

Children of Immigrants and the Future of Maryland

Cary Lou, Erica Greenberg, and Kate Thomas

Children of immigrants are an important part of this country’s future. Around 387,000 children in Maryland had at least one immigrant parent in 2017–18. Nationwide, over 18 million children—a quarter of all people ages 17 and younger—had at least one immigrant parent.

These children and their families are the [next generation of workers](#) and taxpayers. Ensuring that they have access to early education and other public supports so they can reach their full potential is [essential to the future](#) of the US and Maryland.

Who Are Children of Immigrants?

Most are US citizens, and many have families with deep US ties (figure 1). Almost all children of immigrants are citizens (90 percent in Maryland and over 90 percent nationwide); most have at least one citizen parent. Additionally, 73 percent of children of immigrants statewide have parents who have been in the US for 10 years or longer.

Nevertheless, immigration enforcement efforts and other federal immigration initiatives can affect [family stability](#) and [overall well-being](#), even for people not at risk.

Their family employment is high, yet their family incomes are still relatively low (figure 2). In Maryland, the shares of children with family members [working substantial hours](#) (1,000+ hours each on average or 1,800+ hours total) are slightly higher for children of immigrants than children of US-born parents.

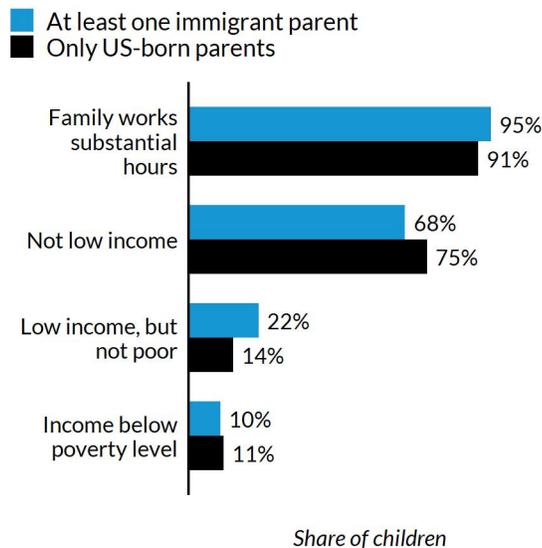
Around 32 percent of children of immigrants lived in families with [low incomes](#) (below 200 percent of the federal poverty level) in 2017–18, compared with 25 percent of children with only US-born parents.

They come from diverse backgrounds. Around 38 percent of children of immigrants in Maryland are Hispanic, followed by Black (25 percent), Asian (18 percent), and white (14 percent); 6 percent identify as another race or are multiracial.

FIGURE 1
Maryland Children, by Citizenship and Parental Birthplace, 2017–18



FIGURE 2
Family Work and Income Levels of Maryland Children, 2017–18



How Can Public Investments Support Children of Immigrants' Success?

Children need [quality education](#), [access to health care](#), and [stable housing](#) to thrive. For some families, federal, state, and community initiatives, including public programs and [tax credits](#), can help mitigate the effects of poverty and ensure a level playing field. Investing in these initiatives also has [positive economic payoffs](#).

Safe and stable housing is the foundation for children's development, but high housing costs can put pressure on family budgets.

In Maryland, around 20 percent of children with an immigrant parent lived in households [severely burdened](#) by housing and utility costs, compared with 14 percent of children with only US-born parents (figure 3).¹

Government programs [can help](#) create and preserve more affordable housing and provide ladders to opportunity. But substantial shares of immigrant families have recently reported avoiding [public programs](#) or [other activities](#) because of immigration concerns.

Health insurance can be [critical to kids' success](#). In Maryland, the share of all children without health insurance has fallen slightly since 2008–09 (not shown). The share of uninsured children of immigrants and others, respectively, was 8 percent and 4 percent in 2008–09, 7 percent and 3 percent in 2012–13, and 5 percent and 2 percent in 2016–17 (figure 4).

Public insurance programs like Medicaid are [one piece of the puzzle](#) in covering children and families. But immigrant families have [reported being afraid of](#) participating in a range of health and nutrition programs, despite their [demonstrated benefits](#), because of the current policy climate.

High-quality [early education supports children's development](#). In Maryland, around 43 percent of children of immigrants ages 3 to 5 were enrolled in preschool in 2017–18, compared with 45 percent of 3-to-5-year-olds with only US-born parents.

Children of immigrants are and will continue to be part of the state's future and the nation's. Understanding their diversity and supporting immigrant families can help ensure our collective prosperity.

This fact sheet draws from the children of immigrants data tool (<https://urban.is/36q5WZC>), where users can view and download data about children for all 50 states; Washington, DC; and the 100 largest metropolitan areas. The tool's technical appendix includes data sources, methods, and a glossary.

FIGURE 3
Household Housing and Utility Cost Burden for Maryland Children, 2017–18

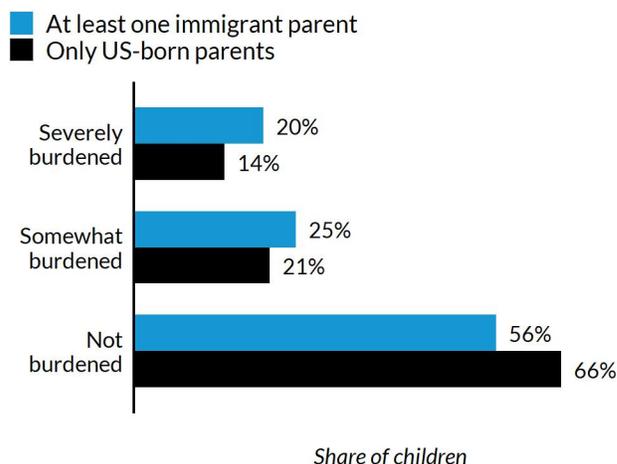
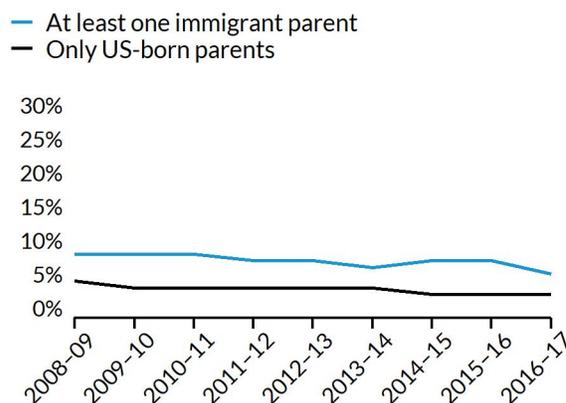


FIGURE 4
MD Children Not Covered by Health Insurance



¹Severely burdened households spend 50 percent or more of their incomes on housing and utilities, somewhat-burdened households spend 30 to 49 percent of their incomes on these costs, and not-burdened households spend 29 percent or less.

This fact sheet was funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this fact sheet are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Foundation or the Urban Institute. Further information on the Urban Institute's funding principles is available at urban.org/fundingprinciples. Copyright © February 2020. Urban Institute. Permission is granted for reproduction of this file, with attribution to the Urban Institute.