

Demographics



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As one of the 10 major gateway states for immigrants, Illinois has seen significant demographic changes among its child population as evident by the most recent data on immigrant and Latino populations. The implications of these changes should not be understated; the recent rise in the proportion of both immigrants and Latinos has modified and will continue to modify who we are and how we live.

The influx of immigrants is not unique to Illinois, but the rise in children in immigrant families as a proportion of the total child population is noteworthy. The percentage of children in immigrant families in Illinois rose from 14 percent to 22 percent between 1990 and 2005, an increase that mirrors the national trend. Despite this congruence between Illinois and the nation, however, the composition of Illinois' child population markedly contrasts with that of its Midwestern neighbors.

The similarities between the Illinois and the United States immigrant child populations should not be overdrawn. Though they are similar with respect to proportionality, they vary according to certain parameters. Children in immigrant families in Illinois, by most measures, fare better than their national counterparts. For example, children in immigrant families

in the state are less likely to live below the poverty threshold than children in immigrant families nationwide, and children in immigrant families in Illinois are less likely to live in crowded households than those nationwide.

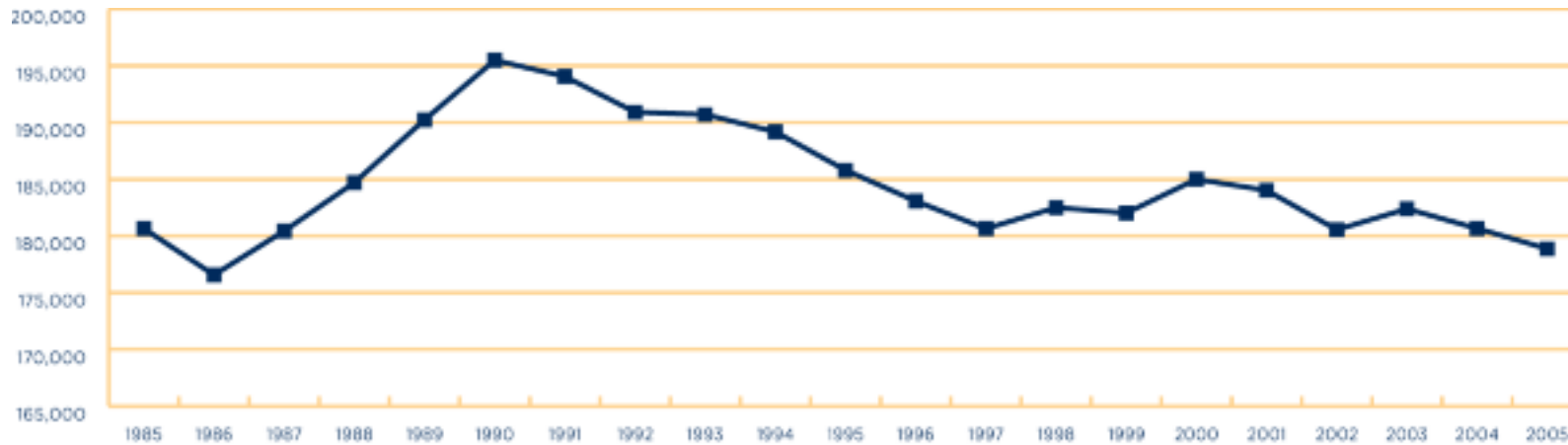
Although faring better than children in immigrant families nationwide, Illinois children in immigrant families experience more hardship than children from native-born families as indicated by measures such as crowded housing and the percentage of income spent on housing. Indeed, children in immigrant families tend to be poorer, to have worse health, and to encounter more food insecurity, according to a report by Ruby Takanishi of the Foundation for Child Development. On the flip side, surveys show that children in immigrant families are more likely to live with two parents than children in native-born families, and children in immigrant families are likely to score as well—or better—on measures of school engagement, such as doing homework and frequency of suspensions.

In addition to the burgeoning proportion of children from immigrant families, the percentage of Latino children in Illinois and throughout the nation has similarly escalated. The dramatic growth was driven

by both increased immigration compared with other racial and ethnic groups and by higher birth rates among Latino women. Indeed, Latino children are the second largest child population group in both Illinois and the United States. Nationwide, 2000 Census data show that 62 percent of children in immigrant families come from Latin America. However, more Latino children are being born in the United States than immigrating.

Although Latino children comprised only 11 percent of the child population in 1990, they comprised 20 percent of the child population by 2005. The increase in the percentage of Latino children in the Illinois child population, similar to the demographic trend of children in immigrant families, is congruent with the increase on the national level. As Latino children make up an increasingly larger proportion of the child population, white children, both in Illinois and in the nation, make up an increasingly smaller proportion of the population. Children from other racial and ethnic groups, including black and Asian, have maintained stable proportions of the child population both in Illinois and in the nation.

Live Births in Illinois



Source: Illinois Department of Public Health

Child Population by Race/Ethnicity, Illinois and U.S.

	1990	2000	2005
Illinois			
White	67%	59%	57%
Black	19%	19%	18%
Latino	11%	17%	20%
Asian	3%	3%	4%
Other	<1%	2%	1%
U.S.			
White	69%	61%	58%
Black	15%	15%	15%
Latino	12%	17%	20%
Asian	3%	3%	4%
Other	1%	4%	3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1990, 2000, American Community Survey 2005

Children as a Percentage of the Total Population in Illinois

	1990	2000	Average 2004-2006
All Children	25.8%	26.1%	25.7%
Birth to age 4	28.8%	27.0%	27.7%
Ages 5 to 9	28.4%	28.7%	27.1%
Ages 10 to 14	27.0%	27.9%	28.4%
Ages 15 to 17	15.8%	16.5%	16.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1990, 2000, American Community Survey 2004-2006

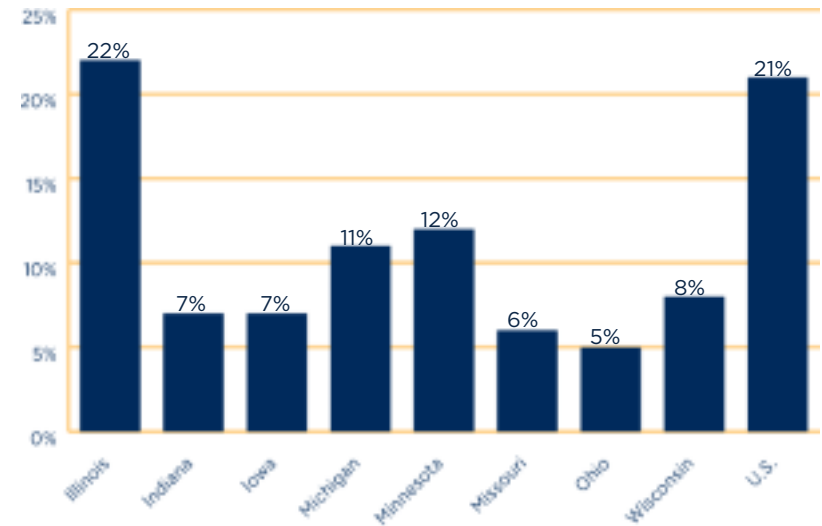
Demographics

Percent of Children in Immigrant Families, Illinois and U.S.

	1990	2000	2005
Illinois	14%	20%	22%
U.S.	13%	19%	21%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1990, 2000, American Community Survey 2005

Percent of Children in Immigrant Families, Midwestern States and U.S., 2005



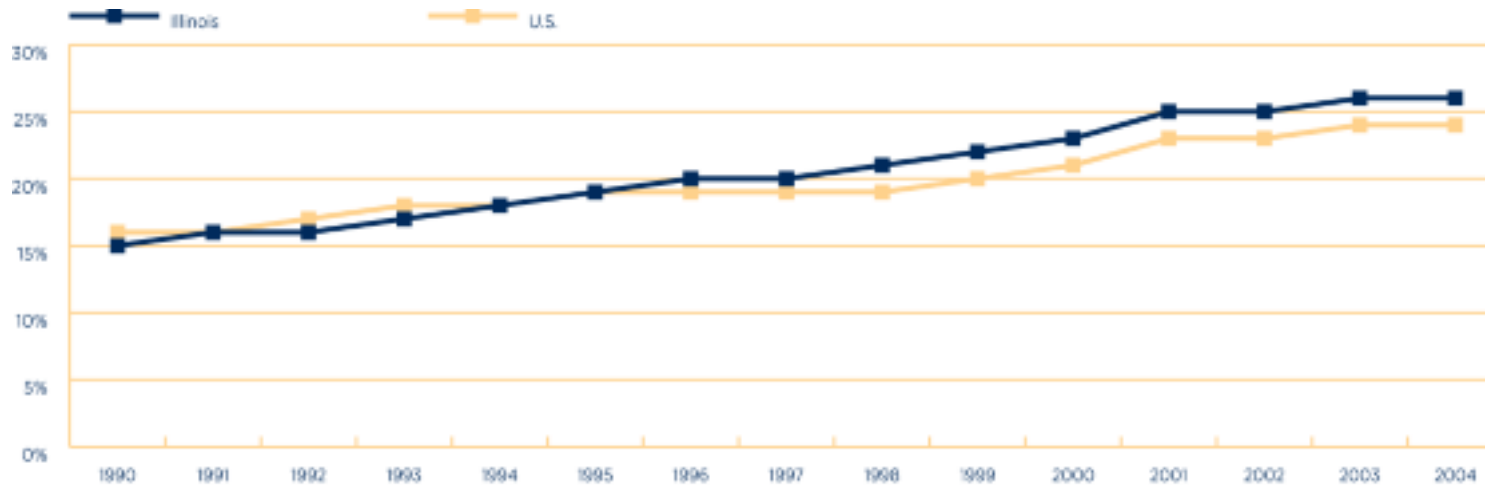
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2005

Children in Immigrant and Non-Immigrant Families, Illinois and U.S., 2002-2005

		Illinois	U.S.
Children living below poverty threshold	Immigrant families	16%	22%
	U.S.-born families	16%	17%
Children living in low-income families (below 200% of poverty level)	Immigrant families	44%	50%
	U.S.-born families	33%	37%
Children whose parents have less than a high school degree	Immigrant families	25%	28%
	U.S.-born families	7%	8%
Children living in crowded households	Immigrant families	26%	32%
	U.S.-born families	8%	9%
Children living in families that spend more than 30% of income on housing	Immigrant families	47%	45%
	U.S.-born families	32%	32%

Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2002-2005

Births to Foreign-Born Mothers



Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, based on data from a Child Trends analysis of National Center for Health Statistics data set

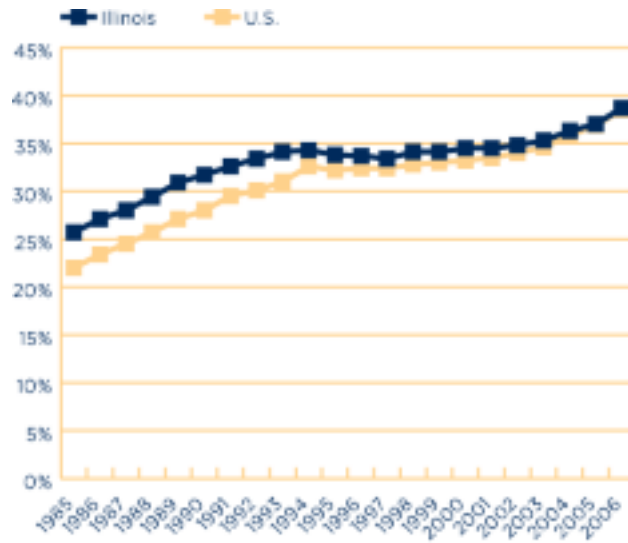
Nativity and Citizenship Status of Children

	1990	2000	Average 2004-2006
Illinois			
Native	97.0%	95.2%	95.7%
Foreign born	3.0%	4.8%	4.3%
Naturalized citizen	0.6%	0.7%	0.9%
Not a citizen	2.4%	4.1%	3.4%
U.S.			
Native	96.7%	95.6%	95.9%
Foreign born	3.3%	4.4%	4.1%
Naturalized citizen	0.5%	0.8%	0.8%
Not a citizen	2.8%	3.7%	3.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1990, 2000, American Community Survey 2004-2006

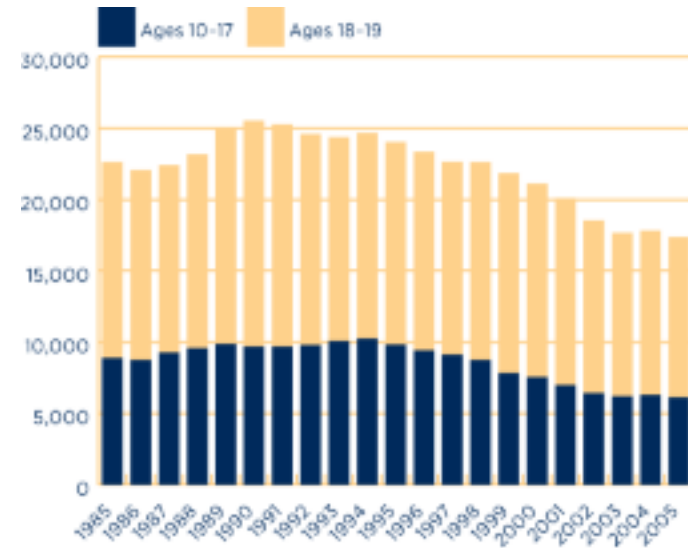
Demographics

Births to Unmarried Women, Illinois and U.S.



Source: Illinois Department of Public Health and National Center for Health Statistics

Births to Teen Mothers in Illinois



Source: Illinois Department of Public Health

Family Households with Own Children, Illinois and U.S.

	1990	2000	Average 2005-2006
Illinois			
Married couple	77%	74%	71%
Female householder, no husband present	19%	21%	23%
Male householder, no wife present	4%	6%	6%
U.S.			
Married couple	77%	72%	69%
Female householder, no husband present	19%	22%	24%
Male householder, no wife present	4%	6%	7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1990, 2000, American Community Survey 2005-2006

By Ngoan Le

Vice President of Programs, Chicago Community Trust

Although Illinois is not a border state, its diverse economy and established immigrant communities attract a steady flow of new settlers. In 2005, more than 13 percent of Illinoisans were immigrants and 22 percent of the state's children were from immigrant families, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In fact, one in five children in Illinois comes from immigrant households.

Immigrants living in Illinois are diverse—nearly half are from Mexico and the other half come from all corners of the world with a large number from Asia.

The state's economy attracts both high- and low-skilled immigrants. Highly trained professionals from South Asia and Europe, for example, are being recruited to meet the needs of science and technology development. The growing service industries and farming communities also need low-skilled immigrants to fill jobs requiring manual labor.

Immigrants bring contributions and challenges as diverse as they are. As a state, we benefit greatly from immigrants who are

working in our labor force at their most productive age and offsetting the growing aging population. Additionally, in many instances, education costs were absorbed by other countries, allowing highly trained immigrants to put their education immediately to work. In other cases, immigrants, particularly children, with limited English skills require language training before they can realize their full potential.

Illinois leads the country with many public and private programs and initiatives to support the successful integration of immigrants. The state has funded adult English language classes and citizenship preparation, enabling generations of immigrants to become more productive and engaged in community-building efforts faster than in many other states. Fully integrated adult immigrants also are more likely to support their children learning English, thereby enabling them to improve their education outcomes.

Successful integration strategies require active leadership at the community level as well as the local and state government levels. Faith-based institutions and immigrant self-help organiza-

tions play critical roles in meeting the needs of immigrant adults and children.

Over the last 10 years, a larger number of immigrants bypassed Chicago and established new homes in suburban areas or cities and counties downstate. Between 1990 and 2000, the immigrant population more than doubled in 30 out of 102 counties. For Illinois communities that are not traditional ports of entry, local governments, education systems and community service providers must develop programs and services to meet the needs of the new residents. Schools and family services, in particular, need to respond to the growing diversity of their classrooms.

When immigrant children live in households with limited education and English-language fluency, meeting their needs while maintaining a productive learning environment for all children can be challenging for school administrators, teachers and social workers.

However, there are communities where exemplary practices build on immigrant children's assets. The Schaumburg school district,

for example, created dual-language programs where native and immigrant children learn subjects in two languages, allowing native children to grasp a new language and immigrant children to learn English without losing their native-language fluency. In Chicago, the Logan Square Neighborhood Association created a nationally recognized family literacy model in which immigrant parents and their children learn together.

Previous immigration waves have shown that immigrant children will acculturate and learn English much more quickly than their parents. Illinois would benefit even more when children from immigrant families are well prepared to be multilingual and can function comfortably in cross-cultural environments so that they and their new home state can be competitive in a global economy.

Challenges and Opportunities Face the ‘Largest Minority’ Group

By Sylvia Puente

Director of the Center for Metropolitan Chicago Initiatives at the Institute for Latino Studies, University of Notre Dame

Eduardo has just started kindergarten in a classroom of nearly 40 children. He did not attend preschool and, to date, speaks only Spanish.

Unfortunately, Eduardo’s situation is all too common for too many children in Illinois. He is beginning school already behind his peers, without the benefits of early childhood education and with limited English proficiency. He will likely spend much of his elementary school education in an overcrowded classroom. While his Spanish could be an asset in a dual-language classroom and in a global economy, instead it will put him further behind most other children.

Eduardo’s ability to learn English will be hampered by the fact that his kindergarten teacher is neither bilingual nor trained to teach English language learners. Furthermore, he will have limited access to after-school programs, and his chances are a little better than half that he will finish high school.

For example, Eduardo may not have access to Head Start because in Chicago there is a mis-

match in demand and supply. While some areas of the city have more slots than children, other Latino neighborhoods have five children for every one slot, according to the Chapin Hall Center for Children.

This reality reflects the demographic shift occurring within Chicago: Some neighborhoods are losing children, while others, primarily Latino communities, are growing.

In addition, the majority of Latino children now live in the suburbs. Counties surrounding the city have experienced growth of between 200 percent and 400 percent in the Latino school-age population since 1990. Latino children now represent 20 percent of the state’s child population, and those under age 5 currently comprise one in every four children in this age cohort, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2006 American Community Survey.

Among youth, Latinos are the state’s largest “minority” population. Yet comprehensive access to enrichment programs such as early childhood education and after-school programs in both the city and the suburbs is lacking.

To address these challenges, civic organizations, service providers, policymakers, school districts, and the Latino community itself all must critically examine the impact of this tremendous demographic transformation on the region and allocate resources and realign priorities to address these changes.

This requires leadership, commitment and political will. Pragmatically, it also necessitates building infrastructure such as early childhood education facilities, fostering a broader understanding of cultural competency and second-language acquisition, and building a welcoming and inclusive environment. In addition, several recent studies indicate that parental involvement in their children’s education is a necessary component of success.

The strength, resiliency and support of Latino families ensure that many children who grow up in Illinois under Eduardo’s circumstances will pursue higher education and have successful careers. Many such families make tremendous sacrifices to provide oppor-

tunities for their children. However, we can’t afford to risk the future of the many families that cannot make such sacrifices.

By building on the language assets of our Latino children, we foster participation in the global economy. Harnessing opportunities for success, well-being and economic potential is the right thing to do for each of our children. In addition, the viability of our state and nation is increasingly dependent on their capacity to fully participate in all aspects of our technology-based 21st century society.

The author thanks Roger Knight for providing additional data and Berenice Alejo, Andy Deliyannidies and Maricela Garcia for their feedback.