

YOUNG SCHOLARS PROGRAM RESEARCH SUMMARY
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Latino U.S.-Citizen Children of Immigrants: A Generation at High Risk

Summary of Selected Young Scholars Program (YSP) Research

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Children of immigrants are growing up in a unique historical context in the United States—a time marked by aggressive immigration policies and practices. Although much has been written on the topic of immigration—and immigration enforcement in particular—few empirical studies have examined the impact of immigration policies on the development of children of immigrants. The Foundation for Child Development is committed to supporting young children in reaching their developmental potential, especially children growing up under conditions of economic instability and social exclusion. For over 10 years, through its Young Scholars Program (YSP), the Foundation has sponsored substantial research with vulnerable children populations, particularly children of immigrants. Between 2009 and 2015, a period marked by heightened immigration enforcement (Gonzalez-Barrera & Krogstad, 2016), when approximately 500,000 parents were deported (Pew Research Center, 2015) studies conducted by YSP scholars have examined the social circumstances of this population, as well as the consequences of immigration policies and practices on the well-being of children of immigrants. This working paper reviews the scholarly work of selected YSP scholars on the impact of parental legal status on child development.

The work of scholars such as Drs. Joanna Dreby, Kalina Brabeck, Cecilia Ayón, Christia Spears Brown, and Liseth Rojas-Flores exemplifies the rigorous empirical inquiry and understanding of issues that the Foundation for Child Development seeks to promote on behalf of children affected by social exclusion. Their research focuses on Latino school-aged children, ages 6 to 12 years, from mixed-status families living in various regions of the continental United States, including eastern and western states as well as mid-southeastern states. The scholarly work of these YSP researchers, taken together, explores the “assets” of this population (addressed later in this review also as “protective factors”) and highlights the vulnerability of Latino children of immigrants. Using rigorous empirical methodologies, including collecting data from multiple classes of informants (parents, children, teachers, clinicians), standardized measures, semi-structured interviews, and secondary analysis of national data sets, these scholars have examined the impact of immigration enforcement practices and policies on Latino U.S.-citizen children living in mixed-status families

with authorized or unauthorized parents. Specifically, they examine the effects of parents' legal status, including parents who have directly experienced immigration enforcement action, such as detention or deportation, on Latino child outcomes.

Over the past two decades, the number of detained and deported migrants has grown exponentially, leading to over 4.2 million deportations since 2000 (Meissner, Kerwin, Chishti, & Bergeron, 2013). Of the estimated 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States in 2014, about 54% (5.8 million) came from Mexico and 15% (1.7 million) from Central American countries (Passel & Cohn, 2016). For broader demographic profile regarding unauthorized¹ immigrant populations in the United States, see Table 1 starting on page 3. Latino immigrants are disproportionately detained or deported by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), with people from Mexico and Central America accounting for 91% of the removals (Rosenblum & McCabe, 2014). The vast majority of those detained and deported are Latino males (Rosenblum & McCabe, 2014; Golash-Boza & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2013)—and many are parents of Latino U.S.-citizen children (Passel, Cohn, Krogstad, & González-Barrera, 2014). Today, an increasing number of Latino citizen children are affected not only by the immigration status of a parent but also by the constant threat of deportation-related family separation. Notably, although many young Latino citizens may experience adversity associated with poverty and related risks, emerging research shows that precarious parental immigration status puts them at higher risk beyond the ill effects of poverty (Yoshikawa, Kholoptseva, & Suárez-Orozco, 2013).

Developmental scientists have long underscored the impact of the larger context on children's overall well-being (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Rutter, 1979). Most recently, models of social stratification associate legal status with conditions that shape health over time, describing immigration as a social determinant of health (Castañeda et al., 2015; Viruell-Fuentes, 2007). Informed by these theoretical frameworks, YSP scholars seek to examine some of the mechanisms connecting parental legal status and developmental outcomes in Latino children of immigrants. From discrimination to fear of enforcement to family dissolution due to the deportation of a parent, differential outcomes for Latino citizen children due to parental status reveal distinct patterns of risk and of promotive and protective factors in relation to the current heightened immigration enforcement and sociopolitical context in which we live.

¹ "Legal or authorized immigrants" are persons to whom the U.S. government has granted legal permanent residence or asylum or allowed entry as refugees or under temporary status, either for residence or employment. "Unauthorized immigrants" are individuals who were born abroad and are not legal immigrants. "Unauthorized immigrants without contact with ICE" are those who were born abroad, are not legal residents, and have not had contact with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The term "citizen" refers to individuals who are U.S. citizens from birth—born in the United States, Puerto Rico, or other U.S. territories, or children of U.S. citizens born while living abroad (Pew Research Center, 2015).

TABLE 1. PROFILE OF THE UNAUTHORIZED POPULATION: UNITED STATES

Migration Data Hub Table developed by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI). Table adapted with permission.

For the complete table, go to <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/authorized-immigrant-population/state/US>

DEMOGRAPHICS	ESTIMATE	% OF TOTAL
Unauthorized Population	11,009,000	100%
TOP COUNTRIES OF BIRTH		
Mexico	6,177,000	56%
Guatemala	723,000	7%
El Salvador	465,000	4%
Honduras	337,000	3%
China	268,000	2%
REGIONS OF BIRTH		
Mexico and Central America	7,854,000	71%
Caribbean	232,000	2%
South America	673,000	6%
Europe/Canada/Oceania	432,000	4%
Asia	1,464,000	13%
Africa	353,000	3%
YEARS OF U.S. RESIDENCE		
Less than 5	1,989,000	18%
5 to 9	2,569,000	23%
10 to 14	2,943,000	27%
15 to 19	1,802,000	16%
20 or more	1,705,000	15%

DEMOGRAPHICS

ESTIMATE

% OF TOTAL

AGE		
Under 16	866,000	8%
16 to 24	1,653,000	15%
25 to 34	3,094,000	28%
35 to 44	2,708,000	25%
45 to 54	1,551,000	14%
55 and over	1,137,000	10%

GENDER

Female	5,060,000	46%
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FAMILY

ESTIMATE

% OF TOTAL

PARENTAL STATUS

Population ages 15 and older	10,263,000	100%
Reside with at least one U.S.-citizen child under 18	3,350,000	33%
Reside with noncitizen children only under 18	573,000	6%
Reside with no children	6,341,000	62%

MARITAL STATUS

Population ages 15 and older	10,263,000	100%
Never married	4,155,000	40%
Married to a U.S. citizen	818,000	8%
Married to a legal permanent resident (LPR)	633,000	6%
Married to non-U.S. citizen/non-LPR	2,658,000	26%
Divorced, separated, widowed	2,000,000	19%

EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE	ESTIMATE	% OF TOTAL
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SCHOOL ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Population ages 3 to 17	1,092,000	100%
Enrolled	1,003,000	92%
Not enrolled	89,000	8%
Population ages 3 to 12	507,000	100%
Enrolled	455,000	90%
Not enrolled	51,000	10%
Population ages 13 to 17	586,000	100%
Enrolled	548,000	94%
Not enrolled	38,000	6%
Population ages 18 to 24	1,390,000	100%
Enrolled	408,000	29%
Not enrolled	982,000	71%

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Population ages 5 and older	10,926,000	100%
Speak only English	819,000	7%
Speak English "very well"	2,504,000	23%
Speak English "well"	2,290,000	21%
Speak English "not well"/"not at all"	5,313,000	49%

TOP 5 LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME

Population ages 5 and older	10,926,000	100%
Spanish	8,143,000	75%
English	822,000	8%
Hindi and related	263,000	2%
Chinese	253,000	2%
Korean	187,000	2%

WORKFORCE	ESTIMATE	% OF TOTAL
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION		
Civilian population ages 16 and older	10,139,000	100%
Employed	6,466,000	64%
Unemployed	702,000	7%
Not in the labor force	2,970,000	29%
ECONOMICS		
FAMILY INCOME		
Below 50% of the poverty level	1,494,000	14%
50% to 99% of the poverty level	2,028,000	18%
100% to 149% of the poverty level	1,909,000	17%
150% to 199% of the poverty level	1,602,000	15%
At or above 200% of the poverty level	3,976,000	36%
ACCESS TO HEALTH INSURANCE		
Uninsured	6,715,000	61%

Source: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data from the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS), 2010–2014 ACS pooled, and the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), by James Bachmeier of Temple University and Jennifer Van Hook of the Pennsylvania State University, Population Research Institute.

Data-related notes

1. “School Enrollment of Children and Youth” refers to unauthorized immigrants who reported attending school or college at any time in the three months prior to the survey.
2. For languages, “Chinese” includes Mandarin, Cantonese, and other Chinese languages; “English” includes English, Jamaican Creole, Krio, and Pidgin Krio; “French” includes French, Patois, French or Haitian Creole, and Cajun; “Hindi and related” includes Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, Sindhi, Sinhalese, and Kannada; “Sub-Saharan African” includes Bantu, Swahili, Mande, Fulani, Kru, and other African languages; “Tagalog/Other Filipino” includes Tagalog, Bisayan, Sebuano, Ilocano, and Hocano.
3. “-” estimates are zero, not applicable, or not displayed due to small sample size.
4. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Protective factors are resources or promotive processes that foster resilience and lessen the impact of adverse social environments on children (Rutter, 1979; Masten, 2011). Scholars also refer to these protective factors as “assets.” Protective factors or assets for Latino children of immigrants documented in the YSP research include relational processes, social supports, and psychological factors that buffer risks associated with the negative experience of social exclusion and/or losing a parent due to detention or deportation. (See Figure 1 on page 10 for summary lists of protective factors documented by YSP scholars for Latino U.S.-citizen children by parental legal status.)

An understanding of how key risk and resilience factors may increase or mitigate vulnerability in Latino children of immigrants is crucial for intervention and especially important in designing and implementing policy. The YSP scholars’ research outlined here reveals the clusters of risk and protective factors that impact the short- and long-term developmental outcomes of Latino children of immigrants. Their findings underscore risk and resilience frameworks, which provide policymakers and service providers with well-defined targets for intervention and prevention.

Assets and Protective Factors for Latino Citizen Children Regardless of Parents’ Legal Status

To date, YSP scholars have documented the following protective factors in relation to parent legal status:

- *Parent legal status.* YSP scholars’ research consistently finds that Latino children of authorized parents, in spite of overall economic challenges, fare significantly better in most domains of their lives compared to peers whose parents are unauthorized or affected by detention or deportation (e.g., Brabeck, Sibley, & Lykes, 2016; Rojas-Flores, Clements, Hwang, & London, 2017). Thus, it is evident that having a parent with legal status, including citizenship or legal permanent status, protects children from a gamut of psychological, social, and academic risks that may otherwise endanger their healthy development.
- *Early care and education.* In a recent study, Brabeck, Sibley, Taubin, and Murcia (2016) found that authorized parents accessed childcare subsidies and enrolled their children in means-tested early intervention programs such as Head Start and Universal Preschool. These center-based early education and care programs are known to set children of immigrants from low socioeconomic backgrounds on a successful academic trajectory (Votruba-Drzal, Coley, Collins, & Miller, 2015).
- *Service utilization.* Likewise, this YSP study (Brabeck, Sibley, Taubin et al., 2016) found that Latino children of immigrants—and notably their parents with authorized status—accessed and used a range of social services. Specifically, Latino families with authorized parents accessed government-subsidized jobs, social security, unemployment, welfare, and Medicaid benefits for adults and children in the family, including parents. A plethora of research, in turn, demonstrates substantial positive benefits from a family’s use of social services, particularly for citizen children of immigrants (Seiber, 2013; Yoshikawa, Godfrey, & Rivera, 2008).

- *Unauthorized immigrants living in the United States contribute significantly to state and local taxes* (Gee, Gardner, Hill, & Wiehe, 2017). Despite their contributions to the overall economy and social services tax base, use of public services such as welfare benefits, including Medicaid, WIC, and food stamps, is overall lower among children and families of immigrants than families with U.S.-born parents (Capps et al., 2015). Some unauthorized parents of U.S.-citizen children make use of some social services for their children, mainly Medicaid, WIC, food stamps, and reduced-cost lunch services (Brabeck, Sibley, Taubin et al., 2016), especially when specific medical needs arise (Capps et al., 2015; Rojas-Flores, Grams-Benitez, Hwang, & Clements, 2017).
- *Parent-child relationships*. Brabeck and Sibley (2016) found that on measures of positive parent-child relationships, Latino families overall scored average or above average in multiple domains regardless of parents' legal status. This is a cultural strength and protective factor of the Latino family, known to mitigate the ill effects that discrimination and other social exclusion processes pose for children of immigrants (Brabeck & Xu, 2010; Ferreira, Kiang, & Potochnick, 2013).
- *Mental health: Hyperactivity, aggression, or conduct problems*. With regard to mental health outcomes, a study conducted on the West Coast by Rojas-Flores, Clements et al. (2017) found no differences in hyperactivity, aggression, or conduct problems as reported by parents among Latino children of unauthorized immigrants, regardless of whether or not families have experienced parental detention or deportation. Similarly, in an East Coast study, Brabeck and Sibley (2016) report that Latino citizen children of parents with unauthorized status were rated with no hyperactivity problems.

Risk Factors for Latino Citizen Children Regardless of Parental Legal Status

Risk factors are individual, family, community, and society variables associated with circumstances of and processes of “vulnerability” that pose significant threats to the growing child (Masten, 2011). Consistent with a large body of research on risk and vulnerability, the risk factors identified by YSP research include processes that exacerbate child vulnerability and often lead to negative developmental outcomes. (See Figure 1 on page 10 for summary lists of risk factors for the three groups). Undoubtedly, these YSP results have far-reaching consequences for the development of public policy.

Departing from a public health conceptual model, Dreby (2012a) describes the significant associations of the threat of immigration enforcement with negative outcomes on all Latino children of immigrants, regardless of their own citizenship and the legal status of their parents. Dreby (2012a) depicts the negative burden of immigration enforcement policies on children with her Burden of Deportation Policies Pyramid, which shows “misunderstandings of immigration” at the pyramid’s base, with fears, short-term and long-term effects building consecutively up from the base—all capped by the worst possible outcome, family dissolution. The YSP research corroborates these risk factors and their cumulative effects.

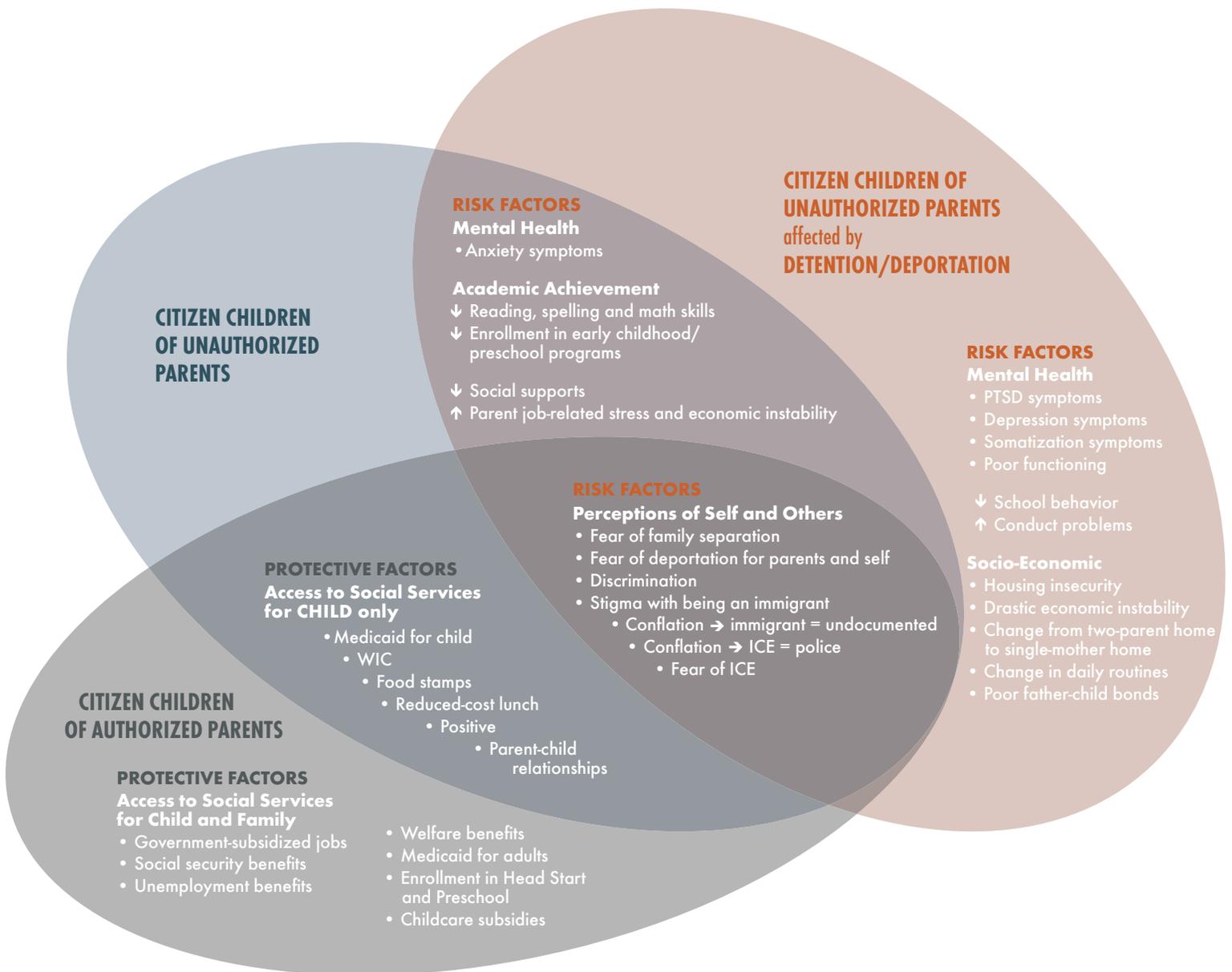
- *Fear of ICE and conflation of ICE and police.* Worrisome, and with possible far-reaching effects on civic engagement, are the children’s expressed fears of ICE and conflation of ICE with the police (Dreby, 2012a, 2012b; Rojas-Flores, Nunes, Hwang, & Zalvana, 2017).

Latino children of immigrants, regardless of their parents’ legal status, are experiencing fear, discrimination, and stigma. Most notable are (1) their conflation of being immigrants with being undocumented and (2) their perception that immigration enforcement agents function as equals to the police.

- *Ethnic identity challenges.* Many Latino citizen children view legal status as a stigma (Dreby, 2015). Citizen children’s perception of illegality and their conflation of being an immigrant with being unauthorized (Dreby, 2012a, 2012b, 2015; Ayón, 2015) are a concern as children develop their own ethnic identities as citizens.
- *Discrimination.* As anti-immigrant sentiments and mass immigration enforcement legislation have escalated over the past several years, Ayón (2015) and Spears (2015) describe the cumulative and detrimental effects of discrimination—evident in economic stress and social exclusion—on Latino mixed-status families in general, and on Latino citizen children in particular. These daily experiences of discrimination are chronic stressors (Spears, 2015) associated with emotional distress and physiological changes in children, a process often known as “toxic stress” (Shonkoff et al., 2012).

FIGURE 1. LATINO CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS GROWING UP IN A CONTEXT OF HEIGHTENED IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT AND ANTI-IMMIGRANT SENTIMENTS AND POLICIES (ROJAS-FLORES, 2017)

NOTE: This graph does not include research findings completed to date by non-YSP researchers.



Risk Factors for Latino Citizen Children of Unauthorized Immigrants

Emerging research demonstrates that unauthorized parental legal status is a strong predictor of poorer physical health (Vargas & Ybarra, 2016), and particularly poor mental health and academic outcomes for Latino children (Rojas-Flores, Clements et al., 2017; Brabeck, Sibley, Taubin et al., 2016). Dreby (2012a, 2012b) notes that children of unauthorized immigrants are a particularly vulnerable population because they experience a distinct set of circumstances of vulnerability and life stressors, including misunderstandings about immigration (frequently associating immigration with illegality) and fears about family stability (for self and family members).

- *Mental health: Anxiety.* Citizen children of parents with precarious legal status were rated by their parents and by children's own report as exhibiting higher levels of anxiety than children whose parents were authorized (Brabeck & Sibley, 2016; Rojas-Flores, Clements et al., 2017).
- *Academic achievement.* Academic achievement during middle childhood is a good predictor of long-term academic achievement and eventual completion of school (García Coll & Marks, 2009). Brabeck, Sibley, Taubin et al. (2016) were among the first to examine the relationship between parents' legal status and academic performance during middle childhood. They found that parents' unauthorized status was a significant predictor of children's poor performance in reading comprehension, math, and spelling.²
- *Service utilization.* Emerging research reveals that differential utilization of public health services based on parental immigration status is shaped primarily by the threat of deportation (Brabeck, Sibley, & Lykes, 2016). Unauthorized immigrants under-utilized most public means-tested services, even when their citizen children qualified for these programs (Brabeck, Sibley, & Lykes 2016; Ayón, 2014; Yoshikawa, 2011). Nonetheless, Brabeck, Sibley, Taubin et al. (2016) found that unauthorized parents are tapping into some social services that predominantly benefit their children, mainly Medicaid for children, WIC, food stamps, and reduced-cost lunch services. Likewise, other literature indicates that some unauthorized parents enroll their citizen children in means-tested services when specific medical needs arise (Capps et al., 2015; Rojas-Flores, Grams-Benitez et al., 2017).

Citizen children of unauthorized Latino immigrants exhibit greater levels of anxiety and demonstrate lower reading, spelling, and math skills than similar aged peers of parents with established legal status.

² As child outcomes by parental immigration status may be confounded with parental education, marital status, parent and child language preference, family income, child gender, and child disability diagnosis, these factors were statistically controlled for the analyses in Brabeck, Sibley, Taubin, et al. (2016) reported here.

Risk Factors for Latino Citizen Children of Detained or Deported Parents

Parents are fundamental for the well-being of children. At the top of her public health pyramid, Dreby (2012a) describes the detention and deportation of a parent as having the most immediate and long-term detrimental effects on the lives of children. According to a Human Rights Watch report (2017), an estimated 10,000 parents of citizen children are detained each year in the state of California alone. This YSP research identifies children of parents who have been affected by immigration enforcement—a subgroup of children of parents with unauthorized status (note the red oval that depicts this subgroup in Figure 1 on page 10) because their adverse experience of parental detention and/or deportation places them at higher risk, with a distinct set of incremental risk factors and life stressors associated with the loss of a parent. When the constant dread of arrest, detention, or deportation of parents culminates in actual family separation—whether short-lived or permanent—the results are particularly detrimental

Higher levels of PTSD symptoms in children of detained and deported parents indicate that forced parental separation resulting from immigration enforcement is particularly detrimental to children’s mental health. Furthermore, the unpredictability and uncertainty associated with such forced parent-child separations may exacerbate PTSD symptoms.

and far-reaching for child well-being (Dreby, 2012a, 2012b). Children of detained and deported immigrants suffer the consequences of economic instability, emotional distress, changes in daily routines, long-term financial instability, the emotional distress of family separation, and finally, in some cases, family dissolution (Dreby, 2012a, 2012b, 2015). This increased adversity is worrisome as research indicates a synergistic effect between increased stress and adverse life events such as economic hardship and family separation (Dixon-Saxon & Coker, 2014).

- *Mental health: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms.* In a study with a sample of citizen children divided into three groups according to parental legal status (authorized Legal Permanent Residents, unauthorized no contact with ICE, and unauthorized with enforcement experience), children of detained or deported parents were rated with higher levels of PTSD symptoms than their peers (Rojas-Flores, Clements et al., 2017).³ PTSD results in debilitating effects on child development and overall functioning, affecting the child’s ability to live a productive life and to develop trusting relationships. Concentration and memory are also affected by this condition, leading to academic performance and learning problems (Samuelson, Krueger, Burnett, & Wilson, 2010). PTSD in children is also a costly public health issue (Soni, 2014).
- *Internalizing problems over time.* Higher levels of depression, extreme anxiety about physical symptoms such as pain or fatigue, and lower psychological and academic functioning were found among children affected by parental detention/deportation when compared to children whose parents were not detained/deported or were

legal permanent residents (Rojas-Flores, Clements et al., 2017). Furthermore, children of detained/deported parents exhibited greater anxiety and depression symptoms over time (six months post initial assessment) when compared to children of unauthorized parents who did not have contact with immigration enforcement and parents with legal residency (Rojas-Flores, Grams-Benitez et al., 2017). Notably, anxiety and depression create immediate developmental challenges to child functioning (Kendall et al., 2010) and pose higher risk for future mental health problems (Lopez, Turner, & Saavedra, 2005).

- *Externalizing problems over time.* Children of detained/deported parents had more behavior problems, as reported by teachers, and school behavior problems, as reported by clinicians, than did children of authorized, legal permanent residents (Rojas-Flores, Clements et al., 2017). Following the same sample of children six months post initial interview, children of detained/deported parents continued to rate higher on internalizing and externalizing problems over time as reported by parents (Rojas-Flores, Grams-Benitez, et al., 2017). Specifically, these children were rated as having significantly higher externalizing problems (conduct problems and hyperactivity).
- *Changes in father-child bonds.* Given the gender differences of current deportation trends, the losses resulting from prolonged or permanent separation from one's father often erodes Latino father-child bonds (Dreby, 2012a), further impacting the emotional well-being of citizen children.
- *Economic instability.* Dramatic instability results when a two-parent home becomes a single-mother home and the mother unexpectedly becomes the sole breadwinner overnight—becoming what Dreby describes as “suddenly single mothers” (Dreby, 2012a, 2015).
- *Housing insecurity and related food insecurity* set in motion a range of short-term and long-term difficulties for these children, ranging from disruption in child care to abrupt school and neighborhood relocations (Dreby, 2012a, 2012b, 2015).
- *Academic achievement and service utilization.* Preliminary findings indicate that Latino citizen children of detained and/or deported parents were rated by clinicians and teachers as exhibiting higher rates of poor academic functioning, including learning problems, when compared to children of parents with stable legal status in the United States (legal permanent residents) (Mechure & Flores-Rojas, 2017). There is a gap in the health service utilization literature with regard to citizen children's use of services following the detention or deportation of a parent (Capps et al., 2015). Similarly, no studies have yet assessed the impact of detention/deportation on academic achievement and overall service utilization. Given the established negative association between trauma and learning, we suspect that child academic achievement would be significantly impacted after experiencing forced separation from parents.

³ As child outcomes by parental immigration status may be confounded with maternal education, family income, and child lifetime exposure to potentially traumatic events, these factors were statistically controlled for in Rojas-Flores, Clements, et al., 2017, analyses reported here.

Policy Recommendations

Taken together, the YSP scholars' findings highlight a range of risk factors and assets/protective factors for Latino children of immigrants, with the former outweighing the latter. As shown in Figure 1 on page 10, detention and deportation policies in the United States impact the lives of Latino citizen children in multiple short- and long-term ways. Undoubtedly, parental legal status becomes a source of social inequality (Dreby, 2015) for Latino citizen children. The unintended consequences of these restrictive immigration policies create a greater immediate burden on our society due to children's mental health problems: for example, increased reliance on health care and, potentially, on social welfare systems. Furthermore, the long-term intergenerational effects of the cumulative risk experienced by the growing generation of Latino citizen children may in turn be tied to poorer health outcomes in future generations. The social, emotional, and health costs of immigration enforcement on citizen children will be long lasting and should not be overlooked by policymakers and child service providers.

Whether or not one agrees with the ethics or legality of the ways in which citizen children of unauthorized parents have become citizens—these children are U.S. citizens with all the rights and need for care of any other vulnerable citizen children. It is important to underscore that this population of citizen children is affected by various local, state, and federal policies related to economic, educational, health, social, and psychological well-being. For a summary of the most relevant state policies effecting the well-being and development of children of immigrants, see Rodríguez, Young, and Wallace (2015).

For a most up-to-date review of immigration federal policies, see Chishti and Bolter's (2017) Migration Policy Institute Policy Beat. The following points propose an actionable agenda and alternative policy options that more effectively address the best interests of Latino citizen children in a less harmful manner.

Social Services Accessibility and Utilization

- *Address disparities in accessibility, enrollment, and utilization of means-tested social services.* Divergent state social service policies affect children of immigrants as they influence access to services that have direct impact on child health and the well-being of their families. Research shows large differences among many states in the enrollment rates of their Medicaid-eligible citizen children with immigrant and non-immigrant parents (Seiber, 2013). State-specific factors that contribute to these disparities must be reassessed, and federal sponsored Medicaid expansions under overall health care reform must take into account the best interest of our citizen children's health (for a review of divergent health and social services state policies, see Seiber, 2013; Rodríguez, Young, & Wallace, 2015). Access to social services, including early education, is a crucial protective factor for young Latino citizens (Brabeck, Sibley, Taubin et al., 2016; Yoshikawa & Kalil, 2011; Yoshikawa, Godfrey, & Rivera, 2008) and—contrary to popular belief—has economic benefits that extend to families and communities, as well as the entire U.S. economy.

Immigration Enforcement Policies and Practices

- *Reduce unnecessary detainment and associated prolonged parent-child separation.* There is significant variation on length of immigration detention stays by state, with some states taking significantly longer times in the processing of detainees (Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), 2013). The longer the detention of a parent, the longer parental absence, the worse the family fares economically, psychologically, and socially—and the higher the possibility of worse developmental outcomes in citizen children (Dreby, 2012a, 2012b; Rojas-Flores, Grams-Benitez et al., 2017). Clearly, lengthy parental detention destabilizes families and communities, imposes serious costs to taxpayers, and leave indelible effects in young citizen children.
- *Revise deportation legislation and practices in favor of maintaining family units.* Policymakers with an interest in increasing the stability and well-being of immigrant families in the United States should implement alternatives to deportation of parents of citizen children, which, as mentioned earlier, disproportionately affects Latino immigrant fathers. Extensive research on fragile families underscore that children growing up without a father because of incarceration are especially likely to experience disadvantages later in life (Turney, 2017; Waller & Swisher, 2006) and experience adverse health and behavioral consequences (Colter et al., 2017). The parallels between parental imprisonment and parental immigration detention are striking. Emerging research underscores the economic impact of losing a father to incarceration with associated consequences for perpetuation of childhood social inequality (Wildeman & Muller, 2012; Turney, 2017).
- *Revise enforcement apprehension/arrest procedures to reduce exposure to children.* Preliminary findings demonstrate that among children of parents who have been detained/deported, those who witnessed the arrest of a parent experienced higher levels of anxiety symptoms than those who did not (Rojas-Flores, Nunes et al., 2017). Anxiety disorders in children fall under the five most costly children's conditions in the United States (Soni, 2014). Furthermore, children exposed to the arrest of a parent fare worse with regard to mental health outcomes than those who are protected from witnessing such arrest (Roberts et al., 2014). There are established protocols for law enforcement to help address the needs of children at the time of their parents' arrest (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2014). Immigration enforcement arrest protocols should adopt these procedures as a part of ongoing consideration of citizen children's best interests.
- *Revise federal legislation to provide permanent legal status and/or a pathway to citizenship for unauthorized parents.* The Obama administration failed to pass Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) (for more information, see Capps, Fix, & Zong, 2016), and most recently the Trump administration decided to rescind of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) by March 2018 (see Department of Homeland Security Memorandum, 2017), as such it is unclear whether federal policy will proceed to provide a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients. According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS; 2017), approximately 93% of approved DACA applications were submitted by young adults from Latin American countries, primarily from Mexico. Many of these DACA recipients are parents of citizen

children (Capps, Fix, & Zong, 2016). Emerging research underscores the intergenerational effects of legislation that provides protection from deportation, such as DACA, on the well-being of citizen children of immigrant parents. Hainmueller and colleagues (2017) provide casual evidence on the positive mental health effects on children of DACA recipients. Notably, 73% of children of DACA recipients in this groundbreaking research were Latino citizen children (N=8,610) (Hainmueller et al., 2017). Any consideration of DACA moving forward, should be viewed with an understanding of the well-being of those children directly affected.

Creation of Supportive Communities around Children of Immigrants

The thriving of children of immigrants is fostered by supportive environments, which develop in the context of parents and families and through service providers across many sectors. Aligning with the Foundation for Child Development's new vision, supporting the early care and education workforce is essential for vulnerable children to survive and to thrive.

- *Supporting parents and families.* Care for children is mainly provided by parents and caregivers. Despite positive parent-child relationships (Brabeck & Sibley, 2016) and overall parenting practices, Latino mixed-status families experience a range of stressors related to constant threat of parent-child separation that goes above and beyond the stress related to poverty. Specifically, data show that Latino citizen children of unauthorized parents were younger than those of authorized parents (Brabeck, Sibley, & Lykes, 2016), which research demonstrates may put children at risk for a gamut of problems. Thus, family-focused interventions, with a particular focus on supporting parents are warranted. For children at higher risk, that is, those who experienced the detention/deportation of a parent, higher doses of intervention and additional support may be required, given the drastic change in family composition—from being a two-parent home to a single-mother home overnight (Dreby, 2012a, 2012b).
- *Supporting teachers and early interventionists.* Given the high rates of anxiety and PTSD symptoms among children of unauthorized immigrants, particularly for those who have experienced the detention and/or deportation of a parent, trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate systems should be provided in multiple settings (e.g., home, schools, clinics). In addition, trauma-informed intervention and prevention programs for this vulnerable population should target synergistic adverse events, such as poverty and traumatic loss of a parent (Rojas-Flores, Clements et al., 2017). Special education for teaching and school personnel, as well as other health care professionals, on the impact of anxiety and PTSD on learning outcomes is also warranted. Pediatricians, mental health providers, and faith leaders can benefit from trauma-informed care training and education. Developmentally and context- and culturally-sensitive preventive screenings and interventions are a must with this vulnerable young population.

Future Research Directions

In light of the current sociopolitical climate and the rapid growth of the Latino citizen children population in the United States, it is imperative that we continue to develop an understanding of how immigration status impacts the overall well-being of U.S. citizen children in order to better meet the needs of this vulnerable population and maintain their health. Overall, with the exception of the aforementioned study on effects of DACA on young children (Hainmueller et al., 2017), we lack causal evidence on the effects of recent immigration policies on young children. Such a void in the literature warrants immediate attention as a major research direction (Yoshikawa, Suarez-Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2017).

Implement longitudinal studies to examine how the relationship between parent legal status and enforcement acts such as detention and deportation of parents impacts child mental health outcomes over time, particularly as it relates to academic achievement and service utilization. More research is necessary to understand the risks and protective mechanisms of parent detention/deportation on citizen children over time and across developmental domains.

Explore additional mechanisms of parent legal vulnerability on children's overall well-being, particularly for Latinos of other races and for other ethnic immigrant groups.

- *Citizen children of color.* Children of black immigrant mixed-status families (many from the Caribbean) experience poverty and further social exclusion (Hernandez, 2012) and discrimination, in part due to the color of their skin.
- *Citizen children of diverse religious backgrounds.* In January 2017, President Trump signed executive orders concerning immigration enforcement that signaled expanded deportations. Given the executive orders banning immigration from some majority Muslim nations, it is likely that children may perceive these actions as another form of selective exclusion. Developmental scientists must explore the distinct and additive risk effects on such faith-based legislation, particularly for children of Muslim immigrant parents.

Examine mixed-status families' strengths and resilient practices and characteristics. The resilience and strengths of children of immigrants must be set against their background of risk and vulnerability. New research must explore individual protective factors, or child characteristics that mitigate the risks connected with parental precarious legal status—such as child socio-emotional skills, commitment to school, among others—as well as relational protective factors, including warm or supportive relationships with parents or other adults, and positive peer relationships. Lastly, societal or community protective influential factors, including positive and uniquely influential communities such as faith-based communities and/or school environments should be explored.

Conclusion

The collection of findings from selected YSP scholars presented in this report document a troublesome reality for young citizens of this country. Latino citizen children of immigrants are growing up in a unique historical context in U.S. history—a time marked by aggressive immigration policies and practices. These systematic policies and practices place their parents and families in precarious situations leading to a cascade of short- and long-term risks known to be detrimental to child development. Alarming, the data also indicate that immigration policies affect not just those children in mixed-status families when an unauthorized parent is detained or deported. Instead, immigration policies and practices, and an overall anti-immigrant climate, are systemic, and they affect, to varying degrees, all citizen children of immigrants—particularly Latino citizen children, the fastest growing child population in the United States.

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The **FOUNDATION FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT** identifies needs, fills gaps and integrates knowledge for successful implementation and continuous improvement. We connect research, policy and practice to help build early childhood systems that enable children to reach their full potential.

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