Childhood Migration and Well-being: A Framework for Understanding the Opportunities and Challenges

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71 Million Children in 2009: 24% Had An Immigrant Parent

Source: Calculations by Passel (2010) from Decennial censuses for 1850-2000, Current Population Surveys (CPS), and ACS data.
States with the Fastest Growing Immigrant Populations: 2000-2005

Percent Growth in Foreign-Born Population, 2000-2005

Children of Immigrants
Settling across the US (Avg. 23%)

Source: Author’s Tabulations 2006-08 American Community Survey
Challenges in Emerging Latino and Immigrant Settlement States

- Limited data specific to immigrant and Latino populations
- High concentration of limited English proficiency children and adults
- Low availability of providers with specialized cultural competence
- Diversity among immigrants and especially Latinos
Critical Education Concerns for Latino Children of Immigrants

- School Readiness
- High School Dropout Rates
- College Enrollment/Completion Rates
Kindergarten School Readiness, Reading

Kindergarten School Readiness, Math

- Identifying Numbers and Shapes
- Understanding Ordinality
- Solving Addition and Subtraction

High School Drop Out Rates

% of Population with a Bachelors Degree

% 25-34 year olds (weighted)  

- 1st generation*  - 2nd generation  - 3rd+ generation

* Includes adults who never attend school in US

Critical Health Concerns for Latino Children of Immigrants

- Declining Health of Immigrants with Time in the US
- Mental Health and Substance Use
- Overweight/Obesity and related conditions (e.g., Diabetes)
- Asthma
- Access to Health Care
The Latino Experience: Parent/Caregiver Mental Health

At Risk for Depression (PHQ-9): 27%
Experienced Trauma: 22%
Serious Symptoms of Depression: 14%

Foreign-Born Latina Mothers (NC LAMHA Study 2004-05, N=275)
The Latino Experience: Adolescent Mental Health (ages 12-18)

Source: Add Health Sample, 1993-94
The Latino Experience: Substance Use

Source: Hispanic Add Health Sample, 1993-94 (ages 12-18)
The Immigrant Experience: Obesity

Source: NSCH 2003, Singh (2009)
The Latino Experience: Childhood Asthma

Source: NHIS 2008
The Latino Experience: Access to Health Care

Source: NHIS 2008
The Immigrant Experience: Access to Health Care

Source: KFF 2009
Migration and Acculturation Process

Stages
- Pre-Migration
- Migration
- Post-Migration

Threats and Challenges
- Poverty
- Family Separation
- Political Violence
- Physical Trauma
- Emotional Trauma
- Accidental Injury
- Family Conflict
- Discrimination
- Social Isolation
- Legal Marginalization
- N’hood. Disorganization

Policy
- Trade & Econ. Dev’p. Policies
- Immigration Policies
- Immigrant Policies

Strengths and Resiliencies
- Coping Skills
- Remittances
- Family Support
- Community Ties
- Future Orientation
- Good Health
- Family Involvem’t.
- Rite of Passage
- Adaptive Skills
- Ethnic Identification
- Economic Gains
- Family Reunification
- Ethnic Enclaves

Source: UNC Carolina Population Center
Pre-Migration Poverty and Family Separation

Poverty

- “[In Mexico], there isn’t much money and you have a limit on things. Clothing is bought once a year; sometimes there’s nothing more to eat than beans. Many people don’t have anything to eat and people [live] on the streets.” {adolescent, LAMHA}

Family Separation

- “....When my husband would come visit us every 3 or 4 months, and he would leave, [my daughters] would cry. They would tell him, ‘I will go with you Daddy. I will go with you.’ And so when my family would make comments that I could not come here, that I would never have a complete home like my father’s other daughters, that is what drove me to say, ‘I am going.’ And I decided to come.” {parent, LAMHA PILOT}
Migration Trauma

Trauma

- “[I traveled] on a bus for two days sitting down and not stopping except at every gas station to buy whatever and go to the bathroom and from there arrive at the border and this...waiting a night, and walking, many hours walking through the desert. The water ran out, the food too and the sun was so strong. Lots of people fainted, lots of people die there and later you have to be hiding so the migra doesn’t catch you and all that...and the animals-scorpions, cobras-and sleeping on the ground, with nothing, you get cold, you get so hot, hungry, thirsty. {adolescent, LAMHA}
Social Isolation

- In Mexico, I knew all the families of my son’s friends. I knew the mothers, the fathers, and even some of the grandparents. I had visited their homes and they, ours. Here, it’s different. I don’t know the families of his friends.” {Parent, LAMHA Pilot}

Perceived Discrimination and Racism

- In school I always had problems because the Americans called me “wetback” and “beaner” “Mexican, go back to Mexico, we don’t want you here.” And so, I answered back and I was the only one that got in trouble, not the American. And I was always stuck in the intervention center, In School Suspension, or detention. {Adolescent, LAMHA study}
Strength and Resilience

Family Reunification
• “I moved here ‘cause I wanted to see my parents [and] ‘cause it had been a long time since I hadn’t seen them.... I had even forgot their faces; I couldn’t even recognize them.” {adolescent, LAMHA}

Adaptive Skills
• “At first I didn’t want to go because of the change. Sometimes a person is afraid because it’s another country, it’s another culture, other people. And sometimes it’s as if you fear that. But really, it’s like the saying goes, ‘No one becomes a prophet in their own land.’ So at times one has to search for other places and that’s what I’ve found in this country, a great opportunity. {adolescent, LAMHA}
Strength and Resilience

Ethnic Identification and Selective Acculturation
• “It’s hard because the things that our parents taught us, they’re not the same as what our teachers or the things that are outside [the family] teach us right now. So, we have to kind of live with it; we have to change but keep what our parents taught us in some way.” {adolescent, LAMHA}

Future Orientation
• “Even for an illegal [immigrant], I think if you put effort into learning the language [and] doin’ good in school it’ll be way easier for to to be able to find a job. And then, if there is an opportunity for you to get legalized you will have the rest behind you. I’m not a legal immigrant. I don’t have a visa. I don’t have nothin’ And in school I graduated taking AP calculus...I took a college-level course... My GPA was like 3.97.” “If there’s ever a change [in the law] for me to go to college, I’ll have that behind me.”{adolescent, LAMHA}
Thank you