Overview on Children of Immigrants

Hannah Matthews

Children of Immigrants are ¼ of Young Children, and Most are U.S. Citizens

Immigrant Family Status and Child Citizenship Status of Children Under Age 6

Source: Migration Policy Institute. MPI Data Hub. Utilization of data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey.
Who are children of immigrants?

• Children in mixed-status families.
  ▪ More than 5 million children in the U.S. live in a mixed-status family with at least one unauthorized parent.

• Undocumented children.
  ▪ Less than 1 million undocumented children (0-17) estimated to be living in the U.S., also known as “Dreamers”.

• Unaccompanied children.
  ▪ More than 68,000 unaccompanied children entered the U.S. in 2014.

Unique Barriers for Children in Immigrant Families

• Lack of awareness regarding availability of programs
• Language and cultural barriers
• Confusing immigrant eligibility rules
• Immigration-related concerns, including “public charge” and fear of immigration enforcement
• Lack of sufficient training for front-line workers

Immigrant Children & ECE Eligibility

• Head Start serves all eligible children regardless of immigrant status.
• CCDBG is restricted to “qualified immigrants” in most circumstances.
  ▪ Eligibility is based on child’s status, not the parent’s.
  ▪ Head Start collaborations are exempt from immigrant restrictions.
• Pre-k does not have immigrant restrictions in most circumstances.
  ▪ Child care subject to public educational standards is exempt from restrictions.
Anti-Immigrant Policies & the Impact On Children's Development

• Stress related to unauthorized status (parent, youth, or child)
• Immigration enforcement/family separation
• Policies that restrict access to critical health and nutrition assistance, child care, early education, and income supports
• Policies that fail to meet the needs of unaccompanied & other asylum-seeking children

Immigration, Children, and Trauma

Dr. Michael McNeil

“You must tread with caution on the hallowed ground of another’s suffering.”

Neal A. Maxwell
Adverse Childhood Experiences

Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

Who experiences ACEs/Toxic Stress?

The ACE study revealed the following estimates:

- **Abuse**
  - Sexual abuse: 20%
  - Emotional abuse: 19%
  - Physical abuse: 19%

- **Neglect**
  - Parental neglect: 19%
  - Emotional neglect: 19%

- **Household Dysfunction**
  - Substance misuse: 30%
  - Mental illness: 27%
  - Income poverty: 32%
  - Parental separation/loss: 25%
  - Household violence: 25%

As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for negative health outcomes.
Consequences of ACEs and Toxic Stress

As the number of ACEs increases so does the risk for the following:
- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Depression
- Fetal death
- Health-related quality of life
- Illicit drug use
- Ischemic heart disease
- Liver disease
- Poor work performance
- Financial stress
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early initiation of sexual activity
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Risk for sexual violence
- Poor academic achievement

*This list is not exhaustive.

Who is impacted by ACEs?

The Hispanic Community

More than half of U.S. Hispanic children have a foreign-born parent.

Forward of Hispanic children by parents' nativity status, 1996-2013
The Hispanic Community

- One-third of Hispanic children live in households in poverty

- Latino youth have average of 3.2 traumatic experiences
- Latino youth had higher rates of exposure to domestic, community, and school violence
- Latino youth have lower rates of utilization such as primary care, child welfare, and outpatient psychiatric services

Literature

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network Core Data Set:
  - Latino youth have average of 3.2 traumatic experiences
  - Latino youth had higher rates of exposure to domestic, community, and school violence
  - Latino youth have lower rates of utilization such as primary care, child welfare, and outpatient psychiatric services

- Latino youth endorsed greater total numbers of victimization experiences than non-Latino white youth. (Finkelhor and Dzuiba-Leatherman, 1994).
- Latino youth had greater rates of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and family abduction (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner & Hamby, 2005).
- Increased risk of anxiety and depression seen amongst first generation Latino youth (Potochnick and Perreira, 2010)
- Hispanics report higher levels of overall posttraumatic distress (Schell & Marshall, 2008).
Psychological Impact on Children

- Children of deported parents are more likely to exhibit symptoms of aggression, conduct problems, depression, and anxiety (Allen et al. 2013)
- Children of deported parents are at much higher risk of PTSD (Rojas-Flores et al. 2017)
Immigration Policy Changes in 2017

- Immigration executive orders released in January 2017 with a focus on border and interior enforcement
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) rescinded on September 5th, 2017
- Leaked “public charge” EO and other proposals that seek to restrict immigrant and their families’ access to public benefits & income supports

- Anyone without authorization is now a priority for deportation, including parents & legal guardians of U.S. citizen children
- Massive increase in immigration enforcement
- Increased involvement of police in immigration enforcement
- Faster deportations for certain immigrants
- Weakened protections for unaccompanied children

Impact on U.S. Citizen Children in Mixed-Status Families

- Increased risk of losing a parent to deportation (more than 25 percent of DACA recipients are parents of young U.S. citizen children)
- Toxic stress associated with fear of enforcement
- Chill factor and policy proposals further restricting access to health care, nutrition assistance, etc.
- Anti-immigrant climate in schools and communities
How Educators & Service Providers Can Support Children and Families

- Re-assure children and parents that programs are safe from intrusion by ICE, and ensure all personnel are familiar with the sensitive locations policy and other relevant internal policies
- Promote welcoming learning environments, and integrate a trauma-informed approach across systems
- Review existing policies to ensure they are in compliance with federal policies and consider additional policies that will prevent the inappropriate record and release of immigration status
- Connect parents to information (Know Your Rights, safety planning, etc.) as well as resources in the community (legal services, mental health, etc.)
- Utilize community-based partnerships to hold on-site Know Your Rights and other informational workshops

Sensitive Locations Policy

In general, ESS has defined the immigration enforcement environment and access to it as “sensitive locations.” These locations include:

- Schools, school buses, and教师 homes
- Religious centers
- Medical facilities
- Residential housing


Helping Families Prepare for Deportation: Emergency Plans

- Designate a caregiver (US citizen or with legal status)
- Inform child care providers and others about the caregiver in case a parent does not arrive to pick up their child
- Collect important documents (birth certificates, medical and school records, passports for the child, etc.)
- Set up a guardianship/power of attorney (consult a lawyer if possible)
- Discuss the plan with children, family and other essential people

Source: Appleseed Deportation Manual 2017
How Agencies and Policymakers Can Support Immigrant Families

- Agencies can develop **confidentiality policies**
- Agencies can publish **messages for consumers**
- Draft **state laws or policies** that help ensure that people feel comfortable seeking services for which they or their family members are eligible
- Public education about **existing federal, state, and laws** and regulations that continue to protect the confidentiality of benefit applicants/recipients
- **Document the harm** to individuals, communities, and institutions when people are afraid to seek critical services

Additional Resources

- Appleseed Protecting Assets and Child Custody in the Face of Deportation
- Women’s Refugee Commission Resources for families facing deportation
- American Psychological Association webinar series
- AFT “Protecting Our Students” Resources
- Department of Education Sensitive Location Policy Fact Sheet
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network
- Department of Education Resource Guide: Building a Bright Future for All
- Department of Education Resource Guide: Supporting Undocumented Youth

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