

Children of Immigrants

Growing National and State Diversity



Brief No. 5

URBAN INSTITUTE

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The latest Census data with information about the foreign-born population in the United States show that in the last decade children of immigrants are continuing to grow in numbers, but more slowly than during the 1990s.¹ In 2009, children of immigrants age 0 to 17 reached 16.8 million, up from 13.3 million in 2000, and double their number in 1990. The share of children with a foreign-born parent increased from 13 percent in 1990 to 23 percent, or close to one in four, in 2009.²

Continued growth in the number of children in immigrant families during the 2000s offset the decline in children with native-born parents, contributing to the changing demographics of the child population. Between 2000 and 2009, the minority share of U.S. children under age 18 increased from 38 to 44 percent, driven by growth in the number of Hispanic and non-Hispanic Asian children and a decline in non-Hispanic white children. While the increase in minority children included children with foreign- and native-born parents, children of immigrants accounted for most of the growth. This brief highlights this and other important trends in the changing demographics of the U.S. child population nationally and across states.

Immigration Trends

The population of children of immigrants is still on the rise

Children of immigrants experienced the fastest population growth between 1990 and 2000 when their numbers increased from 8.3 million to 13.3 million (figure 1) for an annual growth rate of 5 percent. The upward trend continued during the 2000s, and by 2007, the number of children of immigrants crossed the 16 million mark. The pace of growth slowed down during the 2000s; their numbers increased at an average rate of 3 percent between 2000 and 2009.

By contrast, the population of children with native-born parents grew slowly during the 1990s and leveled off in the 2000s. The annual growth rate for this population of children was less than 1 percent between 1990 and 2000. The rate of growth was negative between 2000 and 2005, and has been very close to zero since then.

Most of the increase in the number of children in immigrant families occurred among children born in the United States. This population increased from 6.4 million in 1990 to 10.6 million in 2000 and reached 14.5 million in 2009. Children who were themselves immigrants increased in number between 1990 and 2000, but this population saw their numbers decline in the past decade. In 2009, immigrant children numbered 2.4 million, below their peak of 2.7 million in 2000.

Immigration flows in the past 20 years have driven the growth of children in immigrant families. Recent immigrants tend to be younger and in their childbearing ages. Relatively higher birth rates for immigrant women have also contributed to higher growth rates for children with foreign-versus native-born parents.³

Because of the higher numbers of children of immigrants, the U.S. child population increased from 63 to 72 million between 1990 and 2000. During the 2000s, it grew to 74 million.

The share of children of immigrants born in the United States has increased over time

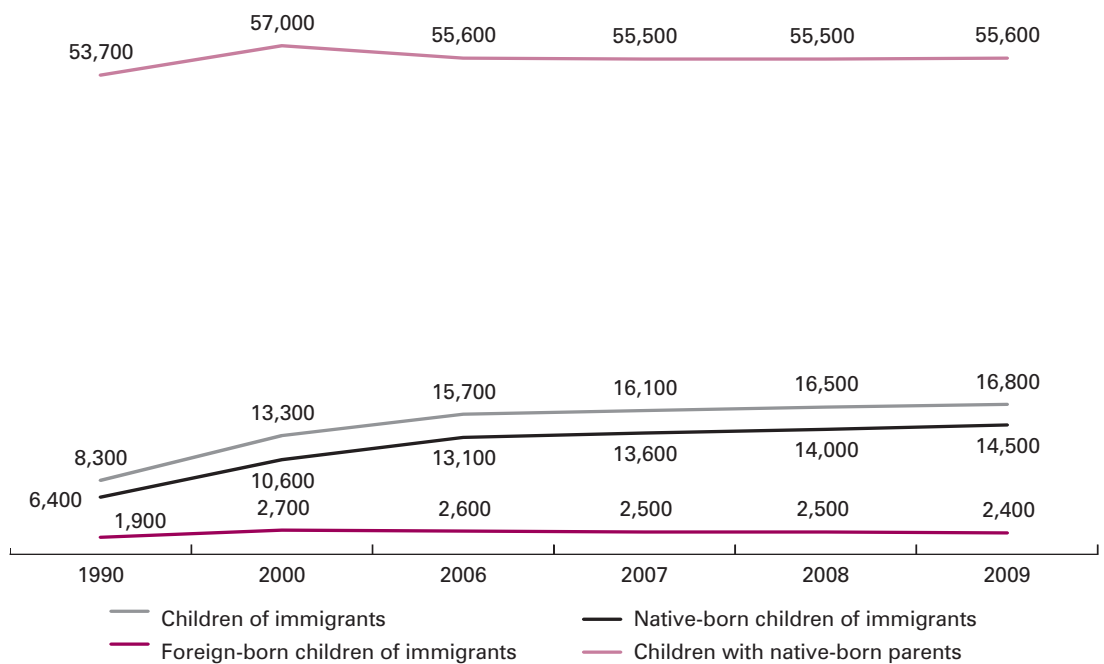
Most children of immigrants are born in the United States. Owing to an increase in the number of native-born children of immigrants and a decline in the number of children who were themselves immigrants, the native-born share of children of immigrants increased from 79 percent in 2000 to 86 percent in 2009.

Children of immigrants are driving the growth in the U.S. child population

Children of immigrants accounted for more than half (58 percent) of the growth in the child population of 8.7 million during the 1990s (Fortuny and Chaudry 2009) and for all growth in the past decade (figure 2). Since 2000, the population of children with native-born parents declined by 1.4 million; most of the decline occurred between 2000 and 2006. The decline was offset by a 3.9 million increase in the number of native-born children of immigrants. Thus,



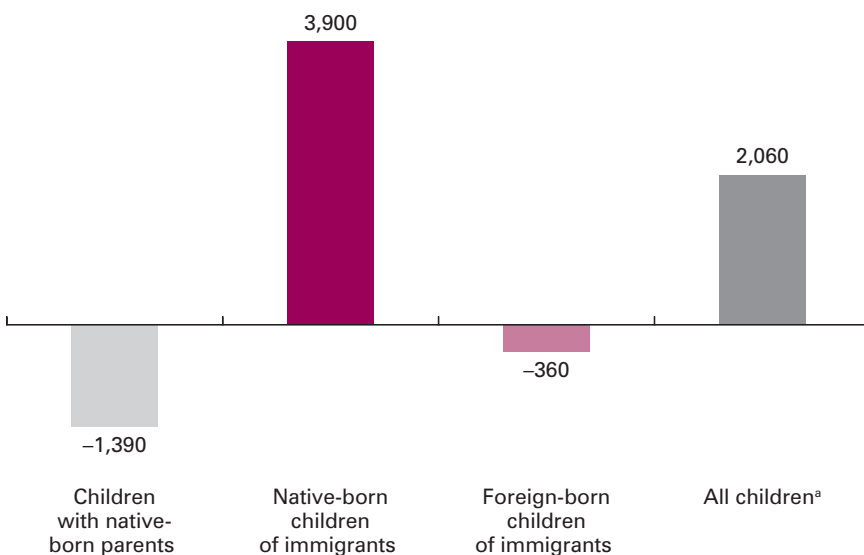
Figure 1. Number of Children by Parents' Nativity, 1990–2009 (thousands)



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the IPUMS datasets drawn from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 5 percent sample, and the 2005–09 American Community Surveys.

Note: Estimates for 2006 and later years are averaged across two years (e.g., the 2006 estimate is averaged across 2005 and 2006).

Figure 2. Growth in Number of Children by Parents' Nativity, 2000–2009 (thousands)



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the IPUMS datasets drawn from the 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 5 percent sample, and the 2008 and 2009 American Community Surveys.

Notes: Numbers are rounded to the nearest ten thousand. Numbers may not sum to totals because of rounding. The 2009 estimates are averaged across 2008 and 2009.

a. Includes children with parents of unknown nativity (about 2 percent of U.S. children).

native-born children in immigrant families contributed to a net increase of the U.S. child population of 2.1 million children.

Immigration Brings Diversity to More States

Children of immigrants are still highly concentrated, but new states are experiencing the fastest growth

Children of immigrants remain highly concentrated in the traditional immigrant gateways—California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey—but many southeastern and midwestern states have experienced higher rates of growth in their foreign-born populations in the past two decades.

In 1990, the six largest immigration states accounted for almost three-quarters (6 million, 73 percent) of all children of immigrants living in the United States (appendix table 1). But as immigrants spread to more nontraditional destinations at higher rates, these six states' combined share declined to 64 percent, despite seeing their



Figure 3. *The 10 States with the Largest Population Growth in Children of Immigrants, 1990–2009 (percent)*



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the IPUMS datasets drawn from the 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 5 percent sample, and the 2008 and 2009 American Community Surveys.

Notes: The estimates are averaged across 2008 and 2009. The big six states are California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey.

number of children of immigrants grow by 4.8 million between 1990 and 2009.

The largest growth rates of children of immigrants occurred in many states that had small immigrant populations 20 years ago: in North Carolina, Georgia, Nevada, and Arkansas, the number of children of immigrants grew more than five times between 1990 and 2009 (figure 3). In contrast, the combined growth in the six largest immigration states was 79 percent, or less than twofold. In fact, in 25 states the pace of growth was faster than in any of the six largest states.

The fastest growing states account for a growing share of children of immigrants, 1990 to 2009

As a result of immigrants dispersing to many nontraditional immigration states, the share of children of immigrants living in these new high-growth states increased from 15 to 26 percent between 1990 and 2009. The number of children

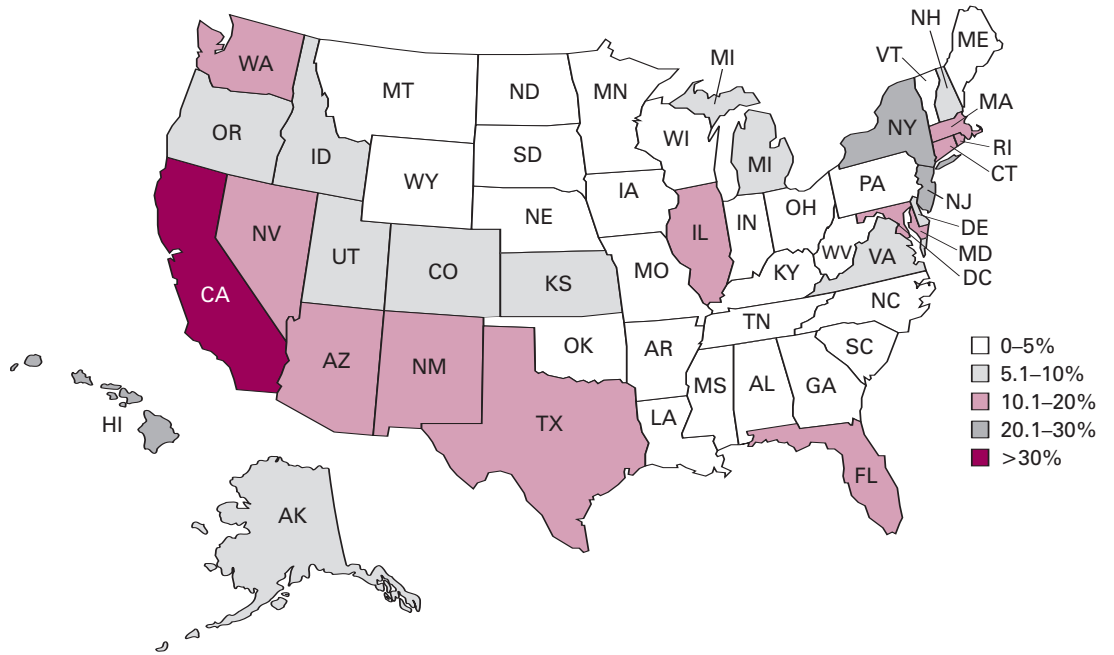
of immigrants living in the 25 states more than tripled from 1.2 to 4.3 million.

Children of immigrants are growing shares of the child population in many states

Figures 4 and 5 show the change in the children of immigrants' share across the states from 1990 to 2009. In 1990, children of immigrants represented less than 5 percent of all children in half the country (figure 4). Their share was greater than 30 percent in just one state (California) and greater than 20 percent in three additional states (New York, New Jersey, and Hawaii). By 2009, only five states had 5 percent or lower shares. Children of immigrants accounted for half of children in California and more than 30 percent of children in six additional states: Arizona, Florida, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, and Texas (figure 5). Children of immigrants accounted for more than 20 percent of children in 11 additional states. In the states with recent high



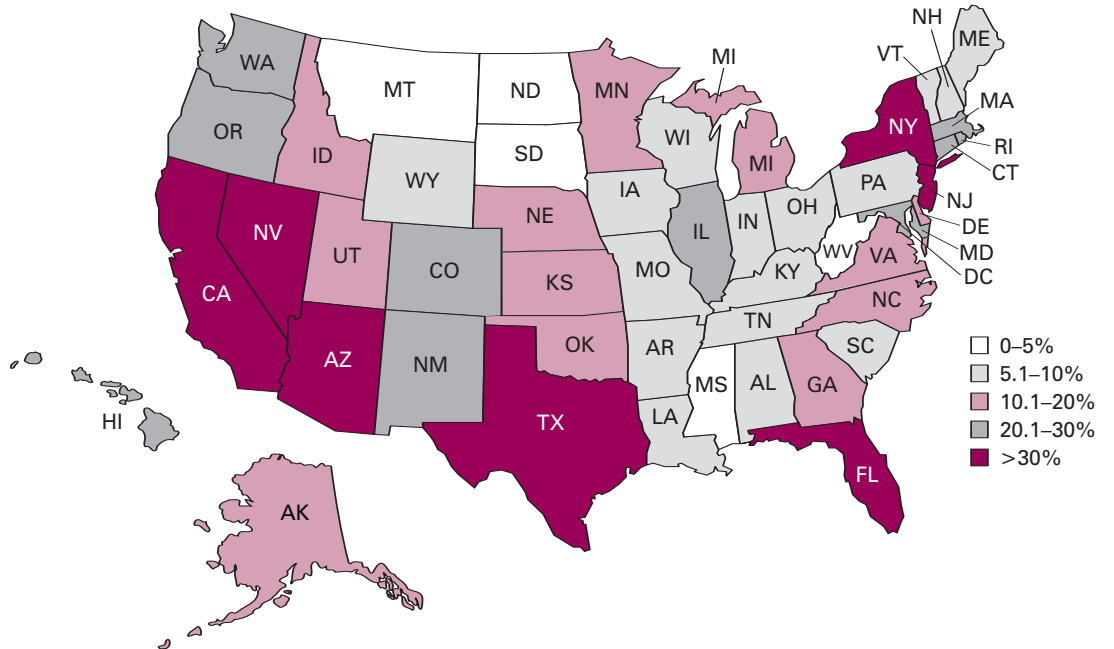
Figure 4. Share of Children with Immigrant Parents by State, 1990



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the IPUMS dataset drawn from the 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 5 percent sample.

Note: Children with parents of unknown nativity (about 2 percent of U.S. children) are excluded.

Figure 5. Share of Children with Immigrant Parents by State, 2009



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the IPUMS dataset drawn from the 2008 and 2009 American Community Surveys.

Notes: Children with parents of unknown nativity (about 2 percent of U.S. children) are excluded. Estimates are averaged across 2008 and 2009.



growth in immigration, the share of children with immigrant parents increased from 5 to 16 percent between 1990 and 2009.

More than half the population growth in Hispanic children in the past decade was the result of children of immigrants

Most children of immigrants were Hispanic (56 percent in 2009; see figure 6).⁴ No minority group predominated among non-Hispanic children of immigrants: non-Hispanic Asian and non-Hispanic white children each represented 18 percent of children of immigrants. Non-Hispanic black children accounted for a smaller share of children of immigrants, 8 percent.

Among children with native-born parents, more than two-thirds (69 percent) were white. Hispanic children with native-born parents (11 percent) were the second-largest minority group after black children (17 percent). Asian and Native American children were the smallest groups, accounting for 1 percent each of children of native-born parents.

In 2009, California had the largest number of Hispanic children (6.7 million), followed by Texas (3.2 million), and Florida (1.0 million). The Hispanic share of all children was above the national average (22 percent) in these states and in four additional states: Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico (figure 7). New Mexico had the highest Hispanic share (55 percent of children), followed by California (50 percent) and Texas (46 percent). In these states, except New Mexico and Colorado, children of immigrants represented a majority of Hispanic children in the state: 67 percent in California, 55 percent in Texas, and 61 percent in Florida (data not shown). As a result of the large numbers of Hispanic children and the large shares with immigrants parents in these states, children of immigrants also accounted for more than half (58 percent) of Hispanic children nationally.

Hispanics surpassed blacks as the country's largest minority group among children under 18 during the 1990s. In 2000, the Hispanic share stood at 17 percent, 1 percentage point above the black share (figure 8). By 2009, the Hispanic share of U.S. children reached 22 percent, while the black share remained the same (16 percent). The Asian share also increased during this time, from 4 to 5 percent.

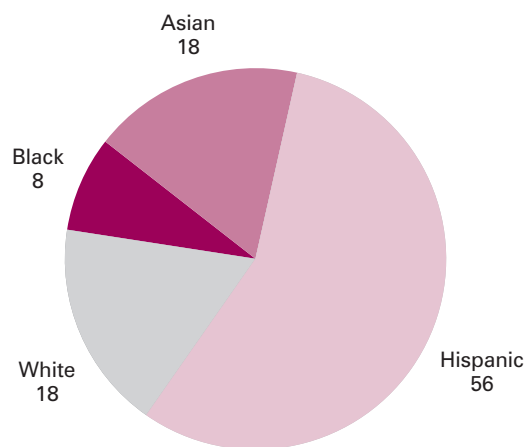
The increase in the overall Hispanic share between 2000 and 2009 stemmed from both an increase of Hispanic children and a decrease of white children (figure 9). The number of Hispanic children increased by 4.1 million, more than half of whom were children of immigrants (2.5 million children, 60 percent of the increase). The 2.9 million decline in the number of white children came mostly from children with native-born parents (3.1 million). Black children saw a modest increase entirely attributable to children in immigrant families.

Similar to the trend for Hispanic children, the population of Asian children grew between 2000 and 2009. While children with foreign- and native-born parents both increased (by 190,000 and 550,000, respectively), most of the growth came from children of immigrants (74 percent).

As a result of these demographic changes, the share of U.S. children under 18 who were white decreased from 62 to 56 percent in just nine years. In 2009, the minority share stood at 44 percent nationally. Among younger children, the minority share was even higher: 47 percent for children age 0 to 3 and 45 percent for age 4 to 5.

In nine states, white children actually represented a minority (figure 10). More than two-thirds of children in Hawaii (81 percent), the District of Columbia (80 percent), and New Mexico and California (70 percent each) were

Figure 6. *Race and Ethnicity of Children of Immigrants, 2009 (percent)*

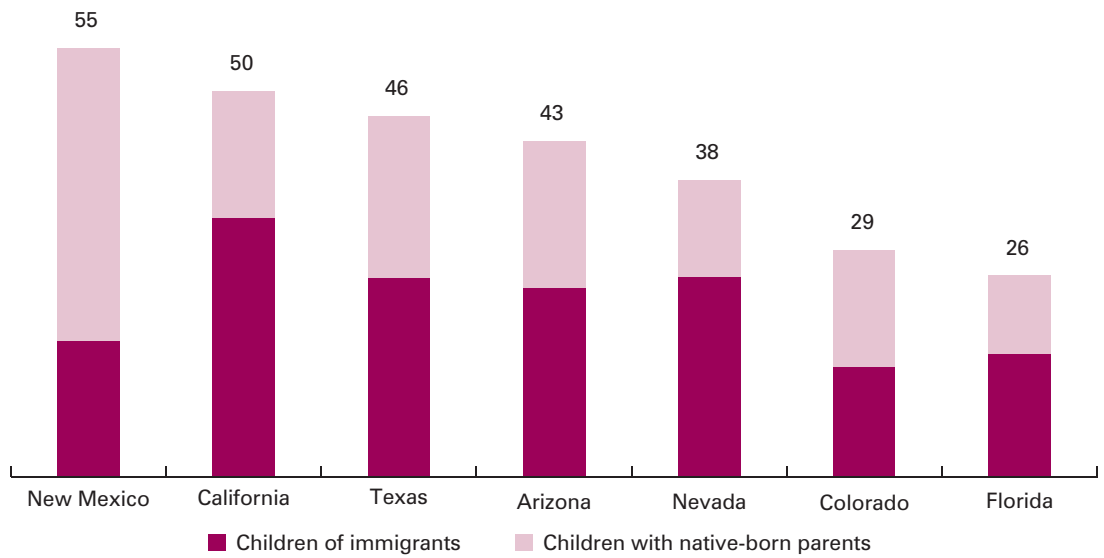


Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the IPUMS dataset drawn from the 2008 and 2009 American Community Surveys.

Note: Estimates are averaged across 2008 and 2009.



Figure 7. *Hispanic Percentage of All Children by Parental Nativity, Selected States, 2009*



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the IPUMS dataset drawn from the 2008 and 2009 American Community Surveys.

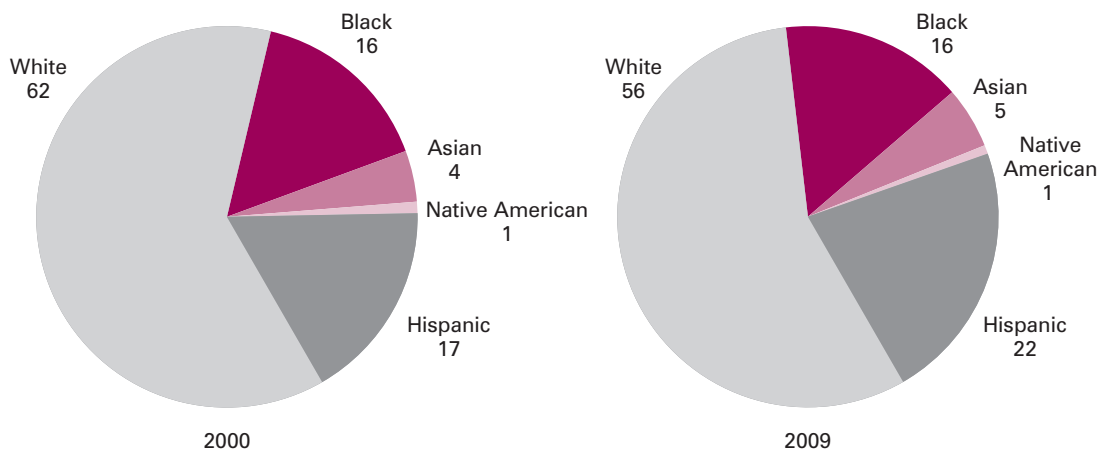
Notes: Children with parents of unknown nativity (about 2 percent of U.S. children) are excluded. Estimates are averaged across 2008 and 2009.

Hispanic, black, Asian, or Native American. Minority children also represented a majority in Texas (63 percent), Nevada and Arizona (57 percent each), and Florida (51 percent). The minority share was above the national average in seven additional states: Mississippi, Georgia, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, Louisiana, and Illinois.

Discussion

The number of children of immigrants has continued to increase during the 2000s, including in the past few years. The pace of growth was fastest in the 1990s, which saw large numbers of new immigrants. But population momentum and relatively

Figure 8. *Race and Ethnicity of U.S. Children, 2000 and 2009 (percent)*

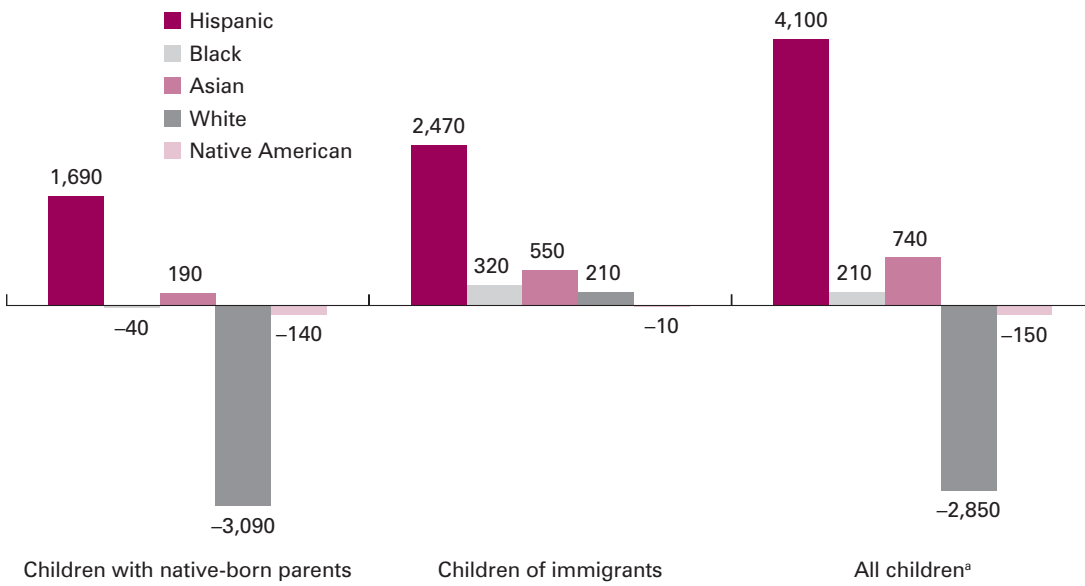


Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the IPUMS datasets drawn from 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 5 percent sample, and the 2008 and 2009 American Community Surveys.

Note: The 2009 estimates are averaged across 2008 and 2009.



Figure 9. Growth in Number of Children by Race/Ethnicity and Parental Nativity, 2000–09 (thousands)

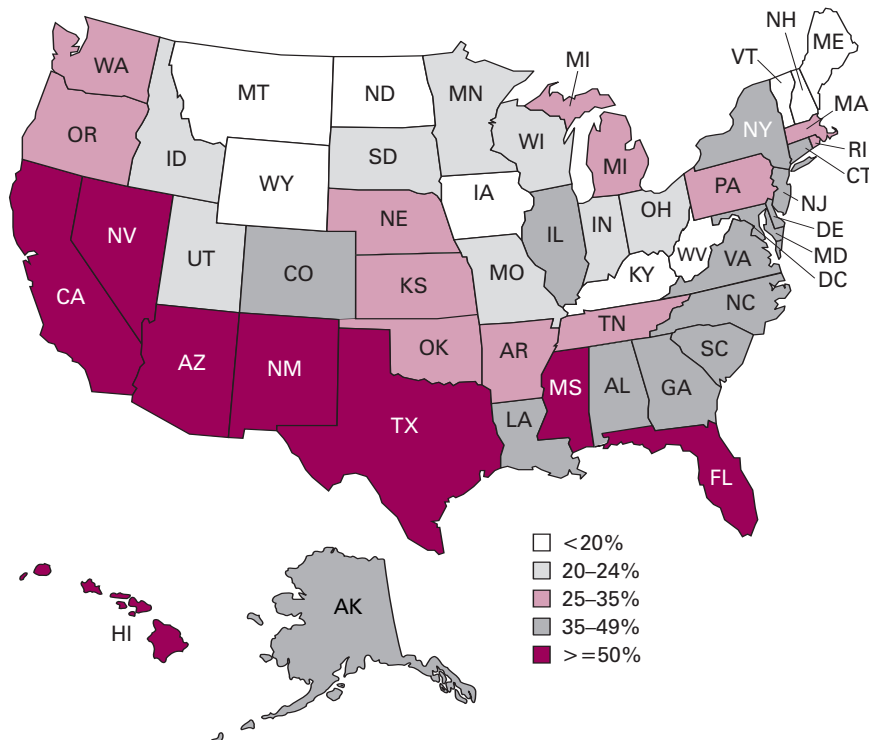


Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the IPUMS datasets drawn from the 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 5 percent sample, and the 2008 and 2009 American Community Surveys.

Notes: The 2009 estimates are averaged across 2008 and 2009. Numbers are rounded to the nearest ten thousand. Numbers may not sum to totals because of rounding.

a. Includes children with parents of unknown nativity (about 2 percent of U.S. children).

Figure 10. Minority Share of Children Age by State, 2009



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the IPUMS dataset drawn from the 2008 and 2009 American Community Surveys.

Notes: Children with parents of unknown nativity (about 2 percent of U.S. children) are excluded. Estimates are averaged across 2008 and 2009.



high birth rates have kept the child population growing in the past decade even as the pace of immigration has slowed. Driven by the population of children of immigrants, Hispanic children saw the largest growth (33 percent) among all racial and ethnic groups between 2000 and 2009, followed by Asian children (24 percent).

Since 2000, children of immigrants have offset the decline in the number of children with native-born parents and contributed to the changing demographic makeup of the U.S. child population under 18, nationally and in many states that before 1990 had small immigrant populations. As a result, the minority share of U.S. children increased from 38 percent in 2000 to 44 percent in 2009, with Hispanic children the largest minority group (22 percent in 2009). This growth occurred nationwide: in traditional immigration states, such as Texas, where the minority share increased from 57 to 63 percent; and in states with recent high growth in immigration, such as Georgia, where the share increased from 44 to 49 percent. Given that the minority share is higher for younger children (47 percent for children age 0 to 3) nationally, this trend will continue.

Notes

1. The latest data with national estimates of the foreign-born population are based on the 2009 American Community Survey. While the 2010 Census includes information about race and ethnicity, the decennial census does not contain information on nativity and citizenship.
2. Data in this fact sheet are taken from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets data drawn from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 5 percent sample, and 2005–09 American Community Surveys (Ruggles et al. 2010). Unless stated otherwise, estimates for 2006 and later years are averaged across two years (e.g., the 2006 estimate is averaged across 2005 and 2006). An immigrant or foreign-born person is someone

born outside the United States and its territories. People born in the United States, Puerto Rico, and other territories, or born abroad to U.S. citizen parents, are native born. Children with immigrant parents have at least one foreign-born parent. Unless stated otherwise, children with parents of unknown nativity (about 2 percent of U.S. children) are excluded.

3. Hispanic women, who represent a majority of immigrant women, historically have had higher birth rates than non-Hispanic white and black women (Sutton, Hamilton, and Mathews 2011).
4. The racial/ethnic categories are mutually exclusive: Hispanic, non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, non-Hispanic Asian, and Native American. The census survey allows respondents to select more than one racial/ethnic group. Hispanic are those who identified themselves as Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino. People of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Non-Hispanic black are those who identified themselves as black or African American regardless of additional racial/ethnic groups reported. Non-Hispanic Asians are those who identified themselves as Asian or Pacific Islander and did not report black/African American. Non-Hispanic white are those who identified themselves as white and did not report black/African American or Asian/Pacific Islander. Native Americans are those who identified themselves as American Indian/Alaska Native and did not report black/African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, or white.

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APPENDIX TABLE 1. Number and Share of Children of Immigrants by State, 1990 and 2009

State	1990			2009			% growth, 1990–2009	Rank by growth rate
	Number	% of state population	Rank by number	Number	% of state population	Rank by number		
Alabama	21,000	2	33	70,000	6	32	239	13
Alaska	13,000	8	41	21,000	12	44	58	43
Arizona	149,000	16	8	518,000	31	7	249	10
Arkansas	12,000	2	42	67,000	10	33	440	4
California	2,845,000	38	1	4,529,000	50	1	59	41
Colorado	70,000	8	17	253,000	21	15	264	9
Connecticut	98,000	13	14	173,000	22	20	76	36
Delaware	9,000	6	45	35,000	17	40	285	8
District of Columbia	13,000	12	40	23,000	21	43	73	37
Florida	543,000	19	4	1,202,000	31	4	121	29
Georgia	76,000	5	16	446,000	18	8	488	2
Hawaii	67,000	25	18	76,000	27	31	13	49
Idaho	17,000	6	37	55,000	14	36	231	16
Illinois	410,000	14	5	775,000	25	5	89	32
Indiana	42,000	3	25	130,000	8	23	210	18
Iowa	17,000	2	36	55,000	8	35	232	15
Kansas	33,000	5	31	87,000	13	30	164	22
Kentucky	15,000	2	38	53,000	5	38	243	12
Louisiana	41,000	3	26	55,000	5	36	34	46
Maine	15,000	5	39	16,000	6	45	7	50
Maryland	121,000	11	13	289,000	22	13	140	25
Massachusetts	206,000	16	7	339,000	24	11	65	40
Michigan	139,000	6	9	239,000	10	17	73	38
Minnesota	52,000	5	21	175,000	14	19	235	14
Mississippi	10,000	1	44	24,000	3	42	135	27
Missouri	36,000	3	29	95,000	7	28	166	21
Montana	5,000	2	48	9,000	4	47	72	39
Nebraska	12,000	3	43	57,000	13	34	368	6
Nevada	43,000	15	24	240,000	36	16	451	3
New Hampshire	17,000	6	35	28,000	10	41	59	42
New Jersey	351,000	20	6	644,000	32	6	83	34
New Mexico	52,000	12	22	102,000	21	26	96	31
New York	973,000	24	2	1,462,000	34	3	50	44
North Carolina	52,000	3	23	346,000	16	10	567	1
North Dakota	4,000	2	51	7,000	5	50	88	33
Ohio	92,000	3	15	168,000	6	21	83	35
Oklahoma	34,000	4	30	97,000	11	27	186	19
Oregon	56,000	8	19	181,000	21	18	223	17
Pennsylvania	126,000	5	12	264,000	10	14	110	30
Rhode island	40,000	18	27	52,000	24	39	30	47
South Carolina	21,000	2	34	89,000	9	29	333	7
South Dakota	4,000	2	50	9,000	5	46	144	24
Tennessee	27,000	2	32	129,000	9	24	377	5
Texas	912,000	19	3	2,188,000	33	2	140	26
Utah	38,000	6	28	132,000	16	22	244	11
Vermont	6,000	4	47	8,000	6	48	26	48

(continued)

APPENDIX TABLE 1. Number and Share of Children of Immigrants by State, 1990 and 2009 (Continued)

State	1990			2009			% growth, 1990–2009	Rank by growth rate
	Number	% of state population	Rank by number	Number	% of state population	Rank by number		
Virginia	126,000	9	11	325,000	18	12	158	23
Washington	137,000	11	10	371,000	24	9	171	20
West Virginia	7,000	2	46	8,000	2	49	3	51
Wisconsin	53,000	4	20	124,000	10	25	133	28
Wyoming	5,000	3	49	7,000	5	51	49	45
United States	8,263,000	13		16,845,000	23		104	
Big six states	6,035,000	25		10,799,000	37		79	
New high-growth states	1,218,000	5		4,306,000	16		253	
All other	1,009,000	6		1,739,000	11		72	

Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the IPUMS datasets drawn from the 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 5 percent sample, and the 2008 and 2009 American Community Surveys.

Notes: Children with parents of unknown nativity (about 2 percent of U.S. children) are excluded from the share of state population calculations. Numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand. Numbers may not sum to totals because of rounding. Percentages are based on unrounded numbers. The big six states are California, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey. In the new high-growth states, the growth rate was higher than the rate in any of the big six states.

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This brief was prepared with generous funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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