



Key Facts About Immigrant Children



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Definitions and Demographics

- “Immigrant children” are defined as children who are foreign-born or children born in the United States who live with at least 1 parent who is foreign-born.
- One in every 4 children in the United States, approximately 18.4 million children, live in an immigrant family. Eighty-nine percent of these children are born in the United States and are US citizens.
- Although 64% of all children of immigrants live in 6 states (California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey), immigrant children are dispersed throughout the country. Since 1990, the largest growth in percentage of immigrant children has occurred in North Carolina, Nevada, Georgia, and Arkansas.

Access to Health Care and Health Status

- Children of immigrants are nearly twice as likely to be uninsured as are children in nonimmigrant families.
- Immigrant children are less likely to have a usual source of medical care and to obtain specialty care when needed.
- Immigrant children who are foreign-born may not have received adequate screenings or immunizations in their home country.

Socioeconomic Factors

- Immigrant children are more likely to live below the federal poverty level than nonimmigrant children, despite the fact that immigrant children are more likely to live with two parents and have parents who work.
- Immigrant children can face barriers to accessing programs and benefits that support low income children
- Many immigrant children have less access to quality early education programs and are less likely to be enrolled in preschool programs, such as Head Start.
- Children in immigrant families are less likely to graduate from high school than are their nonimmigrant peers.

Unique Stressors/Family Separation

- Many immigrant children live in a family with a parent who faces the threat of deportation without notice or preparation.
- Children whose parents have been taken into custody/deported may demonstrate a number of health problems including anxiety, depression, poor school performance, sleeping and eating disruptions.
- Forced separations due to immigration enforcement can also result in the loss of family income and have been shown to result in family housing and food instability.
- Children who have crossed the border to enter the United States as well as children who are refugees may have experienced abuse, exploitation, and/ serious trauma.