategies that the U.S. needs to pursue in order to support the success of these children, on which the vitality of the nation rests. Finally the paper identifies a number of research questions that demand attention so that we may formulate the most effective policies and programs for immigrant children.

Because of the critical importance of this topic and the urgent need for national attention, we requested four commentaries in order to round out fully the portrayal of immigrant children in the country today. Smeeding points out that we find 40 percent of immigrant children in the USA in poverty compared to 20 percent of native born children mainly because the cash and near cash safety net for these children is so weak. Ruby Takanishi points to the collapse of comprehensive immigration reform in this country and to enforcement policies and practices aimed at "unauthorized" immigrants. Tienda addresses human capital development and the need to attend to bilingualism in promoting the academic success of immigrant children. Frosso Motti-Stefanidi brings an important international perspective to the topic. Together these commentary statements point to the critical need for policy attention and offer several creative suggestions. All also stress the need for research and the need for modifications in current research strategies; it cannot be business as usual.

Brooke and I (and Mary Ann McCabe, Director of SRCD's OPC, who stressed the need for this issue) really hope that this SPR helps to galvanize the nation's attention to this urgent issue.

Lonnie Sherrod, Ph.D., Editor  
Fordham University  
SRCD Executive Director

## **Children in Immigrant Families: Looking to America's Future**

**Donald J. Hernandez, Ph.D.**

**Nancy A. Denton, Ph.D.**

**Suzanne E. Macartney, M.A.**

**University at Albany,  
State University of New York**

### **The Study Population, Key Concepts, and Data**

This report mainly discusses results for children ages 0-17 and living with at least one parent, although some attention is devoted to early education among young children ages 3-4, and to the educational attainments of youth ages 20-24 (For a discussion of differences in the circumstances of children and adolescents in immigrant families, see Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, in press a). Following standard demographic definitions, children in immigrant families are classified here as including both the first generation (foreign-born children) and the second generation (children born in the U.S. with at least one foreign-born parent), whereas children in native-born families are third and later generation children (children and parents all born in the U.S.) (Hernandez and Charney, 1998).

This report presents results based mainly on our analyses of data from Census 2000, using microdata files prepared by Ruggles and colleagues (2004). Most results discussed in this report, and additional indicators for many topics and additional country-of-origin and race-ethnic groups, are available at [www.albany.edu/csda/children](http://www.albany.edu/csda/children), click on the report title or on other "data" features of the website. For internationally comparable results presenting indicators and analysis for eight rich countries including the United States, see Hernandez (forthcoming).

### **Why Focus on Children in Immigrant Families?**

There are at least three important reasons that scholars and policy makers concerned with child development should focus attention and resources on children in immigrant families, that is, children with at least one foreign-born parent.

### **Leading the New American Majority**

Children in immigrant families are important because their numbers are growing faster than any other group of children in the nation (Hernandez and Charney, 1998). As of 2005, nearly one-fourth (23%) of children lived in immigrant families. This rapid growth, combined with the large proportion (88%) with origins in Latin America, the Caribbean,

Asia, or Africa, is transforming the race-ethnic composition of America. The emergence of racial and ethnic minorities as the majority U.S. population is occurring most rapidly, and will first become a reality, among children.

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that the proportion of children who are non-Hispanic White will fall steadily into the future, dropping below 50% after 2030, just 22 years from now (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). In contrast, by 2030, when the baby-boom generation born between 1946 and 1964 will be 66-84 years old, the Census Bureau projects that 72% of the elderly ages 65 and older will be non-Hispanic White, compared to 56% for working-age adults, and 50% for children.

Baby-boomers will depend heavily for economic support during retirement on race-ethnic minorities, many of whom grew up in immigrant families. Thus, the current circumstances and future prospects of children in immigrant families should, clearly, be an important focus not only of policy-makers and program administrators, but also of all behavioral and social scientists whose research or practice is concerned with children.

### **Diversity of Origins**

In many ways the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century mirrors that of the previous century. In 1910, due to massive migration during the preceding decades, 28% of all U.S. children lived in immigrant families, compared to 23% as of 2005. But race-ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity is much greater among children of immigrants today (Hernandez and Darke, 1999). In 1910 nearly all children of immigrants (97%) had parents who came from Europe (87%) or Canada (10%), and most were from countries with predominantly White and Christian populations. As of Census 2000, the largest proportion of children in immigrant families (40%) has origins in Mexico. But the remaining 60% have origins that span the globe, including the Caribbean, East Asia, or Europe combined with Canada and Australia (10%-11% each); Central America, South America, Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam), or West Asia (5%-7% each); or the former Soviet Union or Africa (2%-3% each).

Most Latin American immigrants come from countries with predominantly Christian (mainly Roman Catholic) populations, but they are primarily Spanish-speaking and often visibly distinguishable from the native White population. Meanwhile, among all children in immigrant families, 37% have parents from Asia, the Caribbean, or Africa, that is, countries with populations who are mainly not White. These immigrants may be Christian, but many are Confucian, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Shinto, Sikh, Tao-

ist, or Zoroastrian, and they speak a stunning variety of languages. Moreover, language and religion overlap and intersect in complex ways. People speaking the same or mutually intelligible languages (e.g., Hindi and Urdu) from the same or neighboring countries (e.g., India and Pakistan) may practice different religions (Hinduism and Islam), while persons practicing the same religion (Buddhism) may come from different countries with quite different languages (e.g., Japan, Vietnam, and Taiwan).

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the U.S. is again seeking to integrate many children who live in homes where languages other than English are spoken and where cultural practices differ from the American mainstream. But the diversity present in contemporary immigration is far greater than a century ago. This diversity poses unprecedented opportunities and challenges for behavioral and social scientists studying the development and integration of these children, and for policy-makers and program administrators who are responsible for fostering the success of these children and their families.

### **Diversity of Destinations**

Children in immigrant families are highly concentrated in a few states, but also spread widely across many states. Just five states, California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois account for 64% of children in immigrant families. But in seven other states and the District of Columbia at least 20% live in immigrant families, and the proportion is at least 10% in an additional 15 states, many of which are in the Midwest (Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska) and the South (Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia). Overall, children in immigrant families account for at least 10% of children in 27 states (plus the District of Columbia), and in only 11 states does the proportion fall below 5%.

Various states differ enormously in the countries and world regions of origin of children in newcomer families, because immigrants from a specific country tend to concentrate in particular localities. Consequently, states experience quite different patterns of language and culture among children of immigrants in their schools and other public and private institutions.

Attention often focuses on the states with the largest immigrant populations, but in 38 states at least one-in-twenty

children lives with an immigrant parent, and this rises to 10% or more in 27 states, and to 20% or more in 12 states and the District of Columbia. Thus, children in immigrant families merit substantial attention not only from the federal government, but also throughout the nation, in states and localities spread across every region of the country.

### **Deeply Rooted in the U.S.**

There is substantial evidence that children in newcomer families have deep roots in the U.S. as reflected in their own citizenship, as well as their parents' citizenship and length of residence in this country, their own and their parents' English fluency, and the patterns of homeownership and residential stability of their families.

#### **Citizenship and Length of Residence in the U.S.**

##### **Many Have U.S.-born Parents**

Nearly one-in-four children in immigrant families (24%) has a parent born in the U.S. Thus, almost one-in-four children of immigrants lives in a family in which one parent is a lifelong American citizen who was born in the U.S.

##### **Even More Have U.S. Citizen Parents**

Many children with foreign-born parents have at least one parent who is a naturalized American citizen (48%). As a result, including the 24% with a U.S.-born parent, a majority (64%) of children in immigrant families lives with at least one U.S.-citizen parent. The large proportion who become naturalized American citizens reflects the high level of commitment among these parents to the U.S., their adopted homeland. Recent research indicates that naturalizations are increasing. Between 1990 and 2005, among all legal permanent foreign-born residents, the percent naturalized climbed from 38% to 52% (Passel, 2007).

##### **Many Have Parents in U.S. 10 Years or More**

Sixty-eight percent of children in newcomer families have parents who have lived in the U.S. 10 years or more, including the 24% with parents who were born in the U.S. Thus, only about one-third (32%) of children in newcomer families lives with parents who themselves have lived in the U.S. less than 10 years.

Children in immigrant families are highly concentrated in a few states, but also spread widely across many states.

Nearly one-in-four children in immigrant families (24%) has a parent born in the U.S.

### **Most Children in Immigrant Families are U.S.-Born**

Seventy-nine percent of children in immigrant families were born in the U.S. and are, therefore, American citizens. Thus, most children in newcomer families share precisely the same rights and privileges as do other citizen children in native-born families. Despite the fact that most children in immigrant families are U.S. citizens, that many have parents born in the U.S., and that foreign-born parents are increasingly likely to become U.S. citizens the longer they live in this country, more than one-half of children in immigrant families (53%) live in mixed-citizenship-status families with at least one citizen and one non-citizen (often a parent and sometimes other siblings).

### **Some Children or Their Parents are Unauthorized Immigrants**

Although most children in immigrant families are U.S.-born and have at least one U.S.-citizen parent, it is estimated for 2005 that 1.8 million children were unauthorized, and 3.1 million were born in the U.S. but lived with an unauthorized parent (Passel, 2006). Thus, 11% of children in immigrant families were unauthorized immigrants, and 18% were U.S.-born but had an unauthorized parent as of 2005. Overall, nearly two-thirds (63%) of children who live with an unauthorized parent are themselves American citizens because they were born in the U.S.

These children may be especially vulnerable, particularly with increases that have occurred during recent years in worksite raids by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to apprehend unauthorized immigrants. An early study indicates that many unauthorized immigrant parents apprehended in these raids were deported within a few days, leaving children and other family members without their primary family breadwinner, and with the need cope with fear, isolation, and other psychological stresses (Capps, Castaneda, Chaudry, and Santos, 2007). A follow-up study by the Urban Institute that is currently in the field will provide much additional detailed knowledge about the short-term and longer-term impacts and changes in children's well-being and psychological disposition resulting from raids occurring both at worksites and at the homes of families.

In Census 2000 which provides most of the data for this Social Policy Report, it is estimated that about 90% of

unauthorized immigrants responded and are included in the results, and it appears that this response rate is holding steady for the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) which also provides data reported here (Marcelli and Ong, 2002; Office of Policy and Planning, no date; Passel, Van Hook, and Bean, 2004). The possibility that worksite raids or other enforcement activities could dampen response rates for unauthorized immigrants highlights the need for continuing assessments of the extent to which these immigrants and their children are, or are not, included in Census Bureau surveys, and to assess non-response rates for this population in other national and local data collection efforts.

...a majority (64%) of children in immigrant families lives with at least one U.S.-citizen parent.

Seventy-nine percent of children in immigrant families were born in the U.S.

### **Welfare Reform and Children of Immigrants**

Eligibility requirements under the 1996 welfare reform drew, for the first time, a sharp distinction between citizens and non-citizen documented immigrants with non-citizen documented immigrants becoming ineligible for important public benefits and services. As a result, many non-citizen documented immigrant parents who are ineligible for specific public benefits may not be aware that their children are eligible, or they may hesitate to contact government authorities on behalf of their children for fear of jeopardizing their own future opportunities to become citizens (Capps, Kenney, & Fix, 2003; Fix & Passel, 1999; Fix & Zimmermann, 1995; Hernandez & Charney, 1998; Zimmermann & Tumlin, 1999).

Insofar as the exclusion of some immigrant parents from eligibility for welfare programs acts to deprive their U.S. citizen children of important public benefits and services, and insofar as most of the children and parents are or will become American citizens, the elimination of these recent eligibility exclusion rules is in the interest not only of immigrant children and families, but also is in the interest of all Americans, including the baby-boom generation who will benefit from having a healthy and productive labor force to support them during retirement.

### **English Fluency and Language Diversity**

Most children in newcomer families grow up in complex language environments that can help to promote the development of English language skills. A smaller proportion of children in newcomer families lives in linguistically iso-

lated households, in which parents and other family members speak little or no English.

### Parental English Fluency

One-half of children in newcomer families have a mother (51%) or a father (50%) who has limited proficiency in speaking English, and 59% of children in newcomer families live with at least one parent who is not proficient in English, by self-report or report of an adult in the household. However, three-fifths (60%) of children in immigrant families have at least one parent in the home who speaks English exclusively or very well, including 36% with both parents fluent in English, 14% with only the mother in the home English fluent, and 10% with only the father English fluent. Thus, a substantial majority of children in immigrant families lives with a parent who is reported to speak English exclusively or very well and, therefore, has made major strides along the path to integration into English-speaking society.

...three-fifths (60%) of children in immigrant families have at least one parent in the home who speaks English exclusively or very well.

### Children's English Fluency

Children in newcomer families are even more likely than their parents to speak English fluently. The vast majority of children of immigrants (74%) speak English exclusively or very well according to the responding adult in the household, whereas the remaining one-fourth (26%) have limited English proficiency. At least 68% of children in immigrant families in each of the U.S. states and the District of Columbia are fluent in English.

At least 68% of children in immigrant families in each of the U.S. states and the District of Columbia are fluent in English.

Nevertheless, schools in all states face the special challenges associated with communicating with and teaching those children in newcomer families who are not proficient in English. Schools with a large number of children with limited English proficiency who speak one particular language can benefit from economies of scale in hiring teachers or assistants who are bilingual. That approach is less feasible in schools with only a small number of limited English-proficient students in a single classroom or when various children speak multiple languages other than English.

Fortunately, however, research indicates that it is not essential for teachers to be fluently bilingual in a child's home language. For example, even when PK-3 teachers have no experience with a child's first language, they can introduce young English language learners to English and also adopt

teaching practices that support home language development. Teachers who encourage the families of children to talk, read, and sing with the child in the parents' home language, and to use the home language in everyday activities, will foster the child's first language development even as the child is learning English (Espinosa 2007, 2008).

### Children Becoming Bilingual

Children in newcomer families are three times more likely to speak English exclusively or very well than to speak English well, not well, or not at all (74% vs. 26%). A large proportion of those who speak English very well are especially well-positioned to become bilingually fluent because they also speak another language at home. In fact, the largest proportion of children in newcomer families—nearly one-half (46%)—both speak English very well and speak the native language of the parent or parents at home. Bilingual children (those reported to speak English very well and to speak another language in the home) outnumber children in newcomer families with limited English proficiency in every state (except South Dakota)

with a ratio of those who are bilingual to those who have limited English proficiency ranging from 1.2:1 in Minnesota to a high of 3.9:1 in Maine. Thus, many children in newcomer families in all states are well-positioned to become fluent bilingual speakers, writers, and readers—if they receive formal training in both English and the native language of their parent or parents.

Research indicates for children who learn English after their home language is established, typically around age three, that they can add a second language during the PK and the early school years, and that this bilingual skill leads to long-term cognitive, cultural, and economic advantages. Importantly, a dual language approach to teaching has been found to be effective for English language learners, while not having negative consequences for other students. In fact dual language programs are effective not only for improving the academic achievements of English language learning students, but also provide benefits to native English speakers, as reflected in standardized test scores, and reports by parents, teachers, and school administrators (Espinosa, 2007, 2008).

## Linguistically Isolated Households

One-fourth of children in newcomer families are limited in their English proficiency, and the same proportion (26%) live in linguistically isolated households, in which no one over age 13 speaks English exclusively or very well, including households where a child age 13 or younger is the only fluent English speaker in the household. Children in these families may experience a high degree of isolation from English-speaking society, because not even adolescent children in these households speak English proficiently. These children and their families offer both special challenges and opportunities for schools.

Children and parents who are limited English proficient may have great difficulty communicating with educators, health care providers, and officials in social service, justice, and other institutions. Insofar as it is only the adolescents, or even children age 13 or younger, in the home who are fluent in English, the parents are not in a position to communicate with professionals on behalf of themselves or their children.

In fact, it may be the children who must act as the primary intermediary between family members and professionals in various institutional settings. This role may be critical in helping immigrant families negotiate and integrate into the unfamiliar terrain of American society, but it can also lead to conflicts by undermining traditional parent-child roles and parental authority (Park, 2001, 2002; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Sung, 1987; Valenzuela, 1999; Zhou, 1998). Also, although children (and adolescents) may be fluent in everyday English, they may not have the technical vocabulary necessary either in English or in the parent's origin-country language for effective contacts with health, social service, or legal organizations.

For this reason, it is critical that education, health, and other organizations provide outreach and interpretive services in the home languages of children and their parents. Without these efforts, these organizations may be cutting themselves off from the rapidly growing client population of immigrant children and families.

## Homeownership and Residential Stability

The strong commitment of immigrant families to their adopted homeland is reflected in rates of homeownership and residential stability, which are not greatly different for children in immigrant and native-born families.

The proportion living in homes owned by their parents

or the householder is more than one-half at 55% for children in immigrant families compared to 70% for children native families, a difference of only 15 percentage points. The homeownership gap is even smaller if similar subgroups are compared. Thus, many children in immigrant families have parents who are making strong financial investments in and commitments to their local communities by purchasing their own homes.

Children in immigrant and native families also have similar rates of five-year residential mobility, 52% and 45%, respectively. There is little variation across groups. Thus, migration rates for children also indicate that immigrant and

native families have broadly similar commitments to staying in (or moving from) their local communities. Children in various groups are broadly similar in the challenges and opportunities presented by changes in residence or by remaining in their communities for longer periods of time.

These results are consistent with another recent study specifically focused on Latino immigrants, indicating that

only 9% can be considered highly attached to their country of origin, because this is the small proportion engaged in three important transnational activities: sending remittances, weekly phone calls, and travel within the past two years to the origin country (Waldinger, 2007). The largest proportion (63%) show a moderate attachment to their country of origin by engaging in two of these activities, while 28% engaged in only one or none.

## Economic Needs and Poverty

Children from low-income families tend to experience a variety of negative developmental outcomes, including less success in school, lower educational attainments, and earning lower incomes during adulthood (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997; McLoyd, 1998, Sewell & Hauser, 1975). Poverty rates merit considerable attention in part because extensive research documents that poverty has greater negative consequences than either limited mother's education or living in a one-parent family (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997; McLoyd, 1998).

## Limitations of Official Poverty Measure

The official poverty measure is used most often to assess economic deprivation in the U.S., but more than a decade ago a National Research Council (NRC) report urged that the official measure be revised, because "...it no longer provides

...it is critical that education, health, and other organizations provide outreach and interpretive services in the home languages of children and their parents.

an accurate picture of the differences in the extent of economic poverty among population groups or geographic areas of the country, nor an accurate picture of trends over time (Citro and Michael, 1995). The NRC report recommended a new approach explicitly accounting for various family costs, with attention to geographic differences in the cost of living. The two “Basic Budget Poverty” measures developed by the authors and presented here reflect these recommendations, based on research by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) in Washington, D.C. (Bernstein, Brocht, Spade-Aguilar, 2000; Boushey, Brocht, Gundesen, and Bernstein, 2001; Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, 2007a).

### **Baseline Basic Budget Poverty**

We calculate “Baseline Basic Budget Poverty” by taking into account the local cost of housing, food, transportation for work, other necessities (such as clothing, personal care items, household supplies, telephone, television, and school supplies), and federal taxes (Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, 2007a). More than one-in-four children is “baseline” basic budget poor. For all children the baseline basic budget poverty rate in Census 2000 is 21.3%, compared to 14.8% for the official poverty rate (Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, 2007a).

Providing another standard for poverty comparisons across rich countries, researchers from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nation’s Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and others have for nearly two decades relied on a measure based on 50% of national median post-tax and transfer income using data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) and other sources (Bradbury and Jantii, 2001; Oxley, Dang, and Antolin, 2000; Smeeding and Torrey, 1988; UNICEF, 2005). The most comparable poverty estimate for U.S. based on the LIS approach is 23.5%, which is 8.7% greater than the official poverty estimate, but only 2.2% more than the baseline basic budget poverty estimate of 21.3%. The close correspondence of results using the baseline basic budget and LIS poverty measures indicates that, at the national level, they are quite similar in their assessment of U.S. child poverty.

More than one-in-three children in immigrant families is baseline basic budget poor. The baseline basic budget poverty rate for children in immigrant families is 34.1%, compared to the official poverty rate of 20.7%, for a difference of 13.4%. But insofar as the cost of living varies greatly across states, states also differ in the size of the difference between the

baseline basic budget and official rates. Insofar as children in immigrant families are more likely to live in states with larger differences between these rates, the overall national difference between baseline basic budget and official poverty rates for children in immigrant families is nearly three times as large as the difference for children in native-born families (13.4% vs. 4.7%). Thus, the official measure indicates that children in immigrant families are more likely than those in native-born families to live in poverty (20.7% vs. 13.4%), while the baseline basic budget measure indicates the rates of economic need are substantially higher for both groups, but especially for children in immigrant families (34.1% vs. 18.1%).

**More than one-in-three children in immigrant families is baseline basic budget poor.**

### **Including Child Care and Early Education**

The baseline basic budget poverty rate does not take into account the costs of child care for young children, which the NRC report recommends should be included in assessing economic deprivation. The LIS approach to measuring poverty, which is used widely in drawing comparisons across rich countries, also does not take these costs into account. But in rich European countries children generally have access to and participate in formal Early Child Education and Care (ECEC) arrangements funded by the national government, or if they are infants or toddlers they have parents who can care for them at home because of government-guaranteed, job-protected, paid maternal or paternal leave arrangements (Neuman and Bennett, 2001). Thus for comparisons involving rich countries other than the U.S., it is not necessary to take account of the costs to families of child care, but for the U.S. the NRC recommends that these costs be included in calculating a U.S. poverty rate.

The NRC report recommends, however, that child care costs be taken into account only for families where there is no stay-at-home parent to care for the children and at a level that provides only for the minimum care necessary for the parent to hold down a job, not for care involving educational enrichment (Citro and Michael, 1995). But research clearly indicates that early childhood education programs can promote school readiness and educational success (Gormley, 2007; Haskins and Rouse, 2005; Lynch, 2004). In addition, participation in high quality preschool programs may be particularly valuable for cognitive development of children in newcomer families speaking a language other than English at home (Gormley, in press; Gormley, Gayer, Phillips, and Dawson, 2005), and socioeconomic barriers can account



for most, or perhaps all, of the lower enrollment levels experienced by children with immigrant parents (See below) (Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, in press b).

Furthermore, past research has found that many not-employed mothers would seek employment and many employed mothers would work more hours if child care were available at reasonable cost. This is especially true for mothers who are young, single, and with low education or little income (Presser and Baldwin, 1980). For these reasons our second basic budget poverty measure includes costs for all children regardless of parental work.

Children in immigrant families experience a national baseline basic budget poverty rate of 34%. Including the cost of early education and child care along with other costs in the basic family budget, the estimated poverty rate for children in immigrant families increases by 13.8%, from 34% to 48%. The corresponding increase for children in native-born families is nearly as large at 10.6% (18.1 vs. 28.7%).

Another poverty measure often used in public policy discussion sets the poverty threshold at twice (200%) of the official poverty thresholds. Poverty estimates using our baseline basic budget plus early education poverty measure are nearly as high as the 200% poverty measure, at 32.4% vs. 35.7% for children overall, 47.9% vs. 48.3% for children in immigrant families, and 28.7% vs. 32.7% for children in native-born families.

Insofar as it is useful to compare the economic circumstances of children in the U.S. and rich European countries, results from the LIS approach for other countries are most relevant. The LIS measure indicates that child poverty rates for six countries with near universal maternal/paternal leave and preschool (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, France, Germany) are in the range of 2.4%-10.2%, while the rate is nearly triple this level or more for the U.S., using our baseline plus child care and early education measure, at 28.9% for children in native-born families and nearly five times this level or more at 47.9% for children in immigrant families (Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, 2007a).

The differences would be still larger if our U.S. measure were expanded to include not only child care and early education, but also health care cost which are not included in our measure, but government-funded national health insurance is available to children in all rich countries.

## **Additional Strengths and Challenges: Family Composition**

Most children in immigrant families live with two parents, and they often also have grandparents, other relatives, or non-relatives in the home who provide additional nurturance or economic resources to children and their families.

### **Parents in the Home**

Children living with two parents tend, on average, to be somewhat advantaged in their educational success, compared to children in one-parent families (Cherlin, 1999; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Children in immigrant families are more likely than children in native families to live

Children in immigrant families are more likely than children in native families to live with two parents (84% vs. 76%).

with two parents (84% vs. 76%). Children in immigrant families from many origin countries/regions are about as likely or more likely than Whites native-born families (85%) to have two parents in the home (including stepparents and the cohabiting partners of parents).

The only major exceptions are children with origins in the Caribbean at 64%-70% (except Cuba) and children with origins in Cambodia (75%). Thus, large majorities of children in all immigrant and most native groups benefit from having two parents in the home, although significant portions of all groups (at least 5%-20%) at any given time live with only one parent.

### **Siblings in the Home**

Brothers or sisters can be a liability but also an asset. Insofar as the time and finances of parents are limited, they must be spread more thinly in larger families than smaller ones. Hence, children in larger families tend, other things equal, to experience less educational success and to complete fewer years of schooling than children with fewer siblings (Blake, 1985, 1989; Hernandez, 1986). Siblings also, however, can serve as child care providers for younger siblings, as companions for siblings close in age, and as an important support network throughout life. Dependent siblings living at home are most likely to share available resources. Children in immigrant families are about one-third more likely than those in native families to live in homes with four or more siblings (19% versus 14%). Thus, children with immigrant origins in countries/regions with a high proportion having four or more siblings in the home are more likely than others to experience both the constraints and the benefits of having many siblings.

## Grandparents, Other Relatives, and Nonrelatives in the Home

Grandparents, other relatives, and non-relatives can provide essential child care, nurturing, or economic resources. Children in most immigrant and race-ethnic minority native-born groups are two to four times more likely than Whites in native families to have a grandparent in the home, 10%-20% versus 5%. Some groups also are likely to have other adult relatives age 18 or older, including siblings, in the home. Many immigrant groups with large numbers of siblings also are especially likely to have grandparents, other relatives, or non-relatives in the home who may be nurturing and providing child care for, as well as sharing economic resources with, the immigrant children and their families. This is particularly likely to be the case for children in immigrant families from Mexico, Central America, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Indochina, and Afghanistan.

### Additional Strengths and Challenges: Parental Education and Employment

#### Parental Education

Children in immigrant families are nearly as likely as those in native families to have a father who has graduated from college (24% versus 28%), but they are more than three times as likely to have a father who has not graduated from high school (40% versus 12%). It has long been known that children whose parents have completed fewer years of schooling tend, on average, to themselves complete fewer years of schooling and to obtain lower paying jobs when they reach adulthood (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Featherman & Hauser, 1978; Sewell & Hauser, 1975; Sewell, Hauser, & Wolf, 1980). Parents whose education does not extend beyond the elementary level may be especially limited in knowledge and experience needed to help their children succeed in school. Immigrant parents often have high educational aspirations for their children (Hernandez & Charney, 1998; Kao, 1999; Rumbaut, 1999), but may know little about the U.S. educational system, particularly if they have completed only a few years of school.

Parents with little schooling may, as a consequence, be less comfortable with the education system, less able to help their children with school work, and less able to effectively negotiate with teachers and education administrators. It may be especially important for educators to focus attention on the needs of island-origin Puerto Rican children, and on children

in immigrant families from Mexico and Central America, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, China, Indochina, and Iraq, because these children are especially likely to have parents who have completed only a few years of school.

#### Father's, Mother's, and Other's Employment

A strong work ethic characterizes both immigrant and native families. Among children living with a father, 93% in immigrant families and 95% in native families have fathers who worked for pay during the previous year. For most specific groups the proportion is 90% or more. Most children living with mothers also have mothers who work for pay to support the family. Other adult workers also live in the homes of many children.

Especially noteworthy is that, among children in immigrant families from Mexico, the largest immigrant group, 92% have working fathers. In addition, although they are among the groups least like to have a working mother

(53%), they are substantially more likely than all other native and immigrant groups, except Central Americans, to have another adult worker in the home, at 29%, compared to the next highest proportions of 20%-25%, and less than 20% for most groups. Clearly, most children live in families with strong work ethics, regardless of their race-ethnicity or immigrant origin, and have parents, and often others, who are committed to working for pay to support their families.

Despite the strong work ethic of parents, many children live with fathers who cannot find full-time, year-round work. Among white children, 16% have fathers who do not work full-time year-round, the lowest level of any native or immigrant group. For other native race-ethnic minority groups (except Asians), the proportions range between 26%-37%. At least 25% of children in 21 of 31 immigrant groups analyzed for this report also have fathers who do not work full-time year-round. The proportion is 30%-37% for four native groups (Blacks, island-origin Puerto Ricans, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders, American Indians), and for 15 immigrant groups from Latin America (Mexico, Central America), the Caribbean (Dominican Republic, Haiti), Indochina (the Hmong, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam), and West Asia (Pakistan/Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iraq), as well as the former Soviet Union, and Blacks from Africa. For these children the proportion with a father not working full-time year-round approaches or exceeds twice the level experienced by Whites in native-born families.

Despite the strong work ethic of parents, many children live with fathers who cannot find full-time year-round work.

Children are much more likely to have mothers than fathers who do not work full-time year-round, no doubt in part because mothers often have greater responsibility for the day to day care of children than do fathers. A large number of dependent siblings in the home is not necessarily, however, a strong indication of the amount that mothers work. The nine immigrant groups with the largest number of siblings include three with very low proportions (21%-24%) of mothers working full-time year-round (Mexico, Iraq, Israel/Palestine), four have high proportions (37%-49%) with mothers working full-time (Haiti, Cambodia, Laos, Blacks from Africa), and two (the Hmong, Thailand) are intermediate (32%-34%). Among the 15 immigrant groups with high proportions of fathers not working full-time year-round, only four are similar to whites in native families (10%) in having a low proportion with fathers who are not high school graduates: Blacks from Africa (8%), former Soviet Union (11%), Pakistan/Bangladesh (15%), and Afghanistan (15%).

...lack of full-time year-round work for fathers goes hand in hand with low hourly earning...

### Parents Working At Low Wage Jobs

Immigrant groups with high proportions of fathers not working full-time year-round also tend to have fathers with low hourly wages. Among 14 immigrant groups for whom 30-44% have fathers not working full-time year-round, 11 experienced proportions of at least 33% with fathers earning below 200% of the federal minimum wage, that is, less than \$10.30 per hour. Only one additional immigrant group, children with origins in China, experienced this high level of father's low-wage work. Similarly, three of the four native groups with many fathers not working full-time year-round also had high proportions earning less than \$10.30 per hour (Blacks, island-origin Puerto Ricans, American Indians). Among every other immigrant and native group with many fathers not working full-time year-round, at least 25% had fathers earning less than twice the federal minimum wage.

The corresponding proportion for whites in native families is 17%. The groups with high proportions of fathers who have low hourly wages also, not surprisingly, have high proportions of mothers with low hourly earnings, usually in the range of 40%-70%. Thus, lack of full-time year-round work for fathers goes hand in hand with low hourly earning for fathers and mothers in 18 immigrant and native groups, and these groups are especially likely to be officially or basic budget poor.

### Overcrowded Housing

Families with low wages and poverty level incomes may double-up with other family members or nonrelatives to share housing costs and make scarce resources go further, leading to overcrowded housing conditions. Overcrowded housing can make it difficult for a child to find a place to do homework, and it has negative consequences for behavioral adjustment and psychological health (Evans, Saegert, & Harris, 2001; Saegert, 1982). Children are characterized here as living in overcrowded housing if they live in a home with more than one person per room (Bureau of the Census, 1994). Children in immigrant families are four times more likely than children in native-born families to live in overcrowded housing (46.9% vs. 11.4%).

As shown earlier in this report, children in immigrant families are more likely to have grandparents, other adult relatives, and/or non-relatives in the home. These other household members can be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, they can provide important nurturing, child care,

and financial resources for young children and their parents. But they can also contribute to overcrowding with negative consequences for behavioral adjustment, psychological health, and access to quiet study space.

### School Enrollment and Educational Attainments

#### Early Education Enrollment

Children's language development begins early, and participation in high quality early care and education can contribute. Participation in high quality preschool programs may be particularly valuable for the cognitive and language development of children in newcomer families with limited English proficiency (Gormley, Gayer, Phillips, & Dawson, 2005). Overall, Census 2000 recorded that children in newcomer families are less likely than are children in native-born families to be enrolled in pre-k/nursery school at age 3 (32% vs. 39%) and at age 4 (55% vs. 63%). Groups less likely than whites in native-born families to be enrolled are children in immigrant families from Mexico, Central America, Dominican Republic, Philippines, Indochina, and Iraq.

Cultural preferences are sometimes cited as a reason for lower enrollment in early education programs among immigrant groups, especially Hispanics. Yet recent research indicates that socioeconomic barriers can account for at least one-half and perhaps the entire enrollment gap in early education that separates children in newcomer families from Mexico, for example, and white children in native-born fami-

## Children in Immigrant Families: All Our Children?

**Ruby Takanishi**  
**Foundation for Child Development**

What is overlooked in debates about both immigration policy and family policy is that children living in immigrant families accounted for nearly one-quarter of children in the United States in 2005. As Hernandez, Denton, and McCartney (this issue) note, three-quarters of these children are birthright citizens (born in the U.S. and therefore, citizens). Among the youngest children below the age of six, over 90 percent were born in the U.S. In some states, like California, about 50 percent of all newborns have at least one parent who is an immigrant. In our nation's largest school districts, New York City and Los Angeles, close to half of the students come from immigrant families.

Given the potential of this group of children for our country, if well educated and nurtured, it is in our collective self-interest to be better informed about who these children are, and to use this knowledge to form policy options.

Sadly, the glass is half empty. The growing knowledge base, including demographic studies of children living in immigrant families, is not considered part of the mainstream of the scientific enterprise about child and adolescent development. Connecting this knowledge to policy formation lags further behind. This situation must change.

Given their numbers, children in immigrant families should not be considered a "special" population of children. Given their diversity, in terms of their countries of origin, the educational levels of their parents and socioeconomic resources, the color of their skins, children in immigrant families should be understood both in terms of how their development illuminates basic themes and principles in human development, as well as what is specific to their groups.

Cross-national migration studies highlight the importance of a country's immigrant integration policies (or lack thereof as in the U.S.) as well as its educational policies and systems on the adult outcomes for immigrant youth (Parsons and Smeeding, 2006). American child development researchers can learn much from research conducted in other countries as well as from engaging in cross-national studies.

National surveys, including longitudinal studies of children supported by federal funds, must collect systematic data on children living in immigrant families, including their generational status, the country of origin of both parents, parental educational levels prior to coming to the U.S. Such surveys and studies must also address how to track a mobile group of children and families both in the U.S. and in the country of origin. Failure to collect these data will greatly compromise our knowledge of a significant number of America's children and families, now and in the future.

Child development researchers must broaden their disciplinary and methodological perspectives. The field of migration studies must be better integrated with child development research. Children of immigrants must not be clustered into a category for analyses, without prior work to justify that cluster. Greater specificity about the characteristics of children of immigrants must be a requirement for sample description.

Immigrants and their children are here to stay. The collapse of comprehensive immigration reform in Summer 2007, and enforcement policies and practices aimed at "unauthorized" immigrants (Capps, Castaneda, Chaudry, and Santos, 2007) are critical policy contexts in which current research on children of immigrant must take place. The ramifications of this policy context regarding immigrants and their children for the broader society, including native-born children, should not be neglected.

All children of immigrants are part of our society, regardless of our personal stance on immigration.

### References

- Parsons, C.A. and Smeeding, T. M. Immigration and the Transformation of Europe. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Capps, R., Castaneda, R.M.; Chaudry, A., and Santos, R. Paying the Price: the Impact of Immigration Raids on America's Children. A report by The Urban Institute for the National Council of La Raza. Washington, DC, 2007.

## Access to the Income Safety Net for Children of Immigrants

**Tim Smeeding**

**Russell Sage Foundation and Syracuse University**

Children living in immigrant families are an important minority in a growing number of rich nations. As Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney (this issue) note, many of these children in the USA are birthright citizens and many others come with their parents. This situation is repeated time and again in rich nations, including those with greater fractions of immigrants than the United States ( e.g., Canada and Australia) and those with smaller numbers and fractions —most European nations. Still the numbers of children in immigrant families continues to swell in almost all rich nations. This process will not be reversed any time soon. Especially in Europe where birth rates are low and populations are growing slowly, immigration is the major source of population growth. (Parsons and Smeeding, 2006).

Adults migrate for work, but often work is not enough or does not pay well enough to avoid poverty. Recent work using the Luxembourg Income Study and examining 12 nations including the United States, finds that child poverty rates for the children of immigrant are about twice the rates for all citizens in most rich nation ( Smeeding, Wing and Robson, 2008) .In compiling these figures, we measure poverty by household income less than half the national median .

Still, the safety nets for families with children seem to affect immigrant and non-immigrant families by about the same extent in most nations. The reason why we find 40 percent of immigrant children in the USA in poverty compared to 20 percent of native born children is because the cash and near cash safety net for these children is so weak whether native or foreign born, immigrant or non-immigrant.

In countries such as France, Germany, Canada and Australia, immigrant child poverty is below native United States child poverty using this same relative poverty measure! The reason is that safety nets and employment policies in these nations provide help for immigrant child populations in about the same ratio as they do native children, and mainly because these nations do more to avoid poverty for all families with children, immigrant or not .

Cross-national studies of migrants can highlight the importance of national immigrant policies in areas of education and health care, as well as income transfer policy (Parsons and Smeeding, 2006). These studies suggest that the generosity and breadth of safety nets can have differential effects on children depending more on the country to which they migrate than on the migrant or non-migrant status of their parents.

### References

Parsons, C.A. and Smeeding, T. M. Immigration and the Transformation of Europe. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.  
Smeeding, T., C. Wing and K. Robson. “Differences in Social Transfer Support for Immigrant Families with Children: Lessons from the LIS” May, 2008 , Russell Sage Foundation

## **The Role of Immigrant Children for the Economic Development and the Social Cohesion of Our Societies: A European Perspective**

**Frosso Motti-Stefanidi**  
**University of Athens, Greece**

The central argument in Hernandez' article is that it is important to promote immigrant children's adaptation and well being because they are the future of the American economy. Certainly, immigrants bring a wealth of human capital, which if appropriately developed, could contribute to the economic prosperity as well as to the cultural diversity of the host society. However, it also could be argued that the integration of immigrant children in society is essential for ensuring social cohesion in immigrant receiving countries. The European Union (EU), which faces similar demographic, economic, and social challenges as the United States, places equal emphasis on the contribution immigrants could make in the future on two of its strategic goals, which are, first, to develop a competitive and dynamic, knowledge based economy, and, second, to promote greater social cohesion (Commission of the European Communities, 2003).

At present, immigrant families in the EU face significant economic and social challenges. Even well educated and skilled immigrants cannot easily find a job that matches their qualifications and have instead to accept low status and low paying jobs. The economic situation of many immigrant families is such that it puts them at high risk for social exclusion. This phenomenon includes, but is broader than, poverty and low income, encompassing some of the wider antecedents and consequences of poverty, such as unemployment, underemployment, poor skills, poor housing, high crime rates, bad health and family breakdown (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001). Although the social and financial costs of social exclusion for society are immeasurable, one of the most serious potential costs is the threat to social cohesion or the stability of the society. Moreover, immigrants often suffer discrimination in many domains, such as in employment, education, social security, health care, access to goods and services and housing, that further undermine their social integration in the host society (Commission of the European Communities, 2003).

As things stand in most EU countries, it is clear that the potential contribution of immigrants to the economy cannot be fully realized. Furthermore, events such as the recent, unprecedented riots of young immigrants in the outskirts of Paris, testify to the real possibility that if no action is taken to help immigrant youth integrate in our societies and to combat social exclusion and discrimination, social cohesion will be in danger.

These social challenges also jeopardize the adaptation of immigrant youth with respect to salient developmental tasks (e.g. McLoyd, 1998; Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2008), leading to a vicious cycle. For example, school failure of immigrant youth compromises their future employment prospects, which further marginalizes the youth and exacerbates their social exclusion, with cascading consequences for the youth and the society (Masten et al., 2005).

As Hernandez has emphasized, it is important to study the factors that may influence adaptive success of young immigrants in the host countries. Such studies are likely to be most beneficial if they are (a) longitudinal, so we can disentangle developmental from acculturative changes; (b) international, so we can examine the role of cultural context in immigrant youth's adaptation; and (c) based on a resilience framework that focuses on positive as well as negative processes across levels of analysis. It is important to consider the interplay of individual differences, family and cultural influences, and larger social contexts on the adaptation of immigrant youth. This research will require the integration of multiple disciplines concerned with adaptation and migration. In psychology, both developmental and social psychological approaches need to be integrated.

Immigrant children, like all children, need to engage successfully in the developmental tasks of their time and context. Like some native children, immigrant children will need to deal with powerful social forces, such as poverty and the risk of social exclusion. Unlike native children, immigrant youth also must learn how to navigate between two cultures embedded in a larger societal context that may or may not be positive about their presence. Understanding the processes that foster adaptive development of immigrant youth will allow many receiving nations of Europe as well as the U.S. and other countries around the world to capitalize on migration, both socially and economically.

## References

- Commission of the European Communities. (2003). *Communication on Immigration, Integration and Employment*, COM (2003)336. Brussels.
- Garcia Coll, C., Crnic, K., Lamberty, G., Wasik, B.H., Jenkins, R., Vazquez Garcia, H., & McAdoo, H.P. (1996). An integrative model for the study of developmental competencies in minority children. *Child Development*, 5, 1891-1914.
- Masten, A. S., Roisman, G. I., Long, J. D., Burt, K. B., Obradovic, J., Riley, J. R., et al. (2005). Developmental cascades: Linking academic achievement and externalizing and internalizing symptoms over 20 years. *Developmental Psychology*, 41(5), 733-746.
- McLoyd, V. C. (1998). Socioeconomic disadvantage and child development. *American Psychologist*, 53, 185-204.
- Motti-Stefanidi, F., Pavlopoulos, V., Obradović, J., Dalla, M., Takis, N., Papathanassiou, A., & Masten, A. S. (2008). Immigration as a risk factor for adolescent adaptation in Greek urban schools. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 5(2), 235-261.
- Social Exclusion Unit (2001), *Preventing Social Exclusion*. London: The Stationery Office.

lies (Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, in press b). These results may be surprising, but it is important to note that these estimates are consistent with the strong commitment to early education in contemporary Mexico, where universal enrollment at age 3 will become obligatory in 2008-2009 (OECD, 2006). In fact, in Mexico where preschool is free, 81% of children age 4 were enrolled in 2005, compared to only 71% among whites in U.S. native-born families in 2004, and 55% for children in the U.S. in 2004 who lived in immigrant families from Mexico.

What strategies might federal, state, and local governments (including school districts) pursue to foster the positive development and successful integration of young children in newcomer families? Additional resources should be devoted to assuring that children in immigrant families have access to high quality early education. Seven states are either currently providing (Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma), or phasing in (Illinois, Iowa, New York, West Virginia) voluntary universal pre-kindergarten programs in which parents can enroll their four-year-old children (Pre-K Now, 2007).

Given the emerging evidence that children from newcomer families can benefit from high quality preschool programs, efforts to ensure that such programs are accessible and welcoming to children in newcomer families, as well as of high quality, would be beneficial. This may require active outreach within some communities to foster the inclusion of children whose parents have limited English proficiency.

Insofar as many children in newcomer families are fluent in English and also speak another language at home, while others are not proficient in English but are learning the heritage language of their parents at home, there is a need for additional studies to systematically examine the effectiveness of education policies, programs, and curricula that encourage fluency not only in English but also in the home languages

of children, and that foster bilingual spoken fluency and literacy (reading and writing). New, more effective programs may require the development of teaching techniques and teacher preparation programs. They also are likely to benefit from new research and program initiatives aimed at teaching strategies that scaffold up from the practices of immigrant families (Fuller, 2007).

If they are provided with the opportunity to maintain and develop bilingual speaking and literacy skills, children in immigrant families could become language emissaries connecting the U.S. to nations throughout the world, including regions where the U.S. has important economic and geopolitical interests, such as Latin America, China, and the Arabic-speaking and Persian-speaking nations of West Asia. Education policies and programs fostering bilingual fluency among children in immigrant families could provide a valuable competitive edge as the U.S. seeks to position itself in the increasingly competitive global economy.

There also is a need for English language training for immigrant parents. Two-generation family literacy programs should be examined as a strategy for providing the opportunity for both children and parents with limited English language skills to learn together how to build literacy into their homes and daily lives. While the most recent national evaluation of the Even Start family literacy program did point to gains in literacy outcomes for participants, it did not provide evidence that gains were greater for those assigned to the program than for those in the control group (St. Pierre, Ricciuti, Tao, Creps, Swartz, Lee, et al., 2003). The researchers note the need for better understanding of the bases for variation in the effectiveness of the Even Start program as implemented in various localities. Work is needed to understand the specific features of family literacy programs that can help parents in immigrant families improve their capacity to provide for the

**Additional resources should be devoted to ensuring that children in immigrant families have access to high quality early education.**

## **Fragile Futures: Immigrant Children and Children of Immigrants**

**Marta Tienda  
Princeton University**

Hernández, Denton and Macartney provide a broad, descriptive overview about the growth and diversification of children who live with one or more immigrant parents, identifying both the precariousness of their socioeconomic circumstances and the promise of their future economic contributions. Whether this promissory note yields large or small social and economic dividends is highly uncertain, however. Much depends on whether the requisite investments are made in their health, education, and economic well-being. Hernández and colleagues invoke social policy in broad strokes rather than identify specific interventions or programs; therefore in the interest of concreteness, I address two core aspects of human capital development that illustrate both the risks and opportunities of the burgeoning second generation, namely linguistic diversity and educational achievement (Tienda and Mitchell, 2006; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001).

Despite the dominance of English as an international language (Crystal, 2003), few dispute the myriad advantages of multilingualism in an increasingly globalized world (Graddol, 2004). Hernández, Denton and Macartney propose that children of immigrants can serve national interests by promoting bilingualism so they can become “language emissaries” for nations where the U.S. has economic and political interests. In practice, however, this potential is largely unrealized. Now as in the past, the language transition to English monolingualism is virtually complete by the third generation, even among youth reared in linguistically isolated neighborhoods (Rumbaut, Massey and Bean, 2006).

That the loss of heritage languages among second generation youth is seldom compensated by comparable gains in English proficiency exacts high psycho-social and academic costs. Supporting Hernández, Denton and Macartney’s claims about the benefits of bilingualism, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) show that fluent bilingualism—where youth are both proficient in English and also fluent in their heritage language—is associated with high academic achievement and positive personality adjustment. They also warn that loss of heritage language unaccompanied by commensurate gains in English fluency is associated with a host of negative consequences, including low self esteem and academic failure.

The challenge for schools, then, is to accelerate English mastery so that students with immigrant backgrounds can excel in academic subjects, ideally while retaining fluency in their heritage language. The irony, though, is that the vast majority of students classified as English language learners (ELLs) are U.S. born, which means that they begin their formal schooling in the early grades and presumably, in English (Capps, et al., 2005). This fact is troubling because language is an example of a cognitive skill that is more easily acquired early in life; moreover, linguistic development provides a critical foundation for subsequent learning (Knudson, et al., 2006). Although learning a second language becomes progressively more difficult with age, it is not only feasible, but can be highly successful with appropriate instructional models (Calderón, 2007). Let me be clear: there is no necessary correlation between linguistic diversity and academic failure (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Rather, socioeconomic factors—notably parental education and parents’ lack of English fluency—limit the pre-school cognitive development of children with immigrant backgrounds. Monolingual English-speaking children arrive at school with a vocabulary of five- to seven-thousand words, and a strong intuitive sense of grammar. Children from low income families arrive with much smaller vocabularies; children with immigrant backgrounds whose parents are not fluent in English and who also have low levels of education have even smaller English vocabularies (Schneider, et al., 2006; Calderón, 2007). These highly uneven starting lines are inadvertently widened via curricula that emphasize English as a separate subject and pull students from mainstream classes at the expense of core academic subjects. Alternatively, instructional approaches that simultaneously teach vocabulary and meaning in context of academic subjects promote the twin goals of English proficiency and mastery of subject matter.

There are no magic bullets for solving achievement gaps, but it is inexcusable that poor English skills allow thousands of children with immigrant backgrounds—the vast majority U.S.-citizens—to fall behind academically even as English flourishes as a global language.



## References

- Calderón, M. 2007. *Teaching Reading to English Language Learners, Grades 6-12*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Capps, R., Fix, M., Murray, J., Ost J., Passel, J. & Herwanto, S. 2005. *The New Demography of America's Schools: Immigration and the no Child Left Behind Act*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institution Press.
- Crystal, D. 2003. *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge, U.K; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Graddol, D. 2004. "The Future of Language." *Science* 303:1329-31.
- Knudson, E., Heckman, J., Cameron, J. & Shonkoff, J. 2006. "Economic, Neurobiological, and Behavioral Perspectives on Building America's Future Workforce." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 103:10155-62.
- Portes, A. & Rumbaut, R. 2001. *Legacies*. Berkeley and New York: University of California Press & Russell Sage Foundation.
- Rumbaut, R.G., Massey, D.S., & Bean, F. D. 2006. "Linguistic Life Expectancies: Immigrant Language Retention in Southern California." *Population and Development Review*, 32(3):447-460.
- Schneider, B., et al., 2006. "Barriers to Educational Opportunities for Hispanics in the U.S." Pp. 179-221 in *Hispanics and the Future of America*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- Tienda, M. and Mitchell, F. 2006. *Multiple Origins, Uncertain Destinies: Hispanics and the American Future*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

economic support of their families while also fostering the children's development.

### **Educational Attainments Among Young Adults**

High school completion among young adults is a key indicator for measuring basic educational success across diverse groups. Because young adults are especially likely to be immigrants, to have immigrated within the past few years, and perhaps not have entered the U.S. educational system, an analysis of educational attainments of young adults ages 20-24 should distinguish between first generation immigrants born abroad, the second generation born in the U.S., and the third and later generation. Although it is not possible to distinguish the generation groups ages 20-24 in Census 2000, the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) does ask the necessary questions. Because the CPS sample size is much smaller than Census 2000, we combine CPS data for 2001-2005 and report on a smaller number of race-ethnic and immigrant origin groups, focusing mainly on the largest group, those with origins in Mexico.

Among young adults from Mexico, 70% are first generation immigrants, compared to only 29% among school-age children in immigrant families from Mexico. Thus, many first generation young adults from Mexico immigrated during late adolescence or early adulthood. The high proportion of recent immigrants among the first generation of young adults is reflected in the very low 44% who have graduated from high school, insofar as 8 years of education is a common standard in Mexico. But many of these young adults should not be considered dropouts from the U.S. educational system, because no doubt many never entered the U.S. system.

The proportion of second generation Mexicans graduating from high school is 78%, much higher than the 40% reported for the first generation, but little different from the 80% of Hispanics in native-born families (other than Puerto Ricans) who completed high school. These results

are encouraging for second generation Mexicans, because they complete high school at nearly the same rate as the third and later generation Hispanics. But the results also are discouraging, because the high school completion rate of 80% for third and later generation Hispanics implies a high school dropout rate (20%) that is more than twice the dropout rate (9%) for third and later generation whites, but similar to the rates for Native Americans (23%) and blacks in native-born families (19%).

For all the other immigrant groups analyzed for this report, the first generation also makes up a much larger proportion of the combined first and second generation population at ages 20-24 than is true for school-age children. The results indicate high school completion rates among first generation Dominicans, Haitians, Central Americans, and South Americans are higher than among first generation Mexicans, but much lower than among the native white group, while the rates reach or exceed the level of native whites for young first generation adults from many countries and regions. The second generation high school completion rate for Dominicans is similar to the low level experienced by the Mexican immigrant group, and while it is substantially higher for Central Americans, it does not reach the level of whites in native-born families.

These results suggest two sets of policies for adolescents and youth. First, education policies, programs, and curricula for recent first generation, adolescent immigrants with little or no experience in U.S. schools must address a very different set of issues than policies for first generation immigrants who arrived at younger ages and obtained most or all of their education in the U.S. prior to reaching high school. Second, because many immigrant adolescents and youth with limited education and limited English proficiency have by-passed the U.S. education system to directly enter the work force, immigrant adolescents and youth need special outreach activities to draw them into the schools, and specially designed programs to help assure their educational

success. (For international comparisons and discussion of early childhood education policies and a ranking of various OECD countries, see UNICEF (forthcoming))

### Health Insurance Coverage

Children and their families require good health to succeed in school and in work. Although Census 2000 does not measure health insurance coverage, health insurance coverage data for a more restricted set of race-ethnic and immigrant-origin groups are presented here based on the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey data for 2001-2005. The proportion uninsured for children in native-born families rises from 8%-9% for Whites and Asians to 11%-17% for other race-ethnic groups. The proportion uninsured among children immigrant families is as low as Whites and Asians only for children with origins in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, Iran, and Whites from Africa (7%-9%). The chances of being uninsured for many other immigrant groups are in the range of most native race-ethnic minorities, but is higher still for children in immigrant families with origins in Central America, South America, and Cuba (22%-25%), and in Mexico and Haiti (29%-30%).

Thus, many children in immigrant families from countries of origin with high U.S. poverty rates are not covered by health insurance. Past research has found that substantial risk of not being insured remains even after controlling for parental education and duration of parental residence in the U.S., as well as reported health status, number of parents in the home, and having a parent employed full-time year-around (Brown, Wyn, Yu, Valenzuela, and Dong, 1999). This research also found the main reason reported by parents for lack of insurance coverage for children is the same for both immigrant and native groups: the lack of affordability of insurance coverage. The reason cited second most frequently related to employers not offering coverage at all, or not offering family coverage, or not offering coverage for part-time employees.

The results presented here cover years after the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was implemented and reflect increased health insurance coverage resulting from this program. Nevertheless, despite the enactment of SCHIP, continuing high proportions of children in immigrant

families are not covered by health insurance, pointing to the need for additional public support for increased access to health insurance for children in immigrant families, particularly those experiencing high poverty rates.

### Conclusions and Implications for Research

Children in immigrant families account for nearly one of every four children, and they represent the leading edge of the race-ethnic transformation of America. Their origins span the globe, although the vast majority has origins in Latin America or Asia, and they live in significant numbers in virtually every state. All of these children have at least one foreign-born parent, but their deep and permanent roots in America are reflected in many indicators, including the proportions born in the U.S. (79%), having U.S.-citizen parents (64%), and living in their family-owned homes (55%). In addition, many are fluent in English (74%), and many have at least one English-fluent parent (60%). They also benefit from important strengths associated with living in two-parent families with parents who moved to America seeking a better life for themselves and their children through hard work and enhanced educational opportunities.

At the same time, many children in immigrant families confront challenges associated with limited parental education, a lack of full-time year-round work for parents, low wages, and high poverty rates, as well as constrained access to early education, low high school completion rates, and low rates of health insurance coverage. About one-fourth of children in immigrant families are limited in their English proficiency, and an equal proportion lives in linguistically isolated households. The collapse of federal efforts for comprehensive immigration reform has served to increase the vulnerability of immigrant children and families, and the recent widely-publicized workplace raids by ICE have magnified the vulnerability and fear in immigrant communities.

Still, children in immigrant families today, as has been the case throughout our history, offer enormous promise as they seek to fulfill the American dream. Their emerging bilingual skills, spanning the languages of Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and other world regions, can provide the U.S. with a competitive advantage in the increasingly

...immigrant adolescents and youth need special outreach activities ... and specially designed programs to help assure their educational success.

... despite the enactment of SCHIP, continuing high proportions of children in immigrant families are not covered by health insurance...

globalized marketplace. Their sheer numbers mean that they will play a major role in sustaining the American economy during the coming decades, which is critical to all Americans, but particularly the baby-boom generation that will depend for economic support during retirement on the productivity of all American workers, including those who grew up in immigrant families.

Policy and program initiatives cited in this report to foster the well-being and development of children in immigrant families will help these children and families, and the nation, to achieve these goals. But to monitor the progress of these children, to understand the factors and processes that lead to developmental success, and to effectively develop emerging policies and programs, it is important that research on children and families focus attention specifically on *these* children and families. The National Children's Study (NCS) is one promising new research effort for understanding how social, psychological, cultural, economic, geographical, biological, chemical, physical, and other factors in a child's environment can affect health and development (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2008).

In order for the NCS and other research studies to address the lives of children in immigrant families, it is essential that these studies ask basic demographic questions that allow these children and key features of their immigrant circumstances to be measured. At a minimum, all studies involving children (and families) should obtain the following information separately for each child and parent in an immigrant family, preferably regardless of whether or not the parent is present in the child's home. First is the country of birth of the child, the child's father, and the child's mother. Second, for each who is foreign-born, is the year the child, the father, and the mother immigrated to the U.S. (or if still living in another country). Third is citizenship and, if appropriate, year of naturalization. Fourth is spoken proficiency in English and in the origin-country language. Fifth, for the foreign-born, is the amount of education completed in the origin country prior to moving to the U.S. (with separate questions for total amount of education completed).

In addition, longitudinal studies should track and study children while in the U.S., but also for periods they spend in the country of origin, in order to not miss these critical times in the lives and development of children and families.

Only if the NCS and other research studies collect at least this bare minimum of immigration-related data will they realize their potential to increase our understanding of development of all children, including children in immigrant families, and to foster the promise of these children to succeed for themselves and for the nation.

Furthermore, especially for the NCS and other large sample surveys, it would be quite valuable to ask the country of birth for each grandparent of each child, allowing researchers to distinguish first, second, and third generation children, from fourth and later generation children. Additional resources required to collect these data for grandparents would be minimal, but they would provide a strong foundation for assessing the longterm integration of children across immigrant generations.

Finally, insofar as NCS plans call for data collection only for children born in the U.S., thereby providing no information about the 21% of children in immigrant families who are foreign-born children, an extremely valuable augmentation to the NCS would be to conduct additional data collection for the foreign-born siblings of NCS sample children. This augmentation of the NCS study would provide the basis not only for valuable insights into the experiences for foreign-born children, but also into the implications that having foreign-born siblings have for children born in the U.S. to immigrant parents.

### Acknowledgements

This report draws on a series of related chapters, an article, and a research brief by the authors on children in immigrant families (Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2008e, in press a, in press b, in press c). The results presented here are from Census 2000 unless otherwise indicated, and additional indicators for children can be retrieved at [www.albany.edu/csda/children](http://www.albany.edu/csda/children), by clicking on "data" and then the title of this chapter. This website also presents extensive information for additional age groups, and for specific states and metropolitan areas. The authors wish to thank Ruby Takanishi for her wise counsel, Richard Alba, Linda M. Espinosa, Bruce Fuller, William T. Gormley, Eugene Garcia, Suzanne Helburn, Karen Hill-Scott, Deborah A. Phillips, Jens Qvortrup, Helmut Wintersberger, and Martha Zaslow for comments on earlier versions of portions of this research, Hui-Shien Tsao for programming assistance, and Jessica F. Singer for research assistance. The authors also acknowledge and appreciate support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Foundation for Child Development, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the National Institute of Child Health & Human Development (5 R03 HD 043827-02 ), and the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at the University at Albany (5 R24 - HD 04494301A1). The authors alone are responsible for the content and any errors of fact or interpretation. The Census 2000 data file used in this research was prepared by Ruggles, Sobek, Alexander, Fitch, Goeken, Hall, King, and Ronnande (2004).

## References

- Annie E. Casey Foundation (2006). *The Annie E. Casey Foundation 2006 KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK*, Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- Bernstein, J., Brocht, C., & Spade-Aguilar, M. (2000), *How much is enough? Basic family budgets for working families*, Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute.
- Blake, J. (1985). Number of siblings and educational mobility. *American Sociological Review* 50 (1): 84-94.
- Blake, J. (1989). *Family size and achievement*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Blau, P.M., & Duncan, O.D. (1967). *The American occupational structure*. New York: Wiley.
- Boushey, H., Brocht, C., Gundersen, B., & Bernstein, J. (2001). *Hardships in America: The real story of working families*, Washington, D.C., Economic Policy Institute.
- Bradbury, B. & Jantti, M. (2001) "Child poverty across twenty-five Countries", Pp. 62-91 in B. Bradbury, S. P. Jenkins & J. Micklewright (eds.) *The dynamics of child poverty in industrialized countries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, under copyright of UNICEF.
- Capps, R., Kenny, G., & Fix, M. (2003). Health insurance coverage of children in mixed-status immigrant families. *Snapshots of America's children, No. 12*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- Cherlin, A.J. (1999). Going to extremes: Family structure, children's well-being, and social sciences. *Demography*, 36(4), 421-428.
- Citro, C. F., & Michael, R.T. (eds.) (1995), *Measuring poverty: A new approach*. Washington D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Duncan, G.J., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (Eds.) (1997). *Consequences of growing up poor*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Espinosa, L.M. (2007). English-language learners as they enter school. In R.C. Pianta, M.J. Cox, & K.L. Snow (Eds.). *School readiness & the transition to kindergarten in the era of accountability*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- Espinosa, L.M. (2008). Challenging Common Myths about Young English Language Learners. *FCD Policy Brief, Advancing PK-3*, No. 8, January. New York: Foundation for Child Development.
- Evans, W.G., Saegert, S., & Harris, R. (2001). Residential density and psychological health among children in low-income families. *Environment and Behavior*, 33(2), 165-180.
- Featherman, D.L., & Hauser, R.M. (1978). *Opportunity and change*. New York: Academic Press.
- Fix, M., & Passel, J. (1999). Trends in noncitizens' and citizens' use of public benefits following welfare reform: 1994-97, Washington, D.C: The Urban Institute.
- Fix, M., & Zimmerman, W. (1995). When should immigrants receive benefits? In I.V. Sawhill (Ed.) *Welfare reform: An analysis of the issues*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- Fuller, B. (2007). *Standardized childhood: The political and cultural struggle over early education*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Gormley, W.T. (2007). Early childhood care and education: Lessons and puzzles. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 26(3), Summer 2007: 633-671.
- Gormley, W.T. (in press). The effect of Oklahoma's pre-k program on Hispanic children. *Social Science Quarterly*, December 2008.
- Gormley, W.T., & Gayer, T. (2005). Promoting school readiness in Oklahoma: An evaluation of Tulsa's pre-k program. *Journal of Human Resources* 40(3): 533-558.
- Gormley, W. T., Gayer, T., Phillips, D., & Dawson, B. (2005). The effects of universal pre-k on cognitive development. *Developmental Psychology* 41(6), 872-884.
- Haskins, Ron and Cecilia Rouse (2005) "Closing achievement gaps". *The Future of Children, Policy Brief, Spring 2005*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton-Brookings.
- Hernandez, D.J. (1986). Childhood in sociodemographic perspective. In R.H. Turner, and J.F. Short, Jr. (Eds.) *Annual Review of Sociology, Volume 12* (pp. 159-180). Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.
- Hernandez, D.J., & Charney, E. (Eds.). (1998). *From generation to generation: The health and well-being of children in immigrant families*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Hernandez, D.J., & Darke, K.(1999), "The well-being of immigrant children, native-born children with immigrant parents, and native-born children with native-born parents". Pp. 421-543 in *Trends in the well-being of America's children and youth: 1998*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Hernandez, D.J., Denton, N.A., & Macartney, S.E. (2007a), "Child poverty in the U.S.: A new family budget approach with comparison to European countries". Pp. 109-140 in H. Wintersberger, L.Alanen, T. Olk, & J. Qvortrup (eds.) *Childhood, generational order and the welfare state: Exploring children's social and economic welfare, Volume 1 of COST A19: Children's Welfare*, Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark.
- Hernandez, D.J., Denton, N.A., & Macartney, S.E (2007b).

- “Demographic trends and the transition years”. In R.C. Pianta, M.J. Cox, & K.L. Snow (Eds.), *School readiness and the transition to kindergarten in the era of accountability* (pp. 217-381). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- Hernandez, D.J., Denton, N.A., & Macartney, S.E. (2007c), “Young Hispanic children in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”, *Journal of Latinos and Education* 6(3):209-228
- Hernandez, D. J., Denton, N.A., & Macartney, S.E. (2007d), *Family circumstances of children in immigrant families: Looking to the future of America*. Pp. 9-29 in Jennifer E. Lansford, Kirby Deater-Deckard, and Marc H. Bornstein (eds.) *Immigrant families in contemporary society*, New York: Guildford Press.
- Hernandez, D.J., Denton, N.A., & Macartney, S.E. (2007e), *Children of Immigrants – The U.S. and 50 States: National Origins, Language, and Early Education* in Child Trends & Center for Social and Demographic Analysis, University at Albany, SUNY: 20047 Research Brief Series, March 2007: Publication #2007-11, 1-9. Available at [www.albany.edu/csda/children](http://www.albany.edu/csda/children) click on Research Briefs.
- Hernandez, D.J., Denton, N.A., & Macartney, S.E. (in press a), *Children of Immigrants and the future of America*. In Elena L. Grigorenko and Ruby Takanishi (Eds.) *Immigration, diversity, and education*, London: Routledge/Taylor and Francis Group
- Hernandez, D.J., Denton, N.A., & Macartney, S.E. (in press b), *Early Childhood Education Programs: Accounting for low enrollment in newcomer and native families*. In M. Waters and R. Alba (eds.) *The next generation: Immigrant youth and families in comparative Perspective*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Hernandez, D.J., Denton, N.A., & Macartney, S.E. (in press c), “School-age children in immigrant families: A challenging future for America”. In Richard Alba and Jennifer Holdaway (eds.), *Immigrant Communities and American Schools*, New York: Teacher’s College Press.
- Kao, G. (1999). Psychological well-being and educational achievement among immigrant youth. In D.J. Hernandez (Ed.), *Children of immigrants: Health, adjustment, and public assistance* (pp. 410-477). Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Lynch, Robert G. (2004) *Exceptional returns: Economic, fiscal and social benefits of investment in early childhood development*, Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.
- Marcelli, E.A., & Ong, P.M. (2002). “2000 Census coverage of foreign-born Mexicans in Los Angeles County: Implications for demographic analysis”. Atlanta, GA: Paper presented at 2002 annual meeting of the Population Association of America.
- McLanahan, S, & Sandefur, G. (1994). *Growing up with a single parent: What hurts, what helps*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McLoyd, V. (1998). Socioeconomic disadvantage and child development. *American Psychologist* 53(2): 185-204.
- National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2008). *National Children’s Study Research Plan: A review..* Panel to Review the National Children’s Study Research Plan. Committee on National Statistics, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Board on Children, Youth and Families and Board on Population Health and Public Health Practices, Institute of Medicine, Washington, DC: The National Academy Press.
- Neuman, M, & Bennett, J. (2001) *Starting strong: Early childhood education and care*, Paris, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- OECD. (2006). *Early childhood education and care policy: Country note for Mexico*. OECD Directorate of Education, retrieved March 4, 2006, from [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/39/34429196.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/39/34429196.pdf).
- Oxley, H., Dang, T.T, & Antolin, P. (2000) “Poverty dynamics in six OECD countries” *Economic Studies* No 30, 2000/I
- Office of Policy and Planning (no date). Estimates of unauthorized immigrant population residing in the United States: 1990 to 2000. U.S Immigration and Naturalization Service. Retrieved May, 28 2008, from [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/III\\_Report\\_1211.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/III_Report_1211.pdf)
- Park, L. (2001). Between adulthood and childhood: The boundary work of immigrant entrepreneurial children. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 45: 114-135.
- Park, L. (2002). Asian immigrant entrepreneurial children. In L.T. Vo & R. Bonus (Eds.), *Contemporary Asian American communities* (161-174). Philadelphia, NJ: Temple University Press.
- Passel, J.S. (2007). Growing share of immigrants choosing naturalization. *Pew Hispanic Center Report*, March 28, 2007, Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, retrieved May 24, 2008, from <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/74.pdf>.
- Passel, J.S. (2006). Size and characteristics of the unauthorized migrant population in the U.S.. *Pew Hispanic Center Report*, March 7, 2006, Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, retrieved May 24, 2008 from <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/61.pdf>.
- Passel, J.S., Van Hook, J., & Bean, F.D. (2004). “Estimates

- of the legal and unauthorized foreign-born population for the United States and selected states, based on Census 2000”, retrieved May 28 2000, from [http://www.sabresys.com/whitepapers/EMS\\_Deliverable\\_1\\_020305.pdf](http://www.sabresys.com/whitepapers/EMS_Deliverable_1_020305.pdf)
- Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R.G. (2001). *Legacies: The story of the immigrant generation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Presser, H. B., & Baldwin W. (1980) “Child care as a constraint on employment: Prevalence, correlates, and bearing on the work fertility nexus”, *American Journal of Sociology* 18(5): 1202-1213.
- Pre-K Now (2007) (September). *Votes count: Legislative action on pre-k fiscal year 2008*, retrieved May 19, 2008, from [http://www.preknow.com//documents/LegislativeReport\\_Sept2007.pdf](http://www.preknow.com//documents/LegislativeReport_Sept2007.pdf).
- Ruggles, S., Sobek, M., Alexander, T., Fitch, C.A., Goeken, R., Hall, P.K., King, M. & Ronnander, C. (2004): *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 3.0* [Machine readable database]. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Population Center [producer and distributor], 2004. Accessed at the IPUMS site, <http://www.ipums.org>.
- Rumbaut, R.G. (1996). A legacy of war: Refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. In S. Pedraza & R.G. Rumbaut (Eds.), *Origins and destinies: Immigration, race, and ethnicity in America*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Rumbaut, R.G. (1999). Passages to adulthood: The adaptation of children of immigrants in Southern California. In D.J. Hernandez (Ed.), *Children of immigrants: Health, adjustment, and public assistance* (pp. 478-545). Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Saegert, S. (1982) Environment and children’s mental health: Residential density and low income children. In A. Baum & J.E. Singer (Eds.), *Handbook of psychology and health, Vol II. Issues in child health and adolescent health* (pp. 247-271). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Sewell, W.H., & Hauser, R.M. (1975). *Education, occupation and earnings*. New York: Academic Press.
- Sewell, W.H., Hauser, R.M., & Wolf, W.C. (1980). Sex, schooling, and occupational status. *American Journal of Sociology* 83(3): 551-583.
- St. Pierre, R., Ricciuti, A., Tao, F., Creps, C., Swartz, J., Lee, W., et al. (2003). *Third national Even Start evaluation: Program impacts and implications for improvement*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service, Elementary and Secondary Education Division.
- Smeeding, T.M., & Torrey, B.B. (1988). *Poor children in rich countries*, *Science*. 42: 873-877
- Sung, B.L. (1987). *The adjustment experience of Chinese immigrant children in New York City*. New York, NY: The Center for Migration Studies.
- UNICEF (2005). *Child Poverty in Rich Countries, 2005*. Innocenti Report Card No. 6. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
- UNICEF (forthcoming). *The Childcare Transition*. Innocenti Report Card No. 8. Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
- U.S. Census Bureau (1977). Characteristics of the population below the poverty level: 1975. *Current Population Reports, Current Income*, Series P-60, No. 106, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Census Bureau (1994). *Housing of lower-income households* (Statistical Brief, SB/94/18). Retrieved January 9, 2006, from [http://www.census.gov/aspd/www/statbrief/sb94\\_18.pdf](http://www.census.gov/aspd/www/statbrief/sb94_18.pdf).
- U.S. Census Bureau (2004). U.S. Interim Projections by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin. Retrieved March 16, 2005 from <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/>.
- Valenzuela, A. Jr. (1999). Gender role and settlement activities among children and their immigrant families. *American Behavioral Scientist* 42: 720-742.
- Waldinger, R. (2007) Between here and there: How attached are Latino immigrants to their native country? *Pew Hispanic Center Report*, October 25, 2007, Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, retrieved May 24, 2008 from <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/80.pdf>.
- Zhou, M., & Bankston, C.L. (1998). *Growing up American: How Vietnamese children adapt to life in the United States*. New York, NY: Sage.
- Zimmermann, W., & Tumlin, K. (1999) *Patchwork policies: State assistance for immigrants under welfare reform*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, Occasional Paper No. 24.

## About the Authors

**Nancy A. Denton**, Ph.D. is Professor of Sociology and Associate Director, Center for Social and Demographic Analysis, University at Albany, State University of New York. Her major research interests are race and residential segregation, and with Douglas S. Massey she is author of *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, winner of the 1995 American Sociological Association Distinguished Publication Award and the 1994 Otis Dudley Duncan award from the Sociology of Population section of the American Sociological Association. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Donald J. Hernandez**, Ph.D., is Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology, University at Albany, State University of New York. He authored *America's Children: Resources from Family, Government, and the Economy*, the first national research documenting the timing, magnitude, and reasons for revolutionary family changes experienced by children since the Great Depression, and he directed the National Academy of Sciences/Institute of Medicine study on the health and adjustment of immigrant children and families. He is currently using the Foundation for Child Development's Index of Child Well-Being (CWI) to explore disparities by race-ethnic and immigrant origins, and by socioeconomic status, conducting research on linguistic isolation in immigrant families, and leading a UNICEF project to develop internationally comparable indicators for children in immigrant and native-born families in eight rich countries. He received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley.

**Suzanne E. Macartney**, M.A. is a doctoral candidate, Department of Sociology, University at Albany, State University of New York. She is working on her dissertation in the Department of Sociology examining children in immigrant families and their neighborhoods.

**Frosso Motti-Stefanidi** is Professor of Psychology and Chair of the Department of Psychology of the University of Athens, Greece. She received her B.A. (Summa Cum Laude), M.A. and PhD from the Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota. In 2005 she received the Distinguished International Alumni Award from the College of Education and Human Development of the University of Minnesota. She currently studies the acculturation and adaptation of immigrant adolescents within a resilience framework. For this purpose, she developed together with Ann Masten and other colleagues the Athena Studies of Resilient Adaptation (AStRA), a collaboration between the Department of Psychology of the University of Athens and the Institute of Child Development of the University of Minnesota. She has authored more than 60 papers and chapters, as well as two books in Greek, and also edited books in both Greek and English. Professor Motti has been an elected member of the Executive Committee of the Hellenic Psychological Association for 8 years, also serving for 3 years as Associate Editor of this association's journal, "Psychologia," and for 6 years as Editor of its Newsletter. She is currently Vice-President of the European Association of Personality Psychology, and President-Elect for the 2008-2010 term. Dr. Motti also

is a member of the Executive Committee of the European Society of Developmental Psychology.

**Timothy M. Smeeding** is Distinguished Professor of Economics and Public Administration at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University where he is also the Founding Director of the Centre for Policy Research. In fall 2008 he will take up the position of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor of Public Affairs at University of Wisconsin-Madison's Robert M. LaFollette School of Public Affairs, and Directorship of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the same institution. Smeeding is also the Founder and Director Emeritus of the Luxembourg Income Study Project, which he began in 1983. His research focuses on national and cross-national comparisons of income and wealth inequality, poverty, social policy and social mobility.

**Ruby Takanishi** is currently president of the Foundation for Child Development. She earned her Ph.D. in Education from Stanford University in 1973. Her interest in how science could inform public policy and programs to support the full development of children and adolescents has followed her throughout her career. Takanishi started out as an assistant professor at UCLA in the Graduate School of Education. She was Founding Executive Director of the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological, and Cognitive Sciences in 1982, and director of the Office of Scientific Affairs of the American Psychological Association from 1984-1986. Takanishi was executive director of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. She was assistant director for Behavioral and Social Sciences in the President's Office of Science and Technology Policy. In 1998, she received the Distinguished Contributions to Research in Public Policy Award from the American Psychological Association. Takanishi served on several boards, including the Council on Foundations, Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, the Advisory Panel on Public Issues of The Advertising Council, Inc., and the National Advisory Council of the Agency for Health Care Quality and Research, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

**Marta Tienda** is Maurice P. Daring '22 Professor in Demographic Studies and Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs at Princeton University, where she directed the Office of Population Research. She is past president of the Population Association of America, and is a board member of TIAA, the Sloan Foundation, the Jacobs Foundation of Switzerland and the Corporation of Brown University. Her research interests include ethnic and racial stratification, poverty and social policy, immigration, and the sociology of employment and labor markets. She is the author, coauthor, or editor of numerous articles and books, including *Multiple Origins, Uncertain Destinies* (2006), *Hispanics and the Future of America* (2006), *Africa on the Move* (2006), *Ethnicity and Causal Mechanisms* (2005), *Youth in Cities* (2002), *The Color of Opportunity: Families, Welfare and Work in the Inner City* (2001), *Divided Opportunities: Minorities, Poverty, and Social Policy* (1988), *The Hispanic Population of the United States* (1987), and *Hispanics in the U.S. Economy* (1985).

*Social Policy Report* is a quarterly publication of the Society for Research in Child Development. The *Report* provides a forum for scholarly reviews and discussions of developmental research and its implications for the policies affecting children. Copyright of the articles published in the *Report* is maintained by SRCD. Statements appearing in the *Report* are the views of the author(s) and do not imply endorsement by the Editors or by SRCD.

Electronic access to the *Social Policy Report* is available at the *Report's* website:  
<http://www.srcd.org/spr.html>

## *Purpose*

*Social Policy Report* (ISSN 1075-7031) is published four times a year by the Society for Research in Child Development. Its purpose is twofold: (1) to provide policymakers with objective reviews of research findings on topics of current national interest, and (2) to inform the SRCD membership about current policy issues relating to children and about the state of relevant research.

### **Content**

The *Report* provides a forum for scholarly reviews and discussions of developmental research and its implications for policies affecting children. The Society recognizes that few policy issues are noncontroversial, that authors may well have a "point of view," but the *Report* is not intended to be a vehicle for authors to advocate particular positions on issues. Presentations should be balanced, accurate, and inclusive. The publication nonetheless includes the disclaimer that the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Society or the editors.

### **Procedures for Submission and Manuscript Preparation**

Articles originate from a variety of sources. Some are solicited, but authors interested in submitting a manuscript are urged to propose timely topics to the editors. Manuscripts vary in length ranging from 20 to 30 pages of double-spaced text (approximately 8,000 to 14,000 words) plus references. Authors are asked to submit manuscripts electronically, if possible, but hard copy may be submitted with disk. Manuscripts should adhere to APA style and include text, references, and a brief biographical statement limited to the author's current position and special activities related to the topic. (See page 2, this issue, for the editors' email addresses.)

Three or four reviews are obtained from academic or policy specialists with relevant expertise and different perspectives. Authors then make revisions based on these reviews and the editors' queries, working closely with the editors to arrive at the final form for publication.

The Committee for Policy and Communications, which founded the *Report*, serves as an advisory body to all activities related to its publication.