



# **Educational Attainment & Language Acquisition for New Americans**

## **An Annotated Bibliography**

Prepared by  
the Cisneros Center for  
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# Introduction

Education is the cornerstone of the American Dream. Addressing language and educational barriers is key to successful integration of immigrant families. Currently, the U.S is home to over 40 million immigrants in addition to the children of these same immigrants. New immigrant parents may struggle to adjust to a new language and culture, making it difficult for their children to access the same resources and opportunities as non-immigrant families in America do. Within the last decade, The Latino and Asian immigrant populations have by far been the fastest growing populations, 43% and 46% respectively. Today, Spanish remains the most common language spoken among English Language Learner students in all U.S. states with the exception of five. The Cisneros Center for New Americans is committed to creating a future in which all Americans, whether native-born or adopted by this nation, have the opportunity to achieve their American Dream.

Our education system has an enormous role to play in addressing barriers New American students and parents face. This annotated bibliography gives a synopsis of seven reports on the topic of immigrant groups and their educational outcomes. Several reports propose methods for addressing barriers to quality education that New American families contend with. We hope this annotated bibliography will be useful to researchers and practitioners seeking to understand and improve the state of education for New Americans.

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## Children in Immigrants Families: Essential to America's Future

*Foundation for Child Development (2012)*

Children in immigrant families today account for one of every four children (25%) amounting to approximately 18.4 million. These children will play key roles in America's future family economic well-being, health, educational attainment, community engagement, and social relationships. The article focuses on the disadvantages and advantages of children with at least one foreign-born parent compared to children with both U.S.-born parents.

- Every six in ten children (57%) with immigrant parents have a parent who is a U.S. citizen.
- Nearly 89% of children in immigrant families are American citizens.
- 95.4% of all children live with immigrant parents who are learning English.
- 29% (4.1 million) of children with immigrant parents have fathers with a bachelor's degree while 26% of children with immigrants have mothers who have completed college.
- One of every three children (31%) in immigrant families has a mother who has not graduated from high school (5.3 million).
- One of four children (24%) with immigrant parents lives in a linguistically isolated household where no one in the home over age 13 speaks English fluently.
- Children of immigrant families have lower health insurance coverage, lower reading and mathematics test scores, lower Pre-Kindergarten enrollment, lower high school graduation, lower median family income, and higher poverty.

Children in immigrant families (15%) are almost twice as likely as children with U.S.-born parents (8%) not to be covered by health insurance.

- Only 14% of dual language learner fourth graders are at or above the proficient level in mathematics compared to 44% of English only learners (a 30% disadvantage).
- In 2009, the Pre-Kindergarten enrollment rate for children ages 3-4 was 1/6 lower for children with immigrant parents than children with U.S.-born parents, 44% and 53% respectively.
- In 2010 one of four children in immigrant families (26%) had not graduated from high school by ages 18-24, compared to 18% among children with U.S.-born parents (a gap of 8%).
- In 2010 the median family income for children in immigrant families was \$17,362 less than for children with U.S.-born parents, at \$41,500 versus \$58,862 respectively.
- In 2010 the poverty rate was 30% for children in immigrant families compared to 19% among children with U.S.-born parents (a difference of 11%).

The article suggests Child Tax Credit should be increased in value, indexed to inflation, and made fully refundable. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families should be reformed to allow both documented and undocumented non-citizen immigrants to benefit from the program. Federal, state, and local governments should increase their investments in high-quality Pre-Kindergarten programs critical to the first stage education process and effective programs/services for Dual Language Learners. Lastly, consumer information should be streamlined in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

Hernandez, Donald J., Jeffrey S. Napierala. *Children in Immigrant Families: Essential to America's Future*. 2012. New York, New York: Foundation for Child Development.

## States and Districts with the Highest Number and Share of English Language Learners

*Migration Policy Institute (2015)*

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 4.85 million ELLs were enrolled in public schools during the 2012-2013 academic year (nearly 10% of the total K-12 student population). Western states have the most English Language Learner students with California leading the way (24% share of all ELL students).

- Approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the country's districts with the largest ELL populations were found in California.
- Twenty five school districts made up 25% of all ELL students in K-12 public schools during the span of 2011-12.
  - 18% of New Mexico state's K-12 students are ELL students.
  - 17% of Nevada state's K-12 students are ELL students.
  - 15% of Texas state's K-12 students are ELL students.
  - 13% of Colorado state's K-12 students are ELL students.
  - 10% of Florida state's K-12 students are ELL students.
  - 8% of New York state's K-12 students are ELL students while District of Columbia ranged at about 9%.
- The Los Angeles Unified District has the largest ELL population with about 152,592 ELL students while New York City District (includes 32 districts across the five boroughs) has 142,572 ELL students.
- California, Florida, Texas, New York, Illinois, Colorado, Washington, and North Carolina account for more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the nation's ELL student enrollment.
- California, Florida, Texas, New York, Illinois, Colorado, Washington, and North Carolina each had over 100k ELL students enrolled. These eight states had over two-thirds of the nation's ELL student enrollment in public schools.
- 25 school districts comprised for 23% of all ELL students in K-12 public schools in 2011-12, all districts in either California, New York, Nevada, Florida, Texas, Illinois, Virginia, Colorado, Hawaii, Maryland, and Georgia.
- 15 of the top 25 districts had an ELL enrollment share of 20% or greater. The ELL student population in Santa Ana, California accounted for over half of the the total K-12 enrollment.

Ruiz Soto, Ariel G., Sarah Hooker, and Jeanne Batalova. 2015. *States and Districts with the Highest Number and Share of English Language Learners*. Washington D.C.: Migration Policy Institute.

## Top Languages Spoken by English Language Learners Nationally and by State

*Migration Policy Institute (2015)*

Spanish remains the most common first or home language spoken by 71% of ELL students in America. Chinese is the second most common language spoken in ELL students' homes which constitutes 4% of the nation's ELL students. Vietnamese constitutes 3% of the nation's ELL students while French/Haitian Creole constitutes 2% of the nation's ELL students.

- In 19 states plus the District of Columbia, over three quarters of all ELL students spoke Spanish.
- California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Illinois accounted for 62 % of ELL students enrolled in K-12 public schools during the 2012-13 school year.
- Alaska, Montana, Maine, Vermont, and Hawaii are the only states where ELL students' top language spoken is not Spanish.
- Alaska: 40% of the state's ELL students' first language is Yupik while Spanish is 12%
- Hawaii: 21% of the state's ELL students' first language is Ilokano, 12% is Chuukese, 10% is Marshallese, 9% is Tagalog, while Spanish is 6%.
- Vermont: 17% of the state's ELL students' first language is Nepali, 10% is Chustic, 9% is Spanish, 7% is Chinese, 6% is Somali.
- Maine: 33% of the state's ELL students' first language is Somali, 11% is Arabic, 10% is Spanish, 7% is French, 4% is Chinese.
- Montana: 7% of the state's ELL students' first language is German, 3% is Spanish, 3% American Indian, 1% is Uncoded, and 1% is Russian.

## The Case for a Two-Generation Approach for Educating English Language Learners

*Center for American Progress (2015)*

The lack of English proficiency of immigrant parents has an effect on children who may lack the resources and opportunities of those whose parents are proficient in English. This report suggests ways that communities can implement a two-generation approach to close the language gap and expand opportunities for English Language Learners.

- Between 2000-13, the Latino population has grown by 43%, far ahead of non-Hispanic whites whose population grew by 5.7% during the same time period.
- Asians have recently surpassed Latinos as the nation's fastest growing population, expanding by 46% between 2000-10.
- Workers proficient in English earn anywhere from 17% to 135% more than English Language Learning workers.

Suggestions for implementing a two-generation approach are:

- Adopting the community school model to provide critical wraparound services for students and families.
- Extending learning hours to ensure that students have additional instruction to help them learn English while learning their curriculum.
- Prioritizing family engagement at school to help parents become better advocates for their children.
- Creating workforce-development programs like English as Second Language (ESL) classes and wraparound services.
- Prioritizing English Language Learning training for teachers.



## Immigrant Parents and Early Childhood Programs: Addressing Barriers of Literacy, Culture, and Systems Knowledge

*Migration Policy Institute (2014)*

Immigrant parents face significant barriers as they try to engage with their children's early educational experiences. Children from immigrant families are less likely to be enrolled in early learning programs or receive financial assistance for child care. Many programs face difficulties engaging with immigrants and refugee parents who often need help building U.S. cultural and systems knowledge that is key to overcoming English language and literacy barriers. The report addresses the need to break down barriers facing low-literate and Limited English Proficient parents of young children.

- Children of immigrants comprise more than 25% of total U.S. young-child population ages 8 and under (90% of which are U.S. citizens), 45% of the parents of these children are low income, and 47% are Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Young children of immigrants comprise more than 20% of the young child population in 19 states.
- Immigrant and refugee parents are more than twice as likely as native-born parents to be low-educated: 2.39 million (11%) lack a high school diploma or its equivalent; foreign-born parents account for 45% of all parents nationwide who lack a high school diploma.
- Young children ages 0-8 in the U.S. who come from newcomer families grew roughly from 3.1 million in 1980 to 9.1 million in 2012. The overall number of young children in the country grew from 29.6 million to 36.3 million, with young children born to immigrant parents accounting for nearly all of this growth. Among foreign-born parents, over 45% are low-income; foreign-born parents as a group account for 27% of all low-income parents with young children.
- A 2007 study showed that at the start of kindergarten, 73% of third-generation white children demonstrated basic reading proficiency and 34% demonstrated an ability to understand the beginning sounds of words. Only 42% of first-generation Mexican-American children could recognize letter, while only 14% demonstrated an ability to understand the beginning sounds of words.
- A lack of English proficiency and functional literacy present almost insurmountable barriers to many immigrant and refugee parents' engagement efforts and their participation in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) programs, as well as their parent engagement efforts. A lack of alignment between efforts in early childhood and K-12 parent engagement programming leads to parent alienation from their children's schooling—particularly among those who are low-literate or LEP. Smaller minority groups and speakers of less common languages are particularly underserved and struggle with basic access to high-quality ECEC and parent engagement opportunities.
- To address the latter the author suggests expanding parent education, literacy, and English language programs; strengthening incentives and accountability for existing program funds; leveraging state policymaking and capacity-building efforts; and building evidence and awareness of gaps.

Park, Maki, and Margie McHugh. 2014. *Immigrant Parents and Early Childhood Programs: Addressing Barriers of Literacy, Culture, and Systems Knowledge*. Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute.

## Shaping Our Futures: The Educational and Career Success of Washington State's Immigrant Youth

*Migration Policy Institute (2013)*

Washington State has one of the fastest-growing immigrant populations in the nation. Even though many of the educational experiences and barriers immigrants and their nonimmigrant peers face are similar, immigrants have the additional setback of trying to build their English language proficiency, becoming familiar with the US education system, and meeting distinct economic needs while attending school. Unauthorized immigrants face distinct economic barriers since they cannot legally work, are not eligible for financial aid, are barred from receiving many scholarships and loans, and face the risk of deportation by immigration authorities. This report exclusively focuses on a specific study group in Washington state consisting of immigrants (authorized and unauthorized) ages 16 to 26.

- One in four youth ages 16-26 is an immigrant or the child of an immigrant. The percentage of young people who are first-generation (immigrants) or second-generation (US born with immigrant parents) grew rapidly between 2001-10. The “first and second generation” population excelled past national population, 51% v. 14% respectively.
- Between 2008-2018, the number of jobs for college-educated workers is expected to increase by 260,000. It is urgent to improve high school and postsecondary completion rates of youth belonging to immigrant families.
- Latinos comprise the state's largest group of immigrants, are most likely to grow up in low-income households, and lag behind their peers on many measures of educational attainment. In the last recession, Latino immigrants experienced a more rapid rise in unemployment than other groups of US workers, and a greater rise in poverty. Southeast Asian and African groups) tend to have low levels of educations and high rates of poverty as well.
- Nearly 38% (38,000 people) of Washington State's first-generation population, ages 16-26, were unauthorized immigrants during 2007-11. The national average at the time was 47%, concerning unauthorized immigrants.
- 53% of ELLs in Washington state graduate from high school in four years. In 2011-12, ELLs made up 1% of participants in dual credit programs like AP and Running Start. In 2010-11, approximately 66% of Hispanic, Black, and Pacific Islander students graduated high school in four years compared to 80% of white students and 83% of Asians.
- In 2008-09, only 49% of Latino high school graduates enrolled in college compared to 77% of Asian graduates and 66% of white graduates. Latino students have a low participation rate of 8% in Running Start (a dual credit program) compared to 17% of all high school students.
- From 2007-13, the average four-year college tuition in Washington state rose by 64% while community and technical college rose by 34%. The Washington College Bound Scholarship (CBS) promises a full scholarship for college to low-income middle school students if they maintain satisfactory grades during high school. Latinos comprise one-third of participants in CBS. Hispanics comprised 16% of all Washington public schools students in high school, but only 9% of them enrolled in public two-year colleges and 7% of them in public or private four year colleges. 23% of first-generation immigrants ages 21-26 lacked a high school diploma compared to 10% of all youth.

Hooker, Sarah, Margie McHugh, Michael Fix, and Randy Capps. 2013. *Shaping Our Futures: The Educational and Career Success of Washington State's Immigrant Youth*. Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute.

# Education Reform in a Changing Georgia: Promoting High School and College Success for Immigrant Youth

Migration Policy Institute (2014)

## Part 1: Facts and Figures

The report addresses the educational experiences and outcomes of 1st and 2nd generation youth ages 16-26 (K-12, adult education, and postsecondary education) across the education systems in Georgia, focusing on Gwinnett and Dekalb counties. Georgia has the second-fastest growth rate in the U.S. with the foreign-born population growing 233% during the 1990s. By 2012, Georgia ranked eighth in the immigrant population size, up from 16th place in 1990. Georgia's native-born are aging rapidly while the Latino population remains much younger. One in every five of Georgia's youth is an immigrant or has immigrant parents. Many of the immigrants are ELLs, and lag behind their nonimmigrant peers in high school graduation rates, college access, and postsecondary degree completion. ELLs in Georgia's high schools face lower odds of success with 44% graduating in four years compared to national average of 70% of all students. Among adults ages 21-26 in Georgia, 9% of Latinos hold an associate's degree or higher, versus 31% of non-Latinos.

- Georgia has the 6th largest population of unauthorized immigrants in the country. Among foreign-born youth, approximately 62% were unauthorized immigrants in the 2007-11 period, while the national average was 47%. Unauthorized immigrants comprise 6.5% of Georgia's youth population, many of whom have acquired DACA.
- Gwinnett County has more immigrants than any other Georgia county and enrolls 1/5 of the state's ELL students. Public schools in this county had a student population of 31% white, 30% Black, 25% Latino, and 10% Asian in 2011-12. DeKalb County is the state's largest refugee resettlement destination.
- Georgia state's second-generation youth population grew 43% from 2007-12, while the national average was 29%. In 2012, there were approximately 263,000 first and second generation young adults in Georgia out of 1.44 million of the total population.
- In 2012-12, nearly  $\frac{1}{3}$  of Georgia's first-generation immigrants ages 21-26 lacked a high school diploma or its equivalent compared to 13% of all youth of that age. Future economic growth will be concentrated in jobs requiring at least a high school diploma, but Georgia's 2012 high school graduation rate was among the lowest in the nation.
- Latinos and Asians comprised 80% of ESL (English as Second Language) enrollment in 2011-12, however, both groups made up just 6% of enrollment in technical colleges' degree and certificate programs. Georgia saw a 60% drop in ESL enrollment when the Georgia House Bill Two required individuals to provide verification of lawful presence in order to receive public benefits such as publicly funded adult education.

Hooker, Sarah, Michael Fix, and Margie McHugh. 2014. *Education Reform in a Changing Georgia: Promoting High School and College Success for Immigrant Youth*. Washington D.C.: Migration Policy Institute.

## Education Reform in a Changing Georgia: Promoting High School and College Success for Immigrant Youth

*Migration Policy Institute (2014)*

Georgia has a House Bill that restricts unauthorized immigrants' access to public services, and is one of the only three states that bar unauthorized immigrants from admission to certain public colleges and universities. Georgia's recent education reform efforts are ambitious in scope but they fail to address the unique needs of immigrant youth. There is a need to improve graduation rates among ELLs and improve college and career preparation. Tracking and reporting continual data on ELLs and immigrant youth would allow educators to identify barriers to student success and develop targeted instructional approaches.

Suggestions for reform:

- Training content-area teachers in strategies for making instruction accessible to ELLs, offering summer school to help ELLs catch up to their peers, providing counseling, academic assistance, and scholarships for college students from immigrant families, and analyzing foreign transcripts to award credit for courses students have taken prior to immigrating.
- Tailored approaches that offer a range of programs for ELLs with varied needs. Specially-trained teachers who can support ELL students in all subject areas, creative solutions for time pressures that high school students face as they learn English and strive to meet increasingly rigorous state standards.
- Expanding access to content for ELLs, and investing in teacher training and professional development so that they can adapt instructions and support language development across the school day.
- Enhance college access for DACA recipients by removing the Georgia House Bill Two that bans unauthorized immigrants and those granted deferred action from attending higher education colleges and universities.
- Improving ESL and career training pathways for young adults, and removing legal-status barriers to adult education for youth who otherwise qualify for DACA.
- Extending lessons learned from developmental education reform to improve the remedial process for English learners (Complete College Georgia), and incorporating a focus on ESL students into Georgia's Outcomes-Based Funding Formula. The formula provides a mechanism for policymakers to reward colleges for their progress on indicators aligned with the state's higher education completion goals.

Hooker, Sarah, Michael Fix, and Margie McHugh. 2014. *Education Reform in a Changing Georgia: Promoting High School and College Success for Immigrant Youth*. Washington D.C.: Migration Policy Institute.







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