

Children of Immigrants: 2011 State Trends Update

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Low-Income Working Families Brief
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This brief updates *Perspectives on Low-Income Working Families* brief 9, “Children of Immigrants: National and State Characteristics” (Fortuny et al. 2009) and *Perspectives on Low-Income Working Families* brief 17, “Children of Immigrants: 2008 State Trends Update” (Fortuny 2010). This brief presents data highlights from the 2010 and 2011 American Community Surveys. The statistics presented in this brief and others can be accessed through the Children of Immigrants Data Tool web site.¹ Also, interactive maps showing these statistics over time and across states can be found at the Children of Immigrants Interactive Map website.²

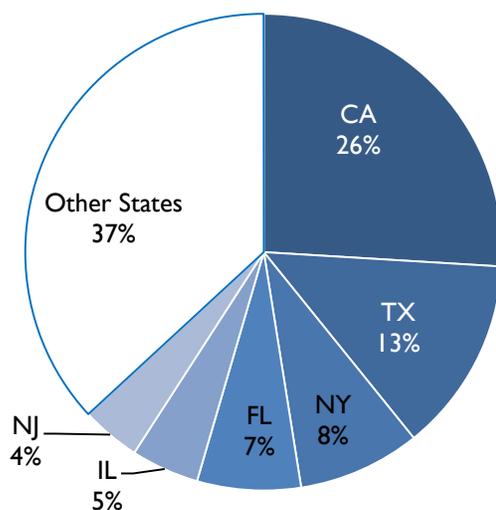
THE POPULATION AND SHARE OF CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS CONTINUE TO GROW

- From 2006 to 2011, the number of children age 0 to 17 that had at least one immigrant parent grew by 1.5 million children, from 15.7 to 17.2 million.³ Growth in the number of children of immigrants accounted for all of the growth in the number of children over this period, because the number of children of native-born parents actually fell from approximately 55.6 million to 55.0 million during this same time period.⁴
- Children of immigrants account for nearly one-quarter of all children in the United States. The share is growing as both the number of children of immigrants continues to rise while the number of children of native-born parents falls.

CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS ARE HIGHLY CONCENTRATED IN SIX STATES

- As seen in figure 1, more than 60 percent of all children of immigrants live in the six traditional immigrant destination states: California, New York, New Jersey, Florida, Illinois, and Texas. California alone contains more than one-quarter of the entire population of children of immigrants in the United States.

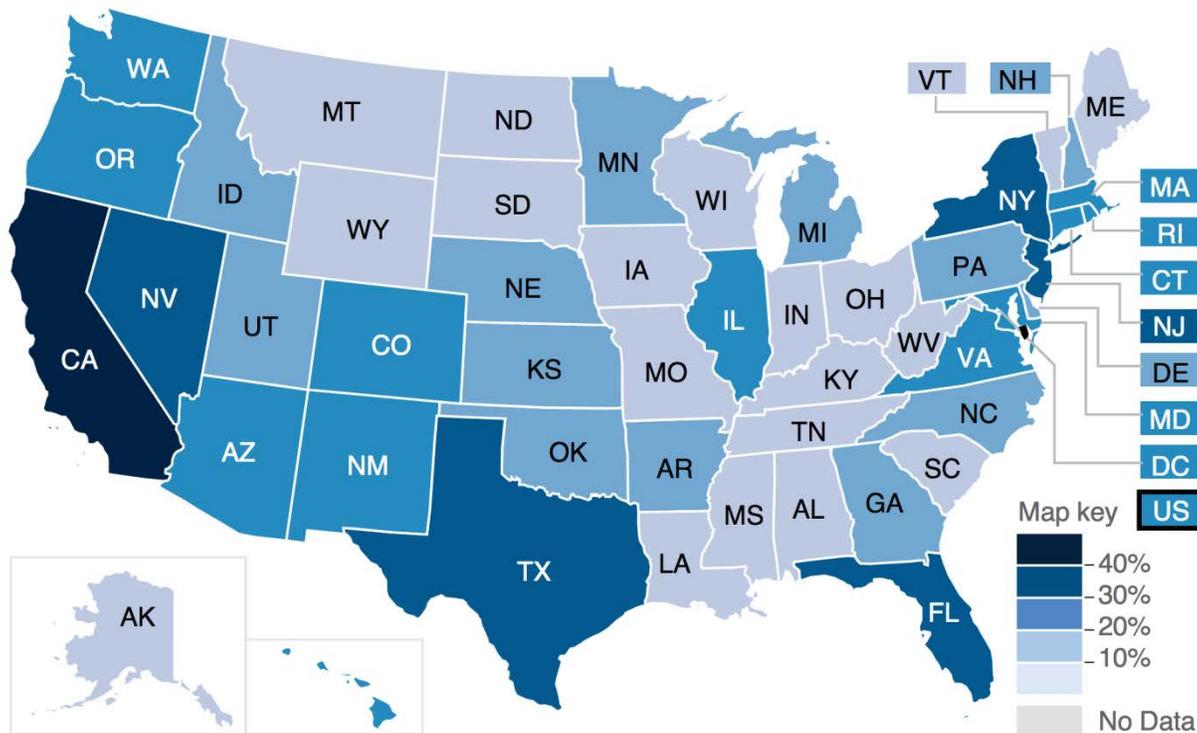
Figure 1. Percentage of Children of Immigrants by State, 2011



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2010 and 2011 American Community Surveys.

- As seen in figure 2, there is substantial variation in the share of all children who are children of immigrants across states. Children of immigrants compose close to 50 percent of all children in California and well over 30 percent in most of the traditional immigrant destination states. On average, children of immigrants compose less than 15 percent of children for states outside these six states. There are four states (Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, and West Virginia) where less than 5 percent of children are children of immigrants.

Figure 2. Share of Children of Immigrants, 2011

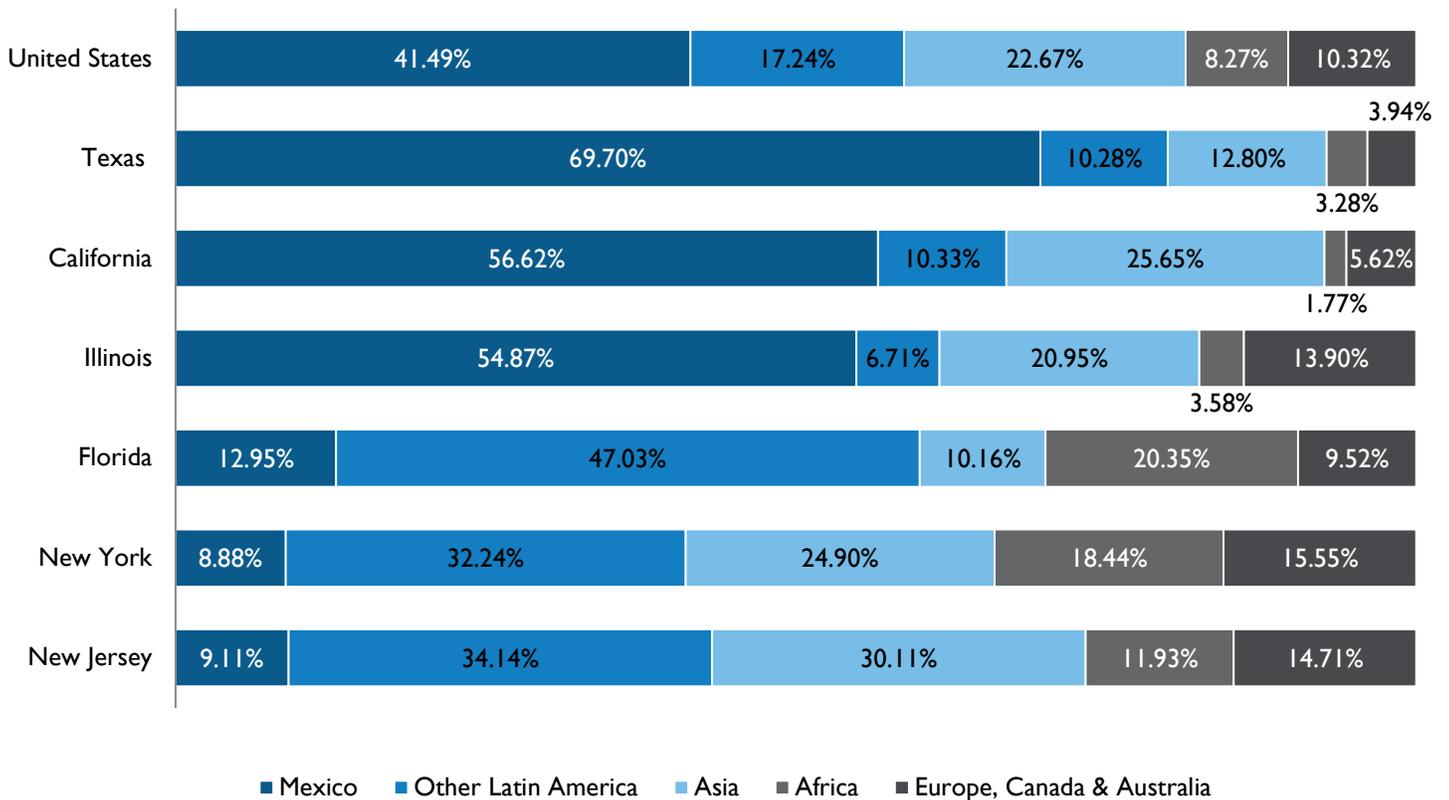


Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2010 and 2011 American Community Surveys.

FOR CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS, THE PARENTS' COUNTRY OF ORIGIN DIFFERS ACROSS STATES

- While the majority of children of immigrants are Hispanic and more than 40 percent have parents from Mexico, there is substantial variation in ethnicity across states. In Texas, 70 percent of children of immigrants have parents from Mexico, but in New York and New Jersey, less than 10 percent of children of immigrants have parents from Mexico. In Florida, nearly half of children of immigrants have parents from other Latin American countries. In New Jersey, nearly one-third of all children of immigrants have parents from Asian countries.

Figure 3. Country of Origin of Parents of Children of Immigrants for the Big Six Traditional Immigration States and the United States



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2010 and 2011 American Community Surveys.

THE MAJORITY OF CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS ARE CITIZENS BORN IN THE UNITED STATES

- Almost 90 percent of children of immigrants are US citizens themselves, but more than 40 percent have noncitizen parents. The share of children of immigrants that are US citizens has increased from 86 percent to 89 percent between 2006 and 2011. However the share of children of immigrants with citizen parents has remained stable. The share of children born in the United States has also grown from 83 percent to 87 percent from 2006 to 2011.

NEARLY HALF OF ALL CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS HAVE NO ENGLISH PROFICIENT PARENT

- While 83 percent of children of immigrants are English proficient, nearly half of all children of immigrants have no English proficient parent.⁵ English proficiency has been increasing among children of immigrants in the past five years from 80 percent in 2006 to 83 percent in 2011, but English proficiency has remained constant (at about 44 percent) among immigrant parents. The increase in the share of English proficient children of immigrants was accompanied by an increase in the share of children of immigrants who are bilingual—from 53 percent in 2006 to 56 percent in 2011.

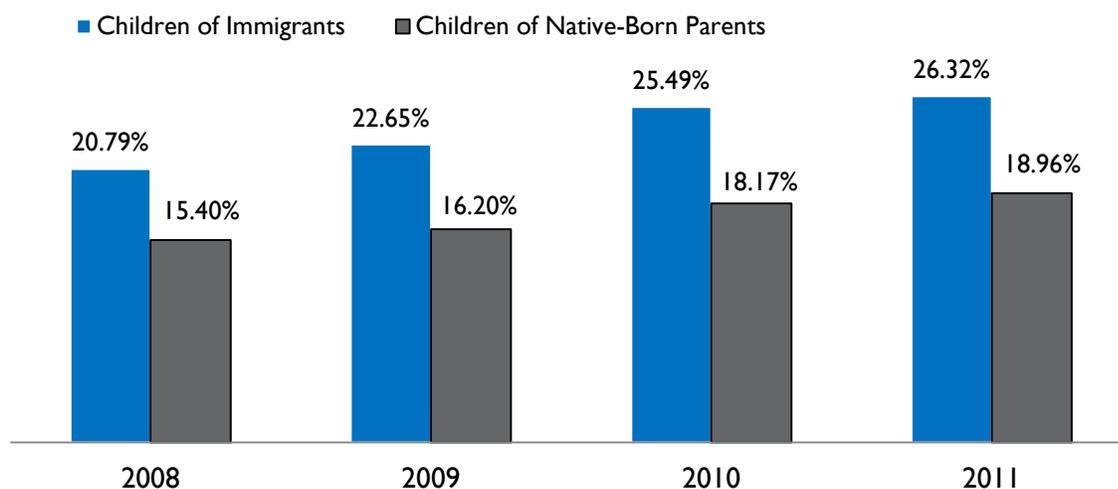
CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO LIVE IN A TWO-PARENT HOUSEHOLD THAN CHILDREN OF NATIVE-BORN PARENTS

- More than 80 percent of children of immigrants live in two-parent families, compared with only 68 percent of children of native-born parents. They are also more likely to live in households with multiple adults, with 28 percent of children of immigrants living in a household with three or more related adults, compared with 15 percent of children of native-born parents. They are also slightly more likely to live in households with more children—42 percent of children of immigrants live in households with three or more children compared with 37 percent of children of native-born parents.

MORE THAN ONE-QUARTER OF CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS LIVE IN POOR FAMILIES AND MORE THAN HALF LIVE IN LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

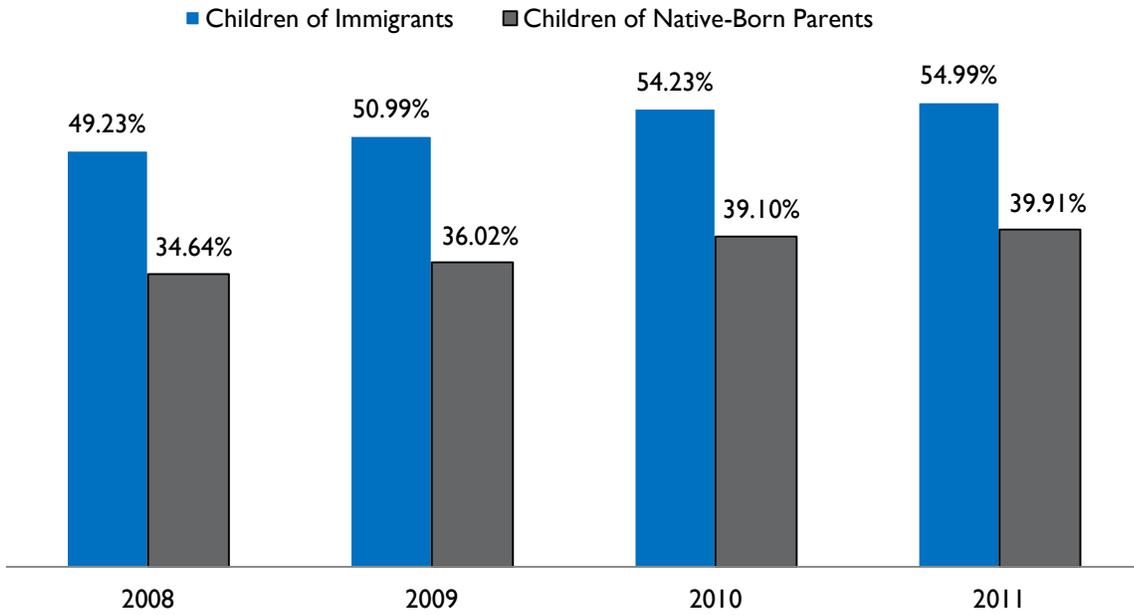
- As seen in figure 4, more children of immigrants are in households with incomes under the federal poverty line than children of native-born parents. In 2011, 26 percent of children of immigrants were below the poverty line compared with 19 percent of children of native-born parents.⁶ During this same period, the disparity in poverty rates between children of immigrants and children of native-born parents grew from 5.4 percent to 7.4 percent. As seen in figures 6 and 7, the increase in the share of children of immigrants in poor families occurred in almost every state. The poverty rate for children of immigrants was above 25 percent in only 10 states in 2008, compared to 31 states in 2011.⁷
- In 2011, 55 percent of children of immigrants were in low income families compared to 40 percent of children of native-born parents (see figure 5). The share of children of immigrants in low-income families has grown from 49 percent in 2008 to 55 percent in 2011.
- Children of immigrants in low-income families are more likely to live in families that are working than children of native-born parents in low income families. Of children of immigrants in low-income families, 81 percent are in families with working adults.⁸ In contrast, only 68 percent of children of native-born parents in low-income families are in families with working adults.

Figure 4. Share of Children below the Federal Poverty Line by Nativity of their Parents



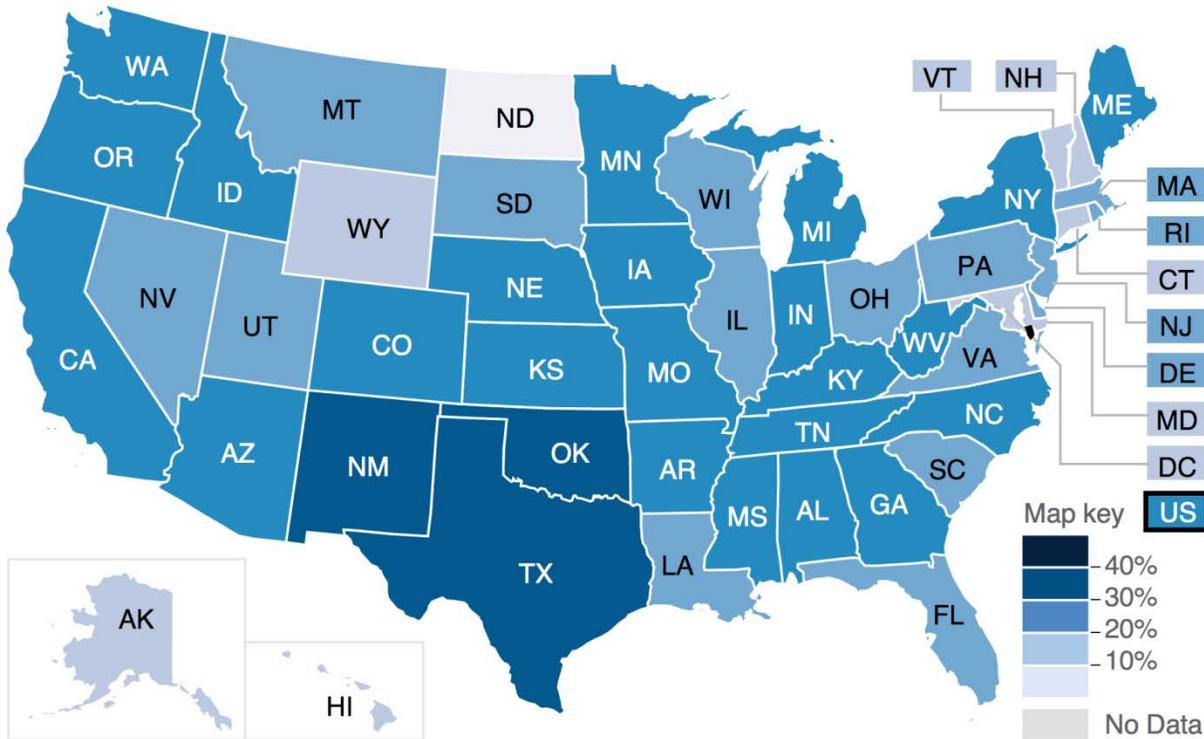
Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2007 and 2011 American Community Surveys. Each year is a two year average; for example, 2008 is based on the 2007 and 2008 American Community Survey.

Figure 5. Share of Children Below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line by Nativity of their Parents



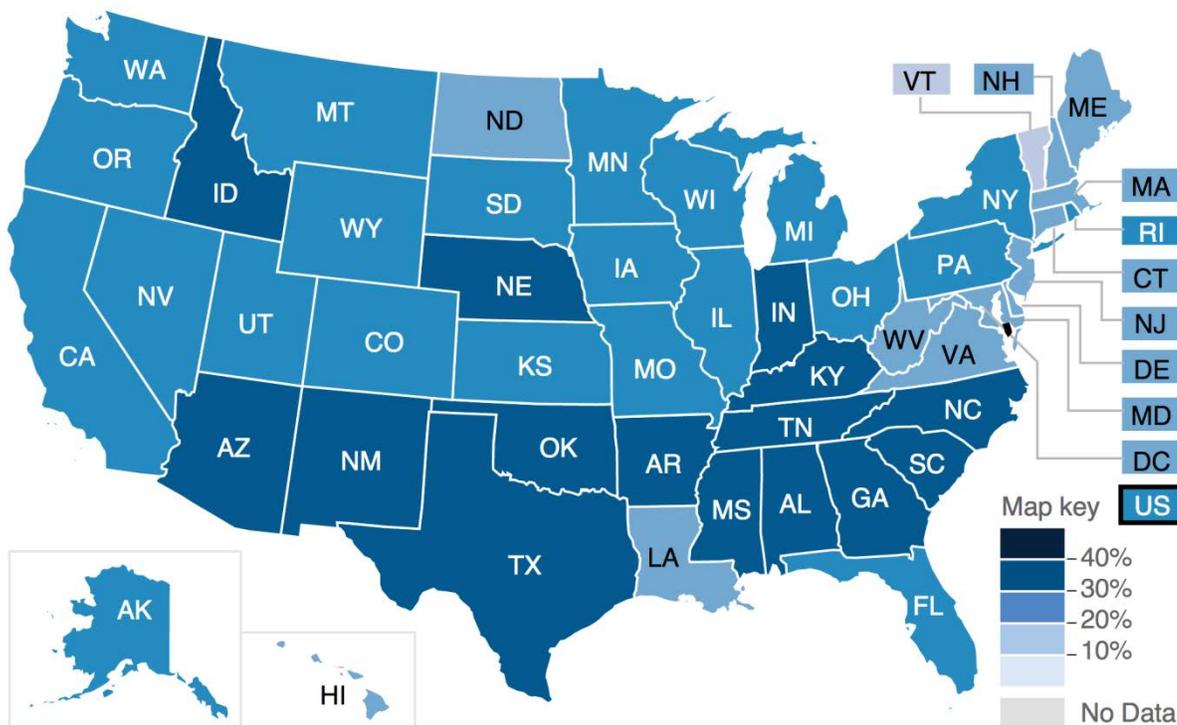
Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2007 and 2011 American Community Surveys. Each year is a two year average; for example, 2008 is based on the 2007 and 2008 American Community Survey.

Figure 6. Poverty Rate of Children of Immigrants, 2008



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2007 and 2008 American Community Surveys.

Figure 7. Poverty Rate of Children of Immigrants, 2011



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2010 and 2011 American Community Surveys.

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NOTES

1. The Children of Immigrants Data Tool is an interactive website that generates charts and tables with statistics on children age from birth to age 17 across the United States, the top 100 metro areas, and the 50 states and the District of Columbia using data from the American Community Survey. See <http://datatool.urban.org/charts/datatool/pages.cfm>.
2. The Children of Immigrants Interactive Map visually presents statistics on children of immigrants from birth to age 17 across the 50 states and the District of Columbia and from 2006–2011. See <http://interactivemap.urban.org>.
3. Unless stated otherwise, data in this brief are taken from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets (Ruggles et al. 2010) drawn from the 2005–2011 US Census Bureau American Community Survey. Each years' estimates are averaged across the year and the previous year; for example, the 2011 estimates are averaged across 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey data.
4. An immigrant or foreign-born person is someone born outside the United States, Puerto Rico, or other territories. People born in the United States, Puerto Rico and other territories, or born abroad to US-citizen parents are native-born. Children with immigrant parents have at least one foreign-born parent.
5. English proficiency and bilingual statistics exclude children that are less than 3 years old.

6. Poor is family income below the federal poverty level, and low-income is family income below twice the federal poverty level. Poverty levels are adjusted for family size. In 2010, the federal poverty level was \$22,050 for a family of four, slightly higher for larger families and lower for smaller families. Twice the federal poverty level in 2010 was \$44,100 for a family of four.

7. For children of native-born parents, the number of states with more than a quarter of children of native-born parents in poor families increased from 2 states in 2008 to 6 states in 2011.

8. Working families are any in which an adult reports at least 1,800 hours of work in the prior year (approximately equal to 35 hours of work a week for 52 weeks a year), in which the average hours worked of all adults in the family is at least 1,000 hours, or in which the adults' total hours worked is at least 1,800 hours.

This brief is part of the Urban Institute's Low-Income Working Families project, a multiyear effort that focuses on the private- and public-sector contexts for families' success or failure. Both contexts offer opportunities for better helping families meet their needs. The Low-Income Working Families project is currently supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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