

Latino Demographics

- Latinos are the largest and fastest growing ethnic group in the United States. Latinos accounted for 49% of the nation's growth between 2004 and 2005ⁱ.
- 44.3 million Latinos lived in the United States in 2006 representing 14.8% of the populationⁱⁱ. This number does not include undocumented immigrants. By 2030, the Latino population is estimated to reach 73 million or 20.1% of the U.S. populationⁱⁱⁱ.
- Latinos are disproportionately represented among low-income families. In 2007, 28.6% of Latino children lived in poor families compared to 10.1% of white children^{iv}. In the 10 most populated states, rates of child poverty among Latino children range from 20% in New Jersey, Florida, and Illinois to 35% in Texas^v.
- In 2002, over two thirds of uninsured children (68%) in fair and poor health were Latinos, yet accounted for less than one-fifth of all children (17%) in the United States^{vi}.
- According to a 2000 US Census survey 74.9% of Latino households spoke a language other than English at home^{vii}.
- Between 1996 and 2006, the proportion of Latino students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools increased from 14.0% to 20.1%, significantly higher than the growth of any other ethnic/racial group^{viii}. Latino students, however, are less likely to complete high school than their White counterparts (53% Latino vs. 75% White students)^{ix}.

Latino Families In Child Welfare

- Some studies have shown that Latino children are usually younger (between the ages of 0-5) than non-Latino children at the time of referral and substantiation, placing them at higher risk for placement^x. This is concerning given that infants and young children are less likely to be reunified with their families.^{xi}
- Reports of abuse and neglect are relatively proportionate between Latino and White non-Latino children. Yet, substantiated cases are more likely to occur with Latino children^{xii}.
- Latino children are more likely to be placed in out-of home care more quickly and for longer periods of time than their White non-Latino counterparts^{xiii}.
- 62% of the Latino children served by child welfare services today are placed in out-of home care, compared to 25% in 1977^{xiv}.
- More than one third (37.4%) of Latino children in family foster care live in relative placements, representing the highest rate among all racial/ethnic groups^{xv}.
- In 2004 Latino youngsters composed 20% of all children in institutional residential care^{xvi}.
- The number of Latino children in foster care more than doubled from 6.7% of the foster care population in 1982^{xvii} to 19% in 2006^{xviii}. This number is roughly the same as the general representation of Latinos in the population of U.S. children (21%). By contrast White children constitute 57%^{xix} of the total population of US children, but only 41% of the children in out-of-home placement^{xx}.
- The issue of overrepresentation is further exacerbated when immigration status is taken into account^{xxiv}. Immigrant children and children from immigrant households are less likely to be living in relative foster care

and more likely to be living in group homes and institutions than their non-immigrant counterparts. They are also more likely to have a goal of independent living or long-term foster care ^{xxv}.

Child Welfare Practice and Policy Implications

- While Latinos are the largest ethnic minority in the U.S. (12.5%) and on average younger than the general population, there is very little research on service utilization and developmental outcomes among Latino children^{xxvi}.
- Growth in the rate of Latino children in foster care has far outpaced the number of Latino foster parents available to care for these children. More Latino families are needed to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of Latino youth in foster care^{xxvii}.
- Given the large number of Latino children placed with relatives, subsidized guardianship programs similar to Kin-GAP (Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program) in California, can potentially increase the number of Latino youth achieving permanency^{xxviii}.
- One study documents the potential of family group conferencing and team decision-making strategies for reducing the number of Latino families in the child welfare system^{xxix}.
- The Fostering Connections to Success Act of 2008 includes provisions such as subsidized guardianship support that could help reduce the overrepresentation of Latino children and improve outcomes by reducing the need for formal foster care^{xxx}.

Information compiled through the work of the Casey Latino Leadership Group comprised of members from Casey Family Programs, Marguerite Casey Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Footnotes

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