

The Child Indicator

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New Report on Characteristics of Immigrant Families and their Implications for Social Policies

With an increasing immigrant population and a still uncertain immigration policy, policy affecting immigrants continues to be a highly relevant topic in the United States. The Urban Institute, in collaboration with Child Trends, has released a report, *Immigration and Child and Family Policy*, addressing the implications of child and family social policy programs on immigrants and noting future policy implications. The report is part of the Urban Institute's larger project, *Assessing the New Federalism*, which has evaluated the devolution and outcomes of federal programs at the state and local levels. The current report draws its findings from U.S. Census, Current Population Survey, and National Survey of American Families (NSAF) data.

The opening sections of this report detail current trends and changing characteristics of the immigrant population, with a focus on immigrant families and children. According to the report, the number of children with an immigrant parent has grown significantly, and these children increasingly make up a considerable proportion of low-income children. Interestingly, although children of immi-

grants tend to be poorer and experience more economic, health, and housing hardship, they are also more likely to live with two parents and have at least one parent in the work force when compared with all children.

Of particular interest are the implications of changes in the number and characteristics of immigrant families for social policies, most of which were formed several decades ago. The current study found that over 80 percent of children with immigrant parents are citizens and are eligible for public benefits. However, children with at least one immigrant parent have lower participation rates in nearly all public benefit programs when compared with children of natives, despite higher rates of poverty and hardship. The authors cite fear of deportation, lack of awareness of their child's eligibility, restrictions on legal immigrants' receipt of benefits, language barriers, and additional documentation requirements as barriers to receiving benefits for eligible children and families. The report also describes the success of public health care in

continued on page 6

In this Issue...

New Report on Characteristics of Immigrant Families	1, 6
Recently Released Reports	1, 4, 5
New Data and Resource Tool Provides Easy Access to Infant and Maternal Health Information	2
New York State Effective and Promising Practices Webpage	3
The Brookings Institution Releases Report on Child Poverty in U.S. Cities	3, 6
NCHS Survey Measures Catalog: Child and Adolescent Mental Health	4
Art in America: Families' and Children's Experiences with Art and Culture	5

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Just Released

Monitoring the Future National Survey Results on Drug Use, 1975-2005, Volume II: College Students & Adults, Ages 19-45, 2005 is a report of the findings from a longitudinal study conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute of Social Research on substance use by American adolescents, college students, and adults through age 45. The report presents trends in the use of licit and illicit drugs, as well as levels of perceived risk and personal disapproval associated with drugs.

The report is available online at

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006043>

continued on page 4

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Statement of Purpose

The goal of *The Child Indicator* is to communicate major developments and new resources within each sector of the child and youth indicators field to the larger community of interested users, researchers, and data developers on a regular basis. By promoting the efficient sharing of knowledge, ideas, and resources, *The Child Indicator* seeks to advance understanding within the child and youth indicators community and to make all its members more effective in their work.

Child Trends, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research center that has been active in the child and youth indicators field for 25 years, produces and distributes *The Child Indicator* with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. We welcome your comments and suggestions. All communications regarding this newsletter can be directed to childindicator@childtrends.org.

Brett Brown, Ph.D., Editor

Data Tools

New Data and Resource Tool Provides Easy Access to National, State, and Local Infant and Maternal Health Information!

By the time a child is born, a wide array of factors have already contributed to his/her chances for a healthy and successful life. *Peristats*, an online data tool developed by The March of Dimes Perinatal Data Center, provides data, information, and resources addressing many of these factors. This site allows users to easily access and use statistics related to infant and maternal health, such as preterm and low birthweight status, prenatal care and maternal health factors, infant mortality, and health insurance coverage. *Peristats* integrates data from over twelve government sources (e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health Resources Services Administration) and offers data at the national, state, county, and city level across several years.

Users can easily navigate the website using pull-down menus to select a state or indicator topic. One can choose from viewing state profiles, or tables, maps and graphs of individual topics and can easily switch back and forth between these options. For each option, data are accompanied by text explanations and are presented as numbers, percentages, rates, or a mix of these forms. *Peristats* not only presents and describes findings, but also provides a brief overview of main topics, which includes information on the topic's importance, key statistics, and relevant Healthy People objectives. Moreover, for each state *Peristats* provides a brief summary report of the major findings. In addition to state profiles and data by topic, the site provides trend data and comparisons by different regions, as well as comparisons by maternal age and race/ethnicity for most topics.

Peristats provides the ability to quickly create graphs, maps, and tables by selecting a topic and a location. Users can print, copy and paste, or download PowerPoint slides of these figures to supplement their own reports. The website also offers the option to download selected data into an Excel file.

Aside from using *Peristats* as a source for data, one can also use the site to connect with relevant resources and information. For every selected topic and subgroup comparison, users can link to a Pubmed search that automatically generates a list of citations related to these subjects. Under resources, *Peristats* also offers links to a range of government and non-profit websites that contain further information on infant and maternal health. In addition, for each state selected, the site provides a link to the state's department of health.

Peristats offers additional information about data definitions and methods of calculating data. In addition, users can receive updates on data and website changes by signing up for the Peristat Newsletter.

The Peristats website can be accessed at: <http://www.marchofdimes.com/peristats/>

New York State Effective and Promising Practices Webpage

The New York State Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) has added an Effective and Promising Practices page to its website. The purpose of this page is to provide resources for service providers and all stakeholders involved in programs to improve outcomes for children and families. It provides valuable information for providing effective evidence-based programs, developing and measuring outcomes, research on effective practices, and implementation issues.

An outcomes-based approach aims to shift the focus of program evaluation from measures such as number of referrals or home visits, to measuring the benefit for program participants. In various forms, each of the links provided help users develop a logic model, which maps the connection between program design and desired outcomes. In addition, the website provides useful questions to ask when developing outcomes. The section on measuring outcomes provides several links to resources on issues such as data collection and commonly used measures, constructs, and assessments.

Once relevant outcomes have been determined, the effective practices and programs section provides links to numerous sources of program evaluations. The links are to outside websites of both government agencies and other organizations, with some being more general and others covering specific topics such as violence prevention or child welfare. While service providers may not choose to implement the same exact programs, they can find effective practices that they can incorporate into existing

programs or use to design a new program.

The implementation section aims to help practitioners put programs into action once outcomes have been selected and a program has been chosen. Links are provided to three outside websites: Promising Practices Network - Program Implementation, *What Works, Wisconsin!*, and Washington State Institute for Public Policy. The Promising Practices Network website provides users with information about what implementation means and why it is significant, the key components of successful implementation, and guidance on how to determine if implementation was successful. *What Works, Wisconsin!* is a study of evidence-based programs, available online from the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance. The report is a thorough resource that includes cost-benefit analyses and considerations for implementation. Washington State Institute for Public Policy website includes links to program evaluations and cost benefit analyses for programs in Washington State, but that exist in similar forms in all states, such as education programs.

By choosing research-based practices and then measuring relevant outcomes, program providers are able to monitor the well-being of children in their programs and track their progress in a meaningful way, which are critical steps towards ensuring the best possible outcomes for these children.

The Effective and Promising Practices webpage is available at:
http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/sppd/eff_practices/

The Brookings Institution Releases Report on Child Poverty in U.S. Cities

Children living in large cities, when compared to all children, are more likely to experience several disadvantages, including poverty. The Brookings Institution's recently released report, "Kids in the City: Indicators of Child Well-Being in Large Cities from the 2004 American Community Survey", focuses on this issue and related disparities. The report was written by authors from both the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program and the Population Reference Bureau and was funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Based on findings from 2004 American Community Survey data, it not only explores child poverty rates and trends in 50 of the largest

U.S. cities, but also examines urban residence in relation to single-parent-hood, employment, education, and other demographics.

The report found that, as of 2004, the child poverty rate in large U.S. cities was higher than the national average and had increased recently. The child poverty rate in large cities was 28 percent in 2004, 10 percentage points higher than the national average. The article provides the rate for each city, which ranged from 50 percent in Detroit and Atlanta to 11 percent in Virginia Beach. The child poverty rate in large cities as a whole and in 16 individual cities also significantly increased between the years

1999 and 2004. Only one city, Los Angeles, experienced a significant decline in the child poverty rate.

The report also compared cities' rates of single parenthood and other characteristics with corresponding child poverty rates, in the hope of explaining some of the variation among cities. For each large city, the report provides low to high rankings for child poverty, single-parent-hood, lower parental unemployment, and low parental education rates. In comparing cities, researchers found that those ranking high on child poverty also tended to rank high on single parenthood. In addition, parental

continued on page 6

NCHS Survey Measures Catalog: Child and Adolescent Mental Health

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), an agency of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, now offers a website that provides detailed information about survey measures in NCHS surveys of child and adolescent mental disorders and use of mental health services. The NCHS Survey Measures Catalog for Child and Adolescent Mental Health presents information about data collected and compiled by NCHS through two types of data systems: population-based surveys that use personal interviews or examinations, such as the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, and the medical records of health care providers, such as the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey.

Researchers can use the search tool to find information about the specific survey questions and scales from NCHS surveys related to various child and adolescent mental health topics, including emotional, behavioral, and developmental conditions. Users can search the entire catalog or by specific survey. The catalog divides survey measures into two categories: "conditions, symptoms, or concerns" and "service use or needs". From these two categories, users can select measures from a list of sub-topics.

The report generated by each search includes the name and year of the specific survey containing the measure, as well as detailed information about the question text, response options, sample, respondent, data collection

methodology, periodicity of the survey, and other information such as skip patterns or information about scales. If a specific measure is found in more than one survey, the entries are listed side by side, making it simple for the user to compare how the variables are measured in each survey. Additional relevant information offered by the site includes links to the survey questionnaires, data files, data file documentation, and in some cases, interactive websites for the tabulation of data.

The search tool does not provide general information or research findings on mental health disorders or their treatments, but additional information can be found through the "Related Resources" section of website's home page. The catalog offers a comprehensive overview of the surveys used by the NCHS to gather information on the topic of children's mental health and, though open to the public domain, is intended to be used in analyses generated by researchers for the purpose of informing policy makers in the realm of public health and health care. For certain measures, access must be requested through a proposal submitted to the NCHS Data Research Data Center (For more information visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/r&d/rdc.htm>).

Users can access the NCHS Survey Measures Catalog by visiting: <http://www.cdc.gov/NCHS/measurescatalog/camh.htm>

Recently Released Reports

continued from page 1

Age 2: Findings From the 2-Year-Old Follow-up of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) has been released. This report analyzes data from the second round of data collection for the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), a study of a nationally representative sample of children born in the year 2001. This follow-up publication reports descriptive information about the children's personal and family characteristics, mental and physical skills, relationships with caregivers and fathers, and experiences in childcare. Data are presented for the overall sample as well as for various subgroups such as gender, race/ethnicity, family income, and family structure.

The report is available online at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006043>

Overweight and Physical Activity Among Children: A Portrait of States and the Nation, 2005 is a report based on the National Survey of Children's Health study that presents national and state-level information on the health and well-being of children in the context of their families and neighborhood environments. The report highlights the study's major findings on the number of overweight children in the U.S., the demographic characteristics of these children, and the association between children's weight and their level of physical activity. The implications for adult health outcomes of an unhealthy weight and lack of physical activity during childhood are also discussed.

The report is available online at <http://nschdata.org/documents/OverweightChartBook.pdf>.

Health, United States, 2006 with Chartbook on Trends in the Health of Americans with Special Feature on Pain has been released. This annual report from the National Center for Health Statistics contains data from numerous federal sources as well as private and international organizations. Though the report contains data on the health of

continued on page 5

Art in America: Families' and Children's Experiences with Art and Culture

How important are artistic and cultural activities to parents and their children? Who participates in these experiences? *Arts, Culture, and the Social Health of the Nation 2005* addresses these and other questions related to trends in Americans' art and cultural experiences. The report, released by the Institute for Innovation in Social Policy at Vassar College and based on a nationally representative sample from the 2004 National Social Survey, focuses particularly on changes in arts participation since the previous report in 2002.

The report builds on findings from the 2002 report to compare rates of participation over time. It also explores the current role of artistic and cultural activities in the lives of Americans, the benefits gained from these activities, and various obstacles that hinder participation in the arts. Findings show that Americans value both attending arts events and individual artistic pursuits as important in their lives, as well as the lives of their children. More than 80 percent of parents surveyed rated reading, creative work, and listening to music as important to their children's lives, while more than 60 percent wish they had gone to more artistic events when they were young or had more chances to do creative work of their own.

However, participation in the arts has declined among children since 2002 in two areas: attendance at live perform-

ances and going to art shows and museums, both of which declined by 15 percentage points. Participation in creative work, the third area studied, showed a slight increase. Barriers to children's participation include few arts opportunities at school, lack of information, insufficient after-school programs, high costs, inconvenient locations, and lack of time. Furthermore, children's level of participation varied significantly by family income, with poorer children having lower levels of involvement. For example, based on parent reports of participation in the past year, 39 percent of children with a family income of less than \$35,000 had not attended a live performance, compared with 22 percent of children from families with higher incomes.

The authors of the report encourage the re-establishment of a strong arts infrastructure to educate, entertain, and expand the imaginations of Americans as the nation faces crises including war, natural disasters, and increasing poverty. With the publication of these data, the Institute for Innovation in Social Policy hopes to inform policy makers, educators, and the academic community of the importance of arts and arts education as social indicators in the lives of both children and adults.

The full report is available at:
http://iisp.vassar.edu/arts_culture.html

Recently Released Reports (*continued*)

Americans of all ages, data for children are provided in two ways. Some indicators, such as dental visits and binge drinking and marijuana use, are entirely focused on children. Other indicators, such as overweight and obesity and health insurance, are based on the entire population but contain subgroup breaks by age. In addition to the chartbook, the publication contains 147 trend tables which contain detailed subgroup breaks and can be downloaded in spreadsheet version.

This report is available online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus.htm>

Quality Counts at 10: A Decade of Standards-Based Education is the 10th edition of this report from the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center and sponsored by the Pew Center on the States. The report tracks and compares states' progress on policy indicators of standards-based school reform, such as efforts to improve teacher quality, school climate, and resource equity. Progress in these areas is compared with math and reading scores and achievement gaps between race/ethnicities and poor versus non-poor are analyzed. The online edition has additional features such as an interactive data map, customizable reports where users can make comparisons across states, and downloadable state tables.

This report is published in Education Week magazine and is available for free until February 4, 2007 at <http://www.edweek.org/qc2006>.

The Health and Well-Being of Children in Rural Areas: A Portrait of the Nation 2005, is a new chartbook from the Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Using data from the National Survey of Children's Health, the chartbook compares indicators on the child, the child's family, and the child and family's neighborhood across three location types: urban focused, large rural city/town focused, and small town and isolated rural focus. The indicators cover topics such as access to health care, health status and conditions, injuries and safety, parental monitoring, and physical activity and overweight.

This report is available online at: http://nschdata.org/documents/NSCH_Rural_Health_Chartbook.pdf

New Report on Characteristics of Immigrant Families and their Implications for Social Policies, cont'd.

continued from page 1

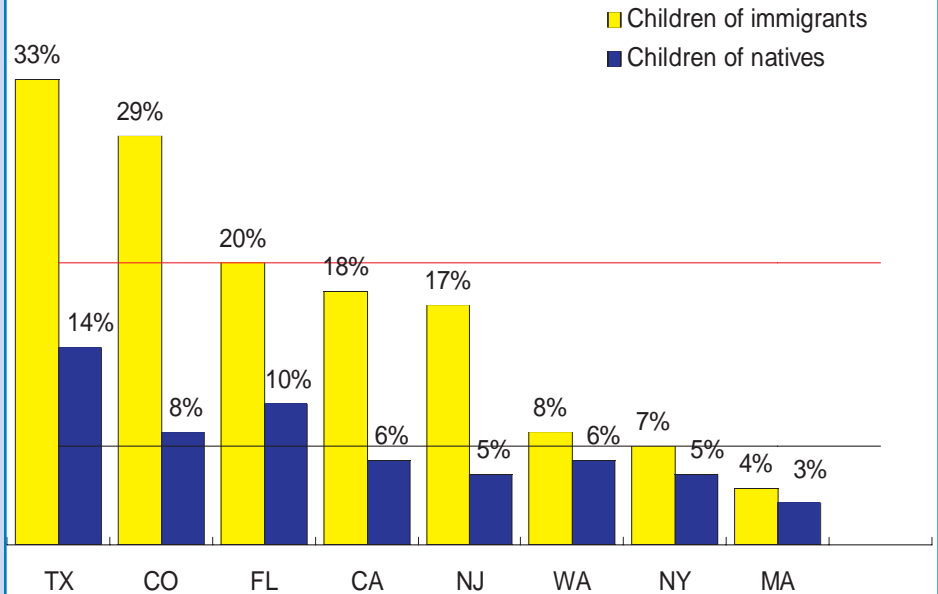
reaching levels of immigrant family participation comparable to that of native families. Finally, the authors discuss regional differences in rates of need and receipt of public benefits.

In addition to public benefit programs, the report discusses disparities related to education and school readiness, including the higher likelihood that children with immigrant parents will not attend center-based early child care, have limited English proficient parents, and perform more poorly in school.

The report calls for an examination of and change in social policies both at the federal and state levels, and raises several questions for further research.

To read the full report visit:
http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311362_lowincome_children3.pdf

FIGURE 14: Proportion without Health Insurance for Children of Immigrants and Natives, Selected States, 2002



Source: Capps, Randy and Fortuny, Karina. (2006). "Immigration and Child and Family Policy." Urban Institute, Washington: DC, page 20.

The Brookings Institution Releases Report on Child Poverty in U.S. Cities, cont'd.

unemployment was associated with poverty rates, with high unemployment predicting a high poverty ranking and low unemployment predicting low child poverty. Low parental education was only weakly related to poverty rankings.

Recognizing the demographic diversity of these cities, the study compared poverty rates with differences in the cities' racial and ethnic structure and rate of population growth. Cities with a higher growth rate and a significant Hispanic population or a largely white population tended to have lower poverty and unemployment rates, and either a low single parenthood or a high education ranking. In contrast, cities with slow growth and a largely black and white population or a highly racially diverse population had some of the highest poverty rates as well as higher unemployment rates and, in the mostly black and white cities, a high single-parenthood ranking.

The authors of this report hope to draw attention to the increasing incidence of child poverty and the potential use of ACS to monitor local trends on an annual basis. Moreover, the unique mix of factors contributing to poverty in each demographically different city type, such as varying combinations of unemployment or single-parenthood, underscores the need to share information between similar city types and promote a range of strategies to decrease poverty.

Read the full report at: http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20060810_KidsCity.pdf

continued from page 3

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