

**FOUNDATION FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT**



**Diverse Children:  
Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration in  
America's New Non-Majority Generation**

Disparities Among America's Children

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# Diverse Children:

## Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration in America's New Non-Majority Generation

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### Executive Summary

Children of immigrants currently account for one out of every four children in the United States. Census Bureau projections indicate that by 2018, fewer than half of the children in the U.S. will be White, and by 2043, Whites will no longer be the majority of our nation's population. It is the American-born children and grandchildren of immigrants that are leading this change in our demographics and will be setting the course for the future of this country.

This is the first report to present comparisons of child well-being across White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian race-ethnic groups, as well as comparisons between children within these groups whose parents are and are not immigrants. The findings offer both promising insights into the well-being of many children in immigrant families, and devastating evidence of persistent disparities in children's well-being based on race-ethnicity, home language, and immigrant status.

At a time when public investments in low-income children and families, and especially those who are immigrants, are a topic of intense debate, and when the economic circumstances of even those families whose incomes fall above low-income thresholds are increasingly precarious, we must seek to understand these disparities and craft policies that restore equity for all children.

#### Key Findings, by Indicator:

##### Poverty and Near-Poverty

Seventy-one percent of Hispanic children with immigrant parents and 65 percent of all Black children with U.S.-born parents fell below twice the federal poverty threshold (a measure often used as an alternative to the official federal poverty rate in public policy discussions). Also more likely

to be poor or near-poor than not are Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents and Black children with immigrant parents (55 percent each). Much less likely to be poor or near-poor are Asian and White children, either with immigrant or U.S.-born parents, in the range of 29 to 34 percent.

##### Median Family Income

Median family incomes for Black children with U.S.-born parents and Hispanic children with immigrant parents were the lowest of all eight groups, at \$29,977 and \$33,396, respectively. Black children with immigrant parents and Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents lived in families with median incomes of \$41,480 and \$42,696, respectively. In comparison, the national median family income for all children is \$56,219. Much higher were median family incomes for White children with U.S.-born parents, at \$74,310, and a higher \$75,044 for White children with immigrant parents. The highest incomes were for children in Asian families with immigrant parents, at \$76,505, and with U.S.-born parents, at \$79,848.

##### Secure Parental Employment

In 2010, only 50 percent of Black children with U.S.-born parents had a securely employed parent. Somewhat more likely to have a securely employed parent were Hispanic children with immigrant parents and with U.S.-born parents, at 61 percent each, followed by Black children with immigrant parents at 64 percent. The likelihood of a child to have at least one securely employed parent rose to 77 percent each for White children with immigrant parents and White and Asian children with U.S.-born parents, and it rose to 81 percent for Asian children with immigrant parents.

## Health Insurance

A high 19 percent of Hispanic children with immigrant parents were without health insurance coverage, as were 15 percent of Black children with immigrant parents. Though these are the highest rates of uncovered children among the eight groups, children with the lowest percentage not covered—White and Asian children with U.S.-born parents—were still at 7 percent (2.6 million children).

## PreKindergarten Enrollment

In 2010, only 37 percent of Hispanic children with immigrant parents and 42 percent of Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents were enrolled in PreKindergarten. The rest of the groups ranged from 50 to 55 percent enrolled in PreKindergarten—still barely half of all children. In addition, for each of the race-ethnic groups, children in immigrant families were less likely than their peers with U.S.-born parents to be enrolled in PreKindergarten.

## Reading and Math Proficiency

Reading and mathematics proficiency rates in Fourth Grade are obtained from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the results of which can be examined not by parental country of birth but by children in households where English is or is not the primary language spoken, for White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian children.

### Reading Proficiency

Fifty-one to 84 percent of Fourth Graders in these eight race-ethnic-home-language groups were reading below grade level in 2011. For children as a whole, the vast majority could not read proficiently at the point in school where children are making the change from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” Children who fall behind at this stage in their education are unlikely ever to fully catch up.

Specifically, 84 percent of Black children in households where English is not the primary language could not read proficiently. This group was closely followed by Black children whose families did primarily speak English at home and Hispanic children who did not have English as the primary home language, at 83 percent each. Seventy-nine percent of Hispanic children whose families did speak

English primarily at home scored below proficiency. At a lower but still unacceptable level, 65 percent of White children who did not have English as the primary home language could not read proficiently, nor could 55 percent of White children who did have English at home. For Asian children, the share not reading proficiently was 51 percent, whether or not they had English spoken primarily at home.

### Math Proficiency

Across the eight groups, 35 to 83 percent of children scored below the proficient level in Fourth Grade. Eighty-three percent of Black children whose families did not speak English primarily at home were not mathematics proficient, and 82 percent of Black children who did have English primarily at home were not math proficient. Seventy-six percent of Hispanic children scored below proficiency, whether or not they had English primarily spoken in the home, as did 56 percent of White children who did not have English as their primary home language and 47 percent of White children who did have English as the primary home language. Mathematics proficiency was highest for Asian children, but, still, more than one-in-three without English as the primary language in the home were below proficiency (35 percent), as were 43 percent of those who did have English as their primary home language.

## Key Findings, Across Indicators:

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### Indicators Where Children of Immigrant Parents Fared Equally Well or Better

Children in each of the four race-ethnic groups with immigrant parents fared equally well, or better, than children in the corresponding groups with U.S.-born parents on six indicators. Children with immigrant parents were equally or more likely to have a securely employed parent and were less likely to live in a one-parent family. They were also less likely to be born at a low birthweight, to die as an infant, to have an impairment that limits physical activity, or to be neither enrolled in school nor working as 16- to 19-year-olds.

### **Indicators Where Children of Immigrant Parents Fared Uniformly Worse**

In contrast, children in each of the four race-ethnic groups with immigrant parents fared worse than children with U.S.-born parents in the four corresponding groups for two key indicators: PreKindergarten enrollment and health insurance coverage.

### **At Most Risk: Black Children with U.S.-Born Parents and Hispanic Children with Immigrant Parents**

After examining all 19 indicators, the group of children at highest risk overall was Black children with U.S.-born parents, and Hispanic children with immigrant parents were the second most at risk.

Black children with U.S.-born parents and Hispanic children with immigrant parents fared the worst for indicators of poverty and near-poverty, median family income, and secure parental employment. They also were at highest risk for child mortality and least likely to have very good or excellent health. In addition, Black and Hispanic children—either with or without immigrant parents—were the least likely to be covered by health insurance.

### **Education: Everyone Is at Risk**

None of the eight race-ethnic-home-language groups were found to be doing well when it came to reading and mathematics proficiency. Black children and Hispanic children fared the worst on reading and math proficiency. Surprisingly, Black children for whom English is the primary language in the home were only one percentage point more likely to be able to read proficiently by Fourth Grade than those for whom English is not primarily spoken at home, and they were reading at the same level as Hispanic children without English as the primary home language. Even for the two groups with the highest reading proficiency—Asian children who do and do not have English as the primary language in the home—a large 51 percent were below the proficient level.

It is notable that there was little difference in reading and mathematics proficiency rates for children within race-ethnic groups who do and do not have English as the primary language at home.

In addition to the alarmingly low proficiency rates for all children, nearly one-in-three Hispanic children in immigrant families do not graduate from high school. The same is true for one-in-four Hispanic and Black children with U.S.-born parents, and one-in-five Black children in immigrant families. More than one-in-ten White and Asian children did not graduate from high school, regardless of whether they had immigrant or U.S.-born parents.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations proposed in this report range from policies on early education to health care to economic security and are aimed at meeting the needs of all children. Key among the detailed recommendations provided in the report are the following:

#### *Investing in Education*

In view of the very low reading and mathematics proficiency rates experienced by all children studied in this report, nothing short of a massive national effort will be required to get all children off to a strong start in school. We therefore urge bipartisan cooperation in Washington, D.C. to expand and make available high-quality early education to all children throughout the nation, starting with infants and toddlers, extending to PreKindergarten and followed by access to full-day Kindergarten. It is also important that the education children experience from PreKindergarten through Third Grade is made up of a series of integrated steps, where the lessons children learn and the gains they make in one year are aligned with the curricula and instruction of the next grade.

Schools must also be given the funding and resources necessary to meet the needs of Dual Language Learner Students, including teachers trained to accurately identify children who are not proficient in English, as well as specific curricula and assessments to meet those children's needs.

#### *Investing in Health*

Eighty-nine percent of children with immigrant parents are U.S. citizens; however, as of 2010, 24 percent of children with immigrant parents had parents who are unauthorized immigrants. Because the Patient Protection

and Affordable Care Act (ACA) excludes unauthorized immigrants from participating in the health insurance exchanges, parents who are not authorized may hesitate to contact the exchanges to purchase insurance for their U.S.-citizen children. Federal and state governments must make sure that all children are both eligible for and covered by health insurance, including the approximately one million unauthorized children in this country.

#### *Investing in the Economic Well-Being of Children and Families*

Public programs are effective in and essential to reducing poverty and near-poverty rates for many children. Nevertheless, many children are growing up in families with very low incomes. Among these children, a particularly vulnerable group consists of those whose parents' incomes place them above eligibility thresholds for crucial safety net programs, but too low to be able to purchase essential services, such as high-quality early care and education, on their own.

Income tax provisions and programs such as the Child Tax Credit (CTC), the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), therefore, must be maintained and increased, and in some cases the eligibility criteria must be expanded so as to provide for the critical needs of all the children who are experiencing economic insecurity.

#### *Investing in Immigrant Families*

It is in the best interest of the country to ensure that immigrant parents have the opportunities available to

other American parents to obtain adequate jobs that pay a living wage. This requires policies and programs that provide non-English speaking parents — immigrant and non-immigrant alike — with accessible, effective programs to improve their English literacy skills. Improved English language skills increase the capacity of parents to find work that enables their families to escape poverty and to communicate effectively with teachers and other adults who also seek to foster the well-being and development of their children. We further believe that the implementation of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act would not only provide children of immigrants the opportunity to go to college, but also an incentive to succeed in elementary and high school with the aim of achieving a bachelor's degree.

#### **Conclusion**

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Many children are not receiving the education they need for academic success; many lack health insurance coverage; and, 40 years after the War on Poverty, disturbingly high numbers of children are growing up poor and near-poor, particularly children with immigrant parents. These truths, along with the fact that these circumstances continue to disproportionately affect Black and Hispanic children and children of immigrants are an affront to this nation. Absent a serious national dialogue about how best to confront these inequities and a commitment to making the essential investments to address them, we are seriously jeopardizing the future of our children and the security and well-being of the nation.



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America is becoming a more diverse society where soon no single race-ethnic group will be the majority. And children are at the leading edge of this transition. Census Bureau projections indicate that by 2018—only five years from now—fewer than half of all children in the United States will be White (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). In addition, children of immigrants account for one of every four children, and they are strikingly diverse: 94 percent have origins in Latin American, Asia, Africa, or the Caribbean, while only 6 percent have origins in Europe, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. Consequently, this report focuses on the current well-being and future prospects of children in eight distinct race-ethnic-immigrant-status groups, distinguishing White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian children, according to whether they have at least one immigrant parent or two U.S.-born parents.

Overall, the total number of children in these groups was 70.4 million in 2012, distributed as follows: 55 percent White, 25 percent Hispanic, 14 percent Black, and 5 percent Asian. Within these four race-ethnic groups, White children were least likely to have immigrant parents, at 8 percent. Black children were about twice as likely, at 14 percent, to live with immigrant parents, and this jumped to 59 percent for Hispanic children, and 87 percent for Asian children.

This report—the first ever to present indicators of child well-being across these eight groups—discusses 19 indicators that focus on family economic resources, health, educational attainments, and demographic circumstances. These are indicators from the Child Well-Being Index (CWI) developed by Land, Lamb, and Mustillo (2001), for which it is possible to distinguish children with immigrant parents from those with U.S.-born parents for White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian children. (For a study comparing the circumstances

of children with immigrant and U.S.-born parents in the United States to seven other affluent nations, see Hernandez, Macartney, and Blanchard (2009).)

This report presents two sets of findings for 2010. First, it discusses each of the 19 indicators in turn, with results for each of the eight race-ethnic-immigrant-status groups, highlighting important disparities across the groups. The report then presents the big picture, summarizing the overall pattern of disparities across all 19 indicators taken together. These indicators are calculated using the latest available data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) microdata files for births and deaths, the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Appendix A).

## Family Economic Resources

Four indicators of children's family economic resources are discussed here: (1) poverty, (2) poverty and near-poverty, (3) median family income, and (4) secure parental employment.

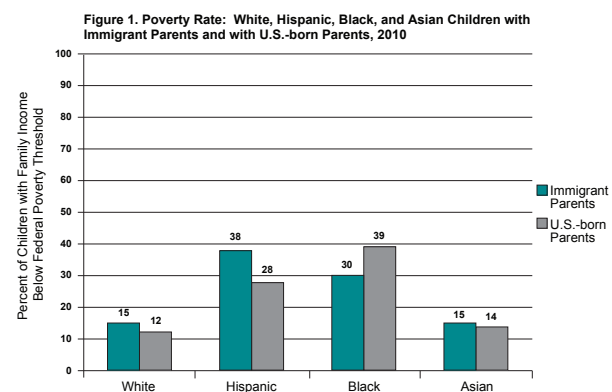
### Poverty

Children in low-income families tend to experience a variety of negative developmental outcomes, including less success in school, lower educational achievements, and lower incomes during adulthood (Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 1997; McLoyd, 1998; Sewell and Hauser, 1975). The official federal poverty rate is an extreme indicator of low income. Thus, children in poor families are particularly at risk of experiencing these negative outcomes.

The poverty rate in 2010 — at a threshold of \$18,121 for a family of three with two children, and \$22,810 for a family of

four with two children—was lowest for White children with U.S.-born parents (12 percent), followed closely by Asian children with U.S.-born parents and Asian and White children with immigrant parents (14, 15, and 15 percent, respectively) (Figure 1) (For thresholds, see U.S. Census Bureau, 2013) (All income values reported here have been adjusted to 2011 dollars). The poverty rate was twice this size for Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents and Black children with immigrant parents (28 and 30 percent, respectively). The groups with the highest poverty rates were Hispanic children with immigrant parents and Black children with U.S.-born parents (38 and 39 percent, respectively).

Within race-ethnic groups, Hispanic children with immigrant parents were much more likely to be poor than Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents. Black children experienced a disparity nearly as large, but in the opposite direction, as Black children with immigrant parents were much less likely than Black children with U.S.-born parents to live in a poor family.



### Poverty and Near-Poverty

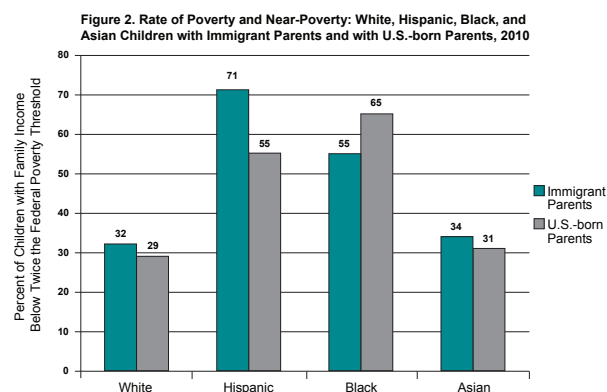
The overall rate of poverty and near-poverty is the percentage of children whose family incomes are less than two times the federal poverty threshold. This measure is often used as an alternative to the official federal poverty rate in public policy discussions (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2009; Child Trends, 2009; Kneebone and Garr, 2010; Nilsen, 2007; Mathews, 2013). Families whose incomes are below the poverty threshold are referred to as “poor,” while those with family incomes above the poverty threshold but less than twice the poverty threshold are referred to as “near-poor.”

The dollar value of the near poverty threshold in 2010 for a family of three with two children was \$36,243 and for a family

of four with two children was \$45,619. These income levels are above the eligibility cutoffs for many federal programs including the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program, the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, and in some states Medicaid, which means that many near-poor children do not receive help from these programs.

The majority of all Hispanic and Black children, regardless of their parents’ immigration status, were poor or near-poor (Figure 2). Most likely to be poor or near-poor were Black children with U.S.-born parents (65 percent) and Hispanic children with immigrant parents (71 percent). White and Asian children generally were much less likely to live in poor or near-poor families.

Within race-ethnic groups, Hispanic children with immigrant parents were much more likely to live in poor or near-poor families than Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents. Black children also experienced a large disparity, but in the opposite direction, as Black children with immigrant parents were much less likely than Black children with U.S.-born parents to live in a poor or near-poor family.



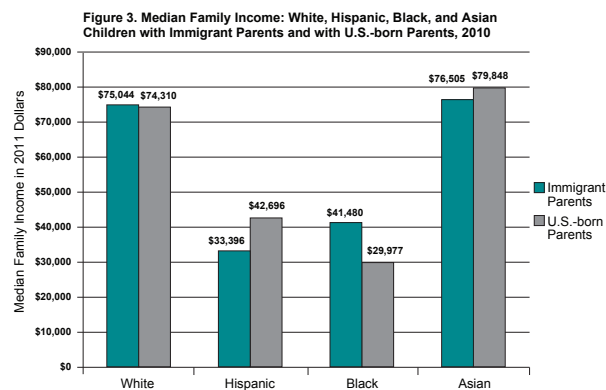
### Median Family Income

Family income provides essential economic resources to pay for food, housing, clothing, and other necessities, as well as recreational activities.

Asian children with U.S.-born parents had the highest median family income in 2010 (\$79,848) (Figure 3). White and Asian children with immigrant parents and White children with U.S.-born parents also had relatively high median family incomes (\$74,310 to \$76,505). Much lower were the median family incomes for Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents and Black children with immigrant parents

(\$41,480 to \$42,696). The lowest median family incomes were experienced by Hispanic children with immigrant parents (\$33,396) and Black children with U.S.-born parents (\$29,977). These figures compare to the national median family income for all children of \$56,219.

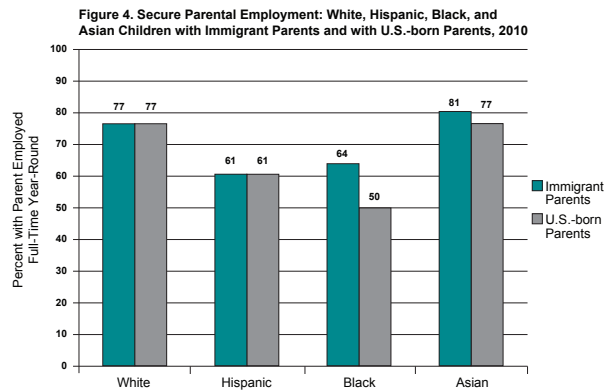
Within race-ethnic groups, Black children with U.S.-born parents experienced a very low median family income compared to Black children with immigrant parents (\$29,977 vs. \$41,480). For Hispanic children the disparity was in the opposite direction, with Hispanic children with immigrant parents experiencing lower median family income than those with U.S.-born parents (\$33,396 vs. \$42,696). (For a study comparing the poverty rate and the poor and near-poor rate to child poverty in European countries, see Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, 2007).



### Secure Parental Employment

Children are classified as having a securely employed parent if they have at least one parent in the home who works full-time year-round. This measure is important because parental employment is the primary source of income in most families.

Asian children with immigrant parents were most likely to have a securely employed parent in 2010 (81 percent) (Figure 4). The children next most likely to have a securely employed parent were White children with immigrant parents, and White and Asian children with U.S.-born parents (77 percent each). Substantially less likely to have a securely employed parent were Black children with immigrant parents (64 percent) and Hispanic children with immigrant parents and with U.S.-born parents (61 percent each). Finally, Black children with U.S.-born parents were least likely to have a securely employed parent (50 percent).



During both recessions and non-recessionary periods, attention often focuses on the unemployment rate, that is, on persons looking for work as a percentage of all persons in the labor force. The national unemployment rate—the percentage of persons looking for a job, regardless of whether or not they have children—was 7.6 percent in March 2013 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). By comparison the rates for children not having a securely employed parent in 2010 were much higher. The rate of not having a securely employed parent for Asian children in immigrant families (19 percent) was 2.5 times greater than the overall unemployment rate. The rates of not having a securely employed parent for White children with immigrant parents and for White and Asian children with U.S.-born parents were 3.0 times greater than the overall unemployment rate (23 percent vs. 7.6 percent). For Hispanic children in U.S.-born families and for Hispanic and Black children with immigrant parents, the rate of not having a securely employed parent was 4.7 to 5.1 times greater than the overall unemployment rate (36 to 39 percent vs. 7.6 percent), and it was 6.6 times greater for Black children with U.S.-born parents (50 percent vs. 7.6 percent).

Within race-ethnic groups, Black children with immigrant parents had much higher rates of secure parental employment than Black children with U.S.-born parents. The difference was in the same direction but much smaller for Asian children.

### Health

Six child health indicators are discussed here: low birthweight, infant mortality, child mortality, activity limitations, very good or excellent health, and health insurance coverage.



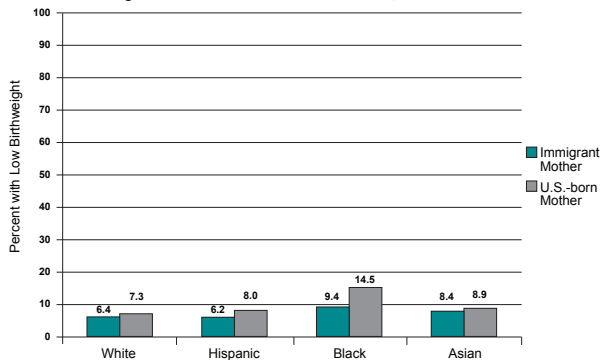
### Low Birthweight

Low birthweight information is obtained from restricted-access NVSS natality microdata, where it is possible to distinguish births to immigrant mothers from those with U.S.-born mothers. We use the most recent data available, which is for 2009. The low birthweight rate is calculated as the percentage of babies born with a weight less than 2,500 grams, or approximately 5.5 pounds. Low birthweight is important because it contributes substantially to infant mortality and to a range of problems such as neurodevelopmental disabilities and respiratory disorders (CDC, 2009).

The low birthweight rate in 2009 was lowest (best) for Hispanic and White children with immigrant mothers (6.2 and 6.4 percent, respectively) (Figure 5). Somewhat higher (worse) were the rates of low birthweight for White and Hispanic children with U.S.-born mothers (7.3 and 8.0 percent, respectively). Next was the low birthweight rate for Asian children with immigrant mothers and with U.S.-born mothers (8.4 and 8.9 percent, respectively). The highest (worst) rates of low birthweight were for Black children with immigrant mothers and with U.S.-born mothers (9.4 and 14.5 percent, respectively). To put into perspective the rate for Black children with U.S.-born mothers, it is slightly higher (worse) than the rate for the continent of Africa (14.5 percent vs. 14.3 percent), whereas the rates for White children with immigrant mothers and with U.S.-born mothers (6.4 and 7.3 percent, respectively) are about the same as the rate for all of Europe (UNICEF and WHO, 2004).

Within each of the four race-ethnic groups studied here—White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian children—the rate with low birthweight was lower (better) for children with immigrant mothers than among children with U.S.-born mothers.

Figure 5. Low Birthweight: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Mothers and with U.S.-born Mothers, 2009



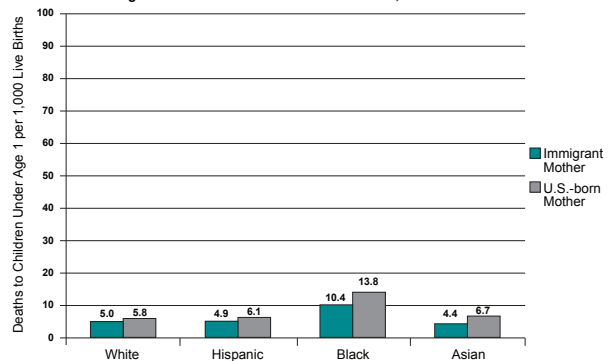
### Infant Mortality

Infant mortality information is obtained from NVSS microdata, where it is possible to distinguish births to immigrant mothers from those with U.S.-born mothers. The most recent data available are for 2007. The infant mortality rate is calculated as the number of deaths to children under age 1 per 1,000 live births. The infant mortality rate reflects the health and living conditions of very young children, and the extent to which the lives of very young children are cut short by death.

The lowest rates of infant mortality were found among Asian, Hispanic, and White children with immigrant mothers (4.4, 4.9, and 5.0 deaths per 1,000 live births, respectively), followed by White and Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents (5.8 and 6.1 per 1,000, respectively), and then by Asian children with U.S.-born mothers (6.7 per 1,000) (Figure 6). The highest infant mortality rates were about twice as high for Black children with immigrant mothers (10.4 per 1,000) and Black children with U.S.-born mothers (13.8 per 1,000).

Within each of the four race-ethnic groups studied here—White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian children—the infant mortality rate was lower for children with immigrant mothers than among children with U.S.-born mothers.

Figure 6. Infant Mortality: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Mothers and with U.S.-born Mothers, 2007



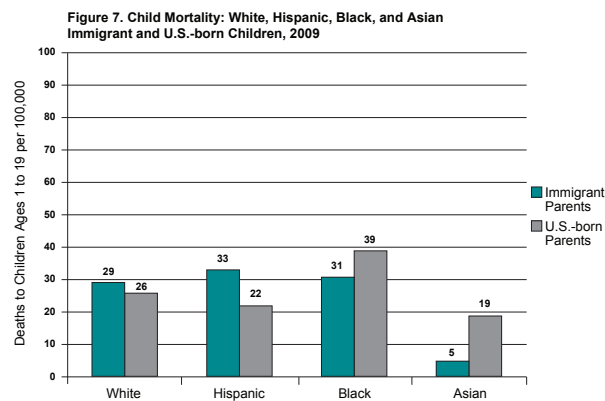
### Child Mortality

Child mortality information is available only from NSVSS microdata, where it is not possible to distinguish between children of immigrant parents and children of U.S.-born parents, but it is possible to distinguish deaths of immigrant and of U.S.-born children. The most recent data available are for 2009. The child mortality rate is calculated as the number of deaths per 100,000 children ages 1 to 19. The

child mortality rate reflects the health and living conditions of children, and the extent to which the lives of children are cut short by death.

Asian immigrant children had the lowest mortality rate in 2009 (5 deaths per 100,000) followed by Asian, Hispanic, and White U.S.-born children (19, 22, and 26 per 100,000, respectively) (Figure 7). The next highest mortality rates were for White, Black, and Hispanic immigrant children (29, 31, and 33 per 100,000, respectively). The highest mortality rate was for Black U.S.-born children (39 per 100,000).

Within race-ethnic groups, Asian children experienced the largest disparity, as Asian immigrant children had a much lower mortality rate than Asian U.S.-born children. Although the disparity is smaller, Black immigrant children also experienced much lower mortality than Black U.S.-born children. With disparities in the opposite direction, Hispanic immigrant children had a much higher mortality rate than Hispanic U.S.-born children, and White immigrant children had a somewhat higher mortality rate than White U.S.-born children.



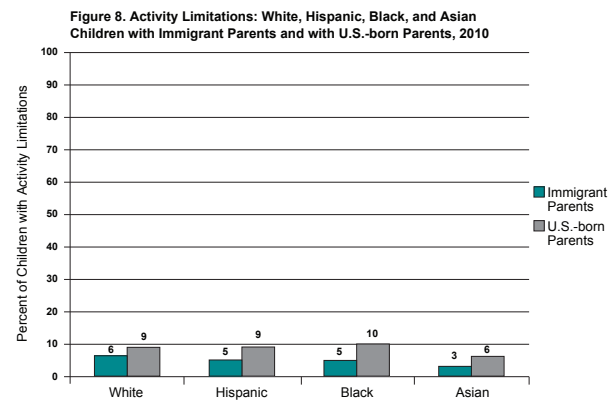
### Activity Limitations

The activity limitations indicator is based on questions asking parents whether their children experience physical limitations in their capacity to walk, run, or play, and whether or not the physical impairment is expected to last a year or more (CDC, 2010).

Asian children with immigrant parents experienced the lowest rate of activity limitation in 2010 (3 percent), followed by Black and Hispanic children with immigrant parents (each at 5 percent) and White children with immigrant parents and Asian children with U.S.-born parents (each at 6 percent)

(Figure 8). The highest activity limitation rates were for Hispanic, White, and Black children with U.S.-born parents (9, 9, and 10 percent, respectively).

Within each of the four race-ethnic groups studied here—White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian children—the activity limitation rate was lower for children with immigrant parents than among children with U.S.-born parents.

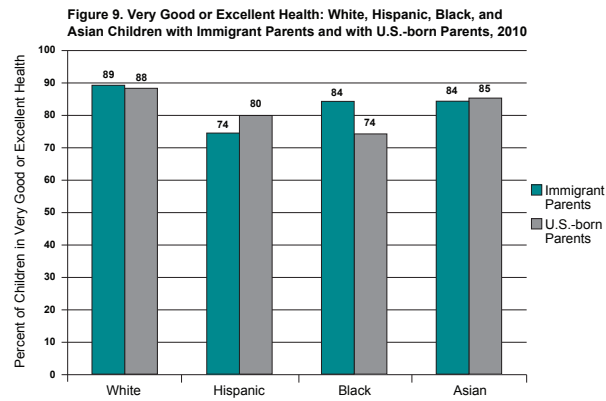


### Very Good or Excellent Health

The very good or excellent health indicator is the percentage of children reported by parents to be in very good or excellent health. Good health is important to children for success in school and later in life.

White children with immigrant parents and with U.S.-born parents were most likely in 2010 to be reported by their parents as having very good or excellent health, followed closely by Asian children with U.S.-born parents and with immigrant parents, and Black children with immigrant parents (89, 88, 85, 84, and 84 percent, respectively) (Figure 9). Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents were less likely to be reported by parents as having very good or excellent health (80 percent). Hispanic children with immigrant parents and Black children with U.S.-born parents were least likely to be reported by parents as having very good or excellent health (74 percent each).

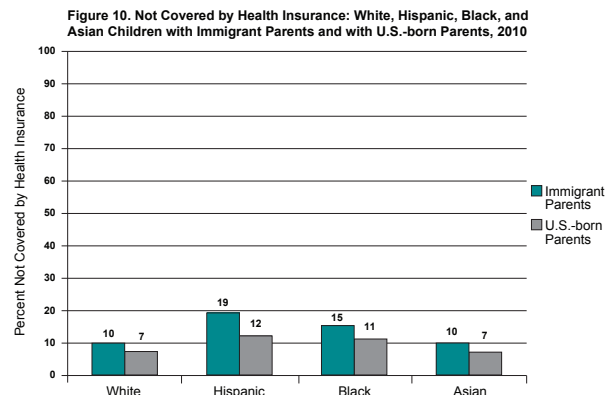
Within race-ethnic groups, Black children with immigrant parents were much more likely to have very good or excellent health than were Black children with U.S.-born parents. Hispanic children also experienced a substantial disparity, but in the opposite direction, as Hispanic children with immigrant parents were less likely than Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents to have very good or excellent health.



### Health Insurance

In 2010, the health insurance indicator is the percentage of children who were not covered by health insurance during the year. All children require access to health insurance and services to ensure that preventive services are provided as recommended, acute and chronic conditions are diagnosed and treated in a timely matter, and health and development are adequately monitored so that minor health problems do not escalate into serious and costly medical emergencies (Brown, et al, 1999).

White and Asian children with U.S.-born parents were least likely to lack health insurance (7 percent each) followed by White and Asian children with immigrant parents (10 percent each) (Figure 10). Black and Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents were more likely to lack health insurance coverage (11 and 12 percent, respectively). Black children with immigrant parents were even more likely to lack health insurance (15 percent), and Hispanic children with immigrant parents were most likely to lack health insurance (19 percent). Within each of the four race-ethnic groups studied here—White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian children—those with immigrant parents were more likely to lack health insurance than children with U.S.-born parents.



## Educational Attainments

Six indicators of educational attainments are discussed here. The first two indicators are reading and mathematics proficiency in Fourth Grade. The remaining four indicators focus on enrollment or completion of specified levels of school: PreKindergarten enrollment, high school graduation, receiving a bachelor’s degree, and youth neither enrolled in school nor working.

### Measuring Proficiency

Reading and mathematics proficiency rates in Fourth Grade are obtained from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as “The Nation’s Report Card.” The NAEP was “developed by the National Assessment Governing Board to specify what students should know and be able to do in each content area at a given grade level” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013a, 2013b). Results are presented here for 2011, the most recent year with available data. The reading and mathematics proficiency indicators are measured as the percentage of children reading below the proficient level, and thus not performing at grade level, in reading and in mathematics.

Data collection procedures for reading and mathematics test scores do not make it possible to distinguish children with immigrant parents or with U.S.-born parents. The NAEP student questionnaire does, however, ask, “How often do people in your home talk to each other in a language other than English?” We classify students who respond “never” or “once in a while” as having English as the primary language in the home, and who respond “about half” or “all or most” of the time as not having English as the primary language in the home.

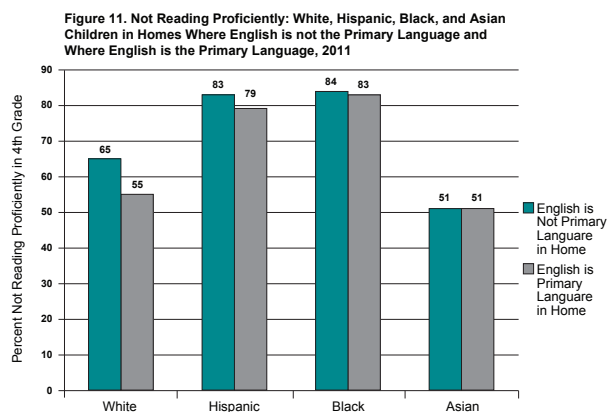
### Reading Proficiency in Fourth Grade

Reading proficiency in Fourth Grade is a vitally important pivot point in children’s school trajectories, because this is the age when children go from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” It has been found that children who do not read proficiently in the early grades are less likely to succeed during the later years of school, and they are much less likely to graduate from high school (Hernandez, 2011a).

In 2011, reading proficiency was highest for Asian children, including those with and without English as the primary

language in the home. However, even among these two groups, 51 percent of children read below the proficient level in Fourth Grade (Figure 11). Lower levels of reading proficiency were found for White children with and without English as the primary language in the home, at 55 and 65 percent of children, respectively, reading below the proficient level. Even larger shares of children in the other four groups read below the proficient level in Fourth Grade, at 79 percent for Hispanic children with English as the primary language in the home, 83 percent for Hispanic children who did not have English as the primary language, 83 percent for Black children with English as the primary home language, and 84 percent for Black children who did not have English as the primary home language. Strikingly, a majority of children in each of the eight race-ethnic-home-language groups (51 to 84 percent) were reading below grade level in 2011.

Within race-ethnic groups, White children who did not have English as the primary language in the home were substantially more likely to read below the proficient level than White children who did have English as the primary language. This pattern held true for Hispanic children, although the disparity was smaller than for White children.



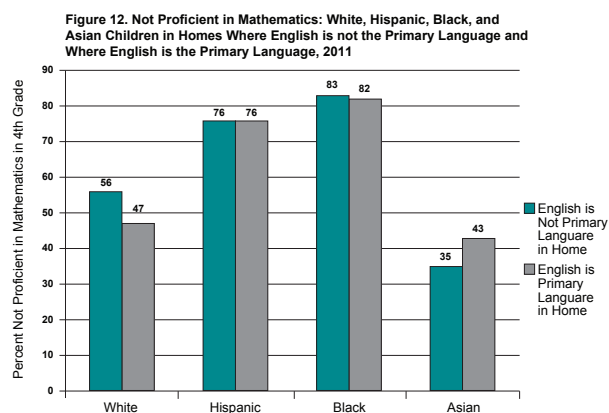
### Mathematics Proficiency in Fourth Grade

Mathematics proficiency in Fourth Grade is at least as predictive of future success in school as is reading proficiency. Children who are not proficient in math in the early grades are less likely to succeed during the later years of school.

In 2011, mathematics proficiency was highest for Asian children. Nevertheless, the percentage below the proficient level was 43 percent for Asian children who did have English as the primary language in their home, and 35 percent for Asian children who did not have English as the primary

language (Figure 12). The percentage below the proficient level in mathematics was even greater for White children who had English as the primary language in the home (47 percent), followed by White children who did not have English as the primary language (56 percent). Three-quarters (76 percent) of Hispanic children, regardless of whether they did or did not have English as the primary home language, were below the proficient level in mathematics. Even worse outcomes were seen among Black children who did not and who did have English as the primary language in the home, at (respectively) 83 and 82 percent, below the proficient level in mathematics.

Within race-ethnic groups, White children who did not have English as the primary language in the home were substantially more likely to be below the proficient level in mathematics than White children who did have English as the primary language. The direction of the difference was reversed for Asian children. Among these children, those who did have English as the primary language in the home were more likely to be below the proficient level in mathematics than those who did not have English as the primary home language.



### School Enrollment and Completion

Four indicators of school enrollment and completion are discussed: PreKindergarten enrollment, high school graduation, bachelor's degree, and the percentage of youth neither enrolled in school nor working.

### PreKindergarten Enrollment

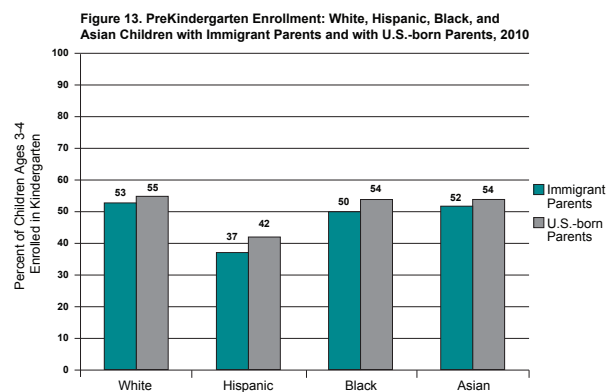
The PreKindergarten enrollment indicator used here is the percentage of children ages three and four enrolled in a PreKindergarten program. High-quality PreKindergarten

programs are a very cost-effective investment for improving later success in school, and therefore, for fostering the economic productivity and life prospects of children when they reach adulthood (Heckman and Masterov, 2007; Reynolds, et al, 2011).

White, Black, and Asian children with U.S.-born parents were most likely to be enrolled in PreKindergarten in 2010 (54 to 55 percent), with only slightly lower enrollment rates for White, Asian, and Black children with immigrant parents (50 to 53 percent) (Figure 13). PreKindergarten enrollment was substantially lower for Hispanic children, at 42 percent for those with U.S.-born parents and 37 percent for those with immigrant parents.

Within each of the four race-ethnic groups—White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian children—those with immigrant parents were less likely than children with U.S.-born parents to be enrolled in PreKindergarten. The disparities were largest for Black children and Hispanic children.

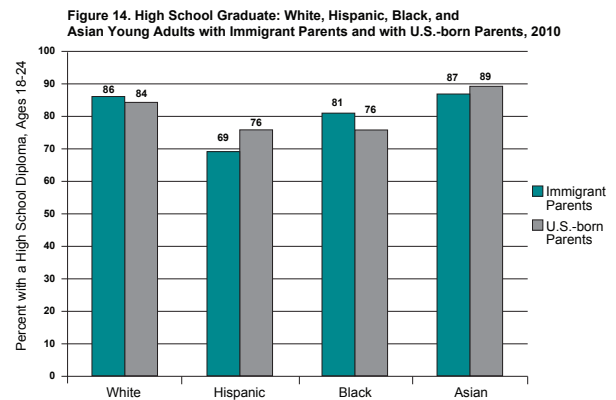
Insofar as high-quality early education has been found to have large positive effects for children’s later success in school, the high rates of non-enrollment for all children, and especially for Hispanic children, are of considerable concern. Focused initiatives to improve PreKindergarten enrollment rates are among the most promising opportunities for improving children’s educational attainments.



### High School Graduation

High school graduation marks the end of schooling for many children, but employment opportunities are constrained for those not graduating from high school. The high school graduation rate is the percentage of young adults ages 18 to 24 who have graduated from high school.

In 2010, the group most likely to graduate from high school by ages 18 to 24 was Asian children with U.S.-born parents (89 percent), followed closely by Asian children with immigrant parents, and White children with immigrant parents and with U.S.-born parents (87, 86, and 84 percent, respectively) (Figure 14). Somewhat less likely to graduate from high school were Black children with immigrant parents (81 percent). Notably less likely to graduate from high school were Hispanic and Black children with U.S.-born parents (76 percent), followed by Hispanic children with immigrant parents (69 percent).



Insofar as it is difficult to find work that pays a decent wage without a high school diploma, the “best” rate of one-in-ten not graduating is of considerable concern; the rates that nearly reach or exceed one-in-four not graduating found for Hispanic children and for Black children with U.S.-born parents are of enormous concern.

Within race-ethnic groups, the largest disparity in high school graduation was experienced by Hispanic children, with a substantially lower rate of high school graduation for those with immigrant parents compared to those with U.S.-born parents. Nearly as large was the disparity for Black children, but the direction was reversed. Black children with immigrant parents were more likely to graduate from high school than Black children with U.S.-born parents.

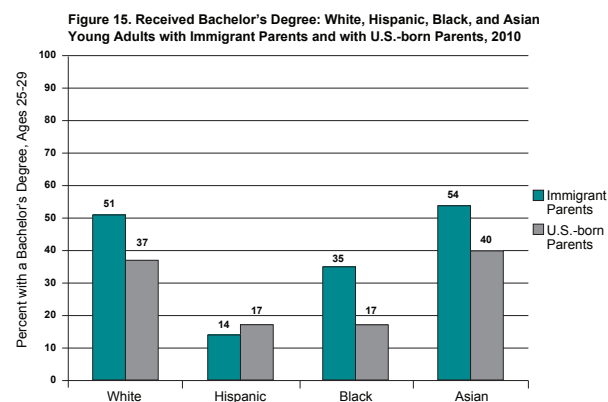
### Bachelor’s Degree

The rate of receiving a bachelor’s degree reflects the completion of a level of post-secondary education that is increasingly required for well-paid employment in the 21st century.



In 2010, the group most likely to receive a bachelor's degree by ages 25 to 29 was Asian children with immigrant parents followed by White children with immigrant parents (54 and 51 percent, respectively) (Figure 15). Less likely to receive a bachelor's degree were Asian children and White children with U.S.-born parents, and Black children with immigrant parents (40, 37, and 35 percent, respectively). Black and Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents and Hispanic children with immigrant parents were the least likely to receive a bachelor's degree, with the much lower rates of 17, 17, and 14 percent, respectively.

Within each of three race-ethnic groups, children with immigrant parents were substantially more likely than children with U.S.-born parents to receive a bachelor's degree. The largest disparity was experienced by Black children (35 and 17 percent, respectively), while smaller discrepancies were experienced by White children (51 and 37 percent, respectively) and Asian children (54 and 40 percent, respectively). The disparity in receiving a bachelor's degree was substantially smaller and in the reverse direction for Hispanic children, among whom those with immigrant parents were somewhat less likely to receive a bachelor's degree (14 vs. 17 percent).



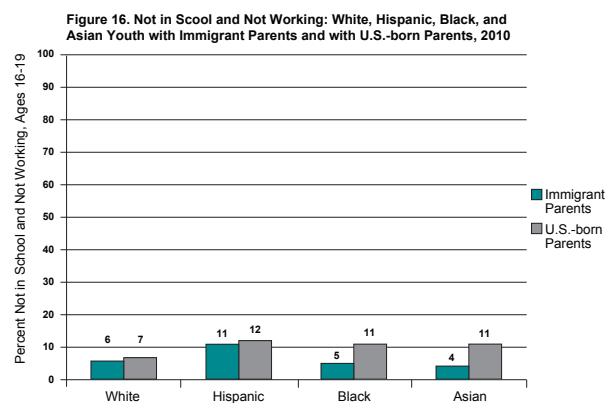
### Neither Enrolled in School nor Working Youth

The indicator for youth neither enrolled in school nor working focuses on the transition from adolescence to adulthood. It is the percentage of youth ages 16 to 19 that are not enrolled in school and are not working. Thus, they are disconnected from both educational and work institutions. Youth who are neither enrolled in school nor working are disengaged from the two activities that mark a successful transition to productive economic activity as an adult. They are, therefore, at risk of limited economic prospects during

the years that follow, which for the vast majority constitute the years of family formation.

In 2010, Asian and Black youth with immigrant parents were least likely to be disconnected from both school and work, followed very closely by White youth with immigrant parents and with U.S.-born parents (4, 5, 6, and 7 percent, respectively) (Figure 16). More likely to be neither enrolled in school nor working were Hispanic youth with immigrant parents, and youth with U.S.-born parents who are Black, Asian, or Hispanic (11 to 12 percent).

Within race-ethnic groups, Asian and Black youth with immigrant parents were notably less likely than those with U.S.-born parents to be neither enrolled in school nor working, while the differences for White and Hispanic youth are in the same direction but very small.



## Demographic Indicators

Three demographic indicators are discussed here: teen births, one-parent families, and residential mobility.

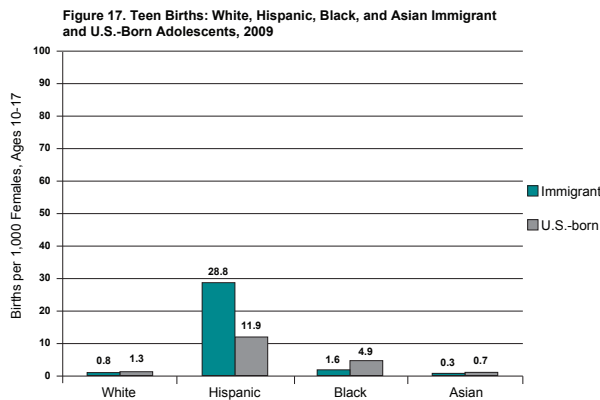
### Teen Births

Teen birth information is obtained from NVSS microdata, where it is possible to distinguish births to immigrant teens from births to U.S.-born teens. The most recent data available are for 2009. The teen birth rate is calculated as births per 1,000 females ages 10 to 17. Teen births make it difficult for mothers to continue in school and to obtain well-paid employment.

The highest teen birth rate in 2009 was experienced by Hispanic immigrant teens, followed by Hispanic U.S.-born teens (28.8 and 11.9 births per 1000 females, respectively)

(Figure 17). The rate was much lower for Black U.S.-born teens (4.9 per 1,000), and extremely small for the other five groups ranging from 0.3 to 1.6 births per 1,000 females. These demographic rates indicate that the share giving birth in 2009 was about 3 percent for Hispanic immigrant teens, about 1 percent for Hispanic U.S.-born teens, and less than 1 percent for the other six groups.

Within race-ethnic groups, Hispanic immigrant teens were more likely than Hispanic U.S.-born teens to give birth, and the reverse was true for Black teens.

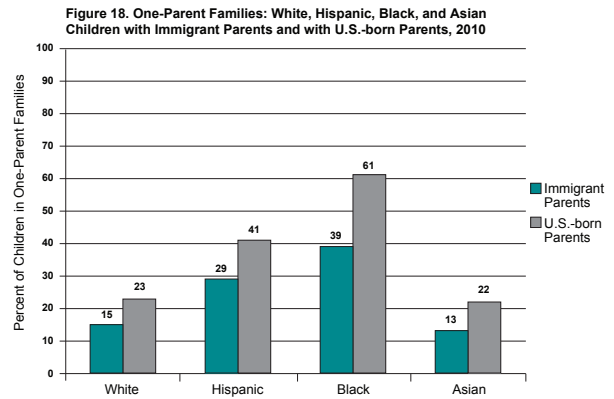


### One-Parent Families

The one-parent family indicator is measured as the percentage of children living with one parent. Children living in one-parent families tend, on average, to be somewhat disadvantaged in their educational success compared to children in two-parent families (Cherlin, 1999; McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994).

Asian and White children with immigrant parents were least likely to live in one-parent families in 2010 (13 and 15 percent, respectively), followed by Asian and White children with U.S.-born parents (22 and 23 percent, respectively), and then by Hispanic children with immigrant parents (29 percent) (Figure 18). Substantially more likely to live in one-parent families were Black children with immigrant parents and Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents (39 and 41 percent, respectively). Black children with U.S.-born parents had the highest one-parent rate (61 percent).

For each of the four race-ethnic groups studied here, the rate of living in a one-parent family was lower for children with immigrant parents than among children with U.S.-born parents.

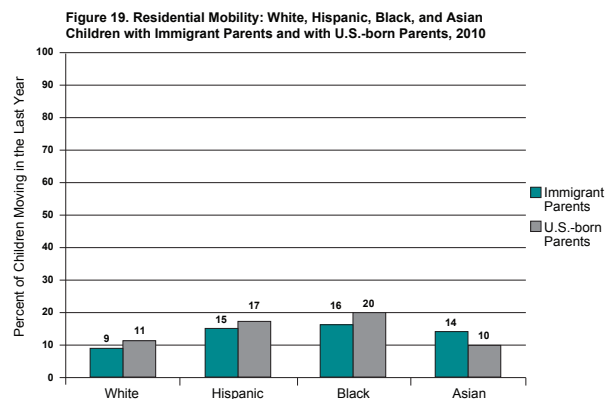


### Residential Mobility

The residential mobility indicator is measured as the percentage of children living in families who moved during the year. Residential mobility can be difficult for children, as they change to schools with new teachers and different curricula, and try to make new friends, although children can benefit from increased economic resources if the move involves improved jobs and incomes for parents.

White children with immigrant parents and Asian and White children with U.S.-born parents were least likely to have moved during the past year (9, 10, and 11 percent, respectively), followed by Hispanic and Black children with immigrant parents, and Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents (15, 16, and 17 percent, respectively) (Figure 19). Black children with U.S.-born parents were most likely to have moved during the past year (20 percent).

Within race-ethnic groups, White, Hispanic, and Black children with immigrant parents were less likely to have moved during the previous year than were the corresponding groups of children with U.S.-born parents. Asian children were the only group in which children of immigrants had a higher mobility rate than children with U.S.-born parents.



## The Big Picture

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### *Indicators Where Children of Immigrant Parents Fare Equally Well or Better*

Children in each of the four race-ethnic groups with immigrant parents fare equally well, or better, than children in the corresponding groups with U.S.-born parents on six indicators of family structure and employment, connection to institutions that drive economic well-being, and health. Specifically, children with immigrant parents are equally or more likely to have a securely employed parent and less likely to live in a one-parent family. They are also less likely to be born at a low birthweight, to die as an infant, to have an impairment that limits physical activity, or to be neither enrolled in school nor working as 16- to 19-year-olds.

### *Indicators Where Children of Immigrant Parents Fare Uniformly Worse*

Children in each of the four race-ethnic groups with immigrant parents fare worse than children with U.S.-born parents in the corresponding groups on two key indicators that capture access to public benefits: PreKindergarten enrollment and health insurance coverage.

### *Children at Highest Risk: Black Children with U.S.-Born Parents and Hispanic Children with Immigrant Parents*

Examining all 19 indicators, the group of children at highest risk overall was Black children with U.S.-born parents, and Hispanic children with immigrant parents were the second most at risk. Black children with U.S.-born parents ranked at the bottom, in 8th place out of the eight groups, on 10 of the indicators, and 7th on an additional five indicators, for a total of 15 out of 19 indicators. Hispanic children in immigrant families fared only slightly better than Black children with U.S.-born parents, ranking 8th on seven indicators and 7th on six indicators, for a total of 13 out of 19 indicators.

Specifically, Black children with U.S.-born parents and Hispanic children with immigrant parents were uniformly the worst off economically across a number of specific indicators. They ranked lowest among the eight groups on poverty and near poverty, median income, and secure parental employment. They also fared the worst on parents reporting they have very good or excellent health, and

Hispanic immigrant children and Black children born in the U.S. had the highest rates of child mortality.

Notably, Black and Hispanic children with either immigrant parents or U.S.-born parents were also the least likely to be covered by health insurance. Compounding, and related to, their low socioeconomic status and poor health outcomes, Black children and Hispanic children also fared worse than other children on educational indicators: reading and math proficiency, high school graduation, and attainment of a bachelor's degree.

### *Education: All Groups Are at Risk*

None of the eight race-ethnic-immigrant-status groups are doing well when it comes to reading and mathematics proficiency. This is a critical situation. Even for the two groups with the highest proficiency, Asian children who do and Asian children who do not have English as the primary language in the home, a large 35 to 51 percent are below the proficient level in reading and mathematics, and this climbs to 47 to 65 percent for White children who do and do not have English as the primary home language, and to 76 to 84 percent for Hispanic and Black children who do and do not have English as the primary home language.

It also is surprising and striking that there is little difference within race-ethnic groups in reading and mathematics proficiency rates for children who do and do not have English as the primary language at home. The rates of not reading proficiently are identical at 51 percent for Asian children, regardless of the home language, and in the range of 35 to 43 percent for mathematics. Among White children, the range is only 55 to 65 percent for reading and 47 to 56 percent for mathematics. For Hispanic and Black children who do and do not have English as their home language, the percentage not proficient is in the very high and very narrow range of 76 to 84 percent for both reading and mathematics.

These striking findings point toward the need for schools to work more effectively with large numbers of children in all groups.

### *Recommendations for Public Investments in the Next Generation*

Children growing up today belong to a generation in which no single group will constitute a majority. Attention to their

needs thus requires confronting issues of diversity in race-ethnicity, immigrant status, language, and socioeconomic status. Moreover, each group of children examined in this report is characterized by substantial variation in these and other indicators that were not analyzed here because this report is necessarily limited in scope. In this context, inclusive policies that embrace all children are essential, as are adaptations to outreach efforts and program features that will ensure that all children truly have the opportunity to reach their peak potential.

In every case, for example, we argue for focused attention to the circumstances and needs of children with immigrant parents and those who are Dual Language Learners. However, one of the most striking conclusions of this report is that the well-being of many children who do not share these features also is in jeopardy. Indeed, children with immigrant parents fare better than those with U.S.-born parents on several indicators of well-being, including healthy birth outcomes and being raised by two parents. Hispanic and Black children, regardless of their immigrant status, experience numerous detrimental outcomes at rates that are unacceptably higher than those experienced by White and Asian children. This is a fundamental civil and human rights issue that demands attention. At the same time, an especially troubling problem that cuts across all groups is the low levels of reading and mathematics proficiency in the early years of school.

We offer the following recommendations with the hope that the legacy of today's diverse generation of children is one of serious and effective attention to issues of equity and fairness for all children. The range of pertinent policies extends from early education to health care to economic security.

#### *Investing in Education*

**Federal, state, and local governments must increase their investments in universal PreKindergarten so that all children have access to voluntary, high-quality PreKindergarten beginning at age three.**

For today's young children, PreKindergarten initiates the critical, first stage of formal education. In view of the very low reading and mathematics proficiency rates experienced by all groups studied in this report, nothing short of a massive national effort will be required to get all children off to a strong

start in school. We therefore urge bipartisan cooperation in Washington, D.C. to expand and make available high-quality early education to children throughout the nation.

**Quality PreKindergarten education must be followed by high-quality full-day Kindergarten and closely aligned curricula for all grades from PreKindergarten through Third Grade.**

In order to ensure that the gains from early education are sustained, it is important that all children have access to full-day Kindergarten, and that the education children experience from PreKindergarten through Third Grade is made up of a series of integrated steps where the lessons children learn and the gains they make in one year are aligned with the curricula of the next grade. Creating such a foundation involves (1) the alignment of curricula, standards, and assessments spanning PreKindergarten through Third Grade; (2) consistent instructional approaches and learning environments across these grades; (3) classroom teachers who possess at least a bachelor's degree and are certified as having the knowledge of child development needed to span PreKindergarten through Third Grade; (4) small class sizes; and (5) partnership between schools and families.

**Federal, state, and local governments must provide schools with the funding they need in order to provide Dual Language Learners with effective programs and services.**

Many children in immigrant families are Dual Language Learners who face additional challenges in school, where English language proficiency is central to academic success. It is essential that schools have the funding and resources necessary to meet the needs of Dual Language Learner Students, including teachers trained to accurately identify children who are not proficient in English, as well as specific curricula and assessments to meet those children's needs.

**Funding must be provided to implement culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach for early learning programs.**

Given the disparities in PreKindergarten enrollment for Hispanic children, there is a pressing need for focused outreach efforts to ensure that this rapidly growing group

of young children benefits from PreKindergarten expansion. Equally important, all states should pursue concerted efforts to develop and implement bilingual education strategies that specifically address the academic challenges facing children of immigrants, while simultaneously building on their strengths (Espinosa, in press).

### *Investing in Health*

**It is essential that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) be implemented in a fashion that ensures that all children and parents have affordable health insurance coverage. The ACA should also be revised to eliminate provisions that exclude unauthorized immigrants.**

The ACA will create health insurance exchanges and provide tax subsidies aimed at low- and moderate-income families to enhance their ability to purchase private insurance in order to benefit both children and adults. The promise of health insurance coverage for low- and moderate-income families will be realized, however, only if overall funding and subsidies to families reach the level necessary for families to be able to afford the health insurance provided through the exchanges.

Focusing specifically on children with immigrant parents, all “lawfully present” children and parents will qualify to purchase insurance from the health exchanges created by the ACA, including both citizens and legal noncitizens. Citizen children currently are eligible for Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and child-only plans will be sold through ACA exchanges, which will provide the opportunity for unauthorized parents to purchase health insurance for their U.S.-citizen children. In addition, in some states all children are eligible for state-funded programs, regardless of their immigration status. However, the health reform law, as it now stands, does not allow unauthorized immigrants to participate in insurance exchanges or to obtain federal subsidies for their own coverage. This leaves two groups of children in jeopardy of not receiving health insurance coverage: (1) U.S.-citizen children with unauthorized parents and (2) children who are themselves unauthorized and who do not live in states where all children are eligible for state-funded programs.

First, among children of immigrants, 89 percent of children are U.S. citizens; however, as of 2010, 24 percent of children with immigrant parents had parents who are unauthorized immigrants (Passel and Cohn, 2011). Because the health reform law excludes unauthorized immigrants from participating in the health insurance exchanges, these parents may hesitate to contact government health programs or ACA health insurance exchanges to purchase health insurance for their U.S.-citizen children. These parents may be concerned that this would create barriers as they seek to become citizens, despite the eligibility of their citizen sons and daughters for Medicaid or CHIP, if they are income-eligible, and for the ACA child-only plans.

Second, we must achieve the goal of insuring all children, and to do this we must cover unauthorized children. As of 2010, among children with immigrant parents, 6 percent, or approximately one million children, were unauthorized (Passel and Cohn, 2011).

Although unauthorized children in Illinois, New York, Massachusetts, Washington, and the District of Columbia can receive Medicaid or CHIP if they are income-eligible, unauthorized children and parents are ineligible for public coverage in 46 states (National Immigration Law Center, 2013), and they are prohibited from obtaining coverage even at full cost through the ACA exchanges. Thus, many children and parents in immigrant families will have to rely on emergency room care as well as public hospitals, health centers, and other clinics that provide affordable care regardless of a patient’s coverage or ability to pay. This serious problem also could be eliminated by ending the exclusion that is slated to prevent unauthorized immigrants from participating in the health exchanges.

In addition, all information provided through the ACA and other health programs should be culturally appropriate and accessible to persons who do not yet speak English fluently, and the process for verifying citizenship or immigration status for coverage should be streamlined and effective to minimize the burden of providing documentation. Immigration reform provides an opportunity for the Federal Government to address gaps in the ACA to expand coverage to all immigrant children and parents.



### *Investing in the Economic Well-Being of Children and Families*

Families with limited economic resources can have great difficulty paying for nutritious food, adequate housing, health insurance, and early education. Children in families with limited income also tend to be less healthy and to experience less success in school (Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Hernandez, 2011a, 2011b; McLoyd, 1998; Sewell and Hauser, 1975). Public policies and programs can, and do, provide critical education, health and economic resources to many children and families, but more should be done. Current policies and programs are limited in their effectiveness in lifting children out of poverty and near-poverty.

For example, the following results are calculated for this report using estimates calculated by the Census Bureau for its Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) and made publicly available to researchers (Short, 2012; King, et al., 2010). We have calculated for 2011 the overall size of the effect on the SPM poverty rate for children of (1) federal income tax provisions, including both the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC), (2) FICA, (3) state income tax, (4) the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), (4) the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, (6) school lunches, and (7) housing and energy assistance programs.

Based on the Supplemental Poverty Measure, these policies and programs led to a range of reductions: (1) 4 to 6 percentage points in the poverty rates for White and Asian children with immigrant parents and with U.S.-born parents; (2) 11 percentage points for Hispanic children with U.S.-born parents and Black children with immigrant parents; and (3) 14 to 16 percentage points for Hispanic children in immigrant families and Black children with U.S.-born parents. These are large effects, especially for Black and Hispanic children. Taken together, these federal and state policies and programs reduce the number of children in poverty in various groups by one-fifth to almost two-fifths (19 to 37 percent). Still, the number of children remaining in poverty for each group is much larger than the number of children lifted out of poverty by these policies and programs.

However, despite the much higher rates of combined poverty and near-poverty for Hispanic and Black children, compared

to White and Asian children, the policies and programs included here acted to change the rate of combined poverty and near-poverty for each group by no more than 3 percentage points. (For a study comparing the rate of poverty and the rate of poverty and near-poverty for children in the United States to corresponding rates in European countries, see Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, 2007).

Notwithstanding the important effects of public policies for reducing rates of poverty and rates of poverty and near-poverty for children, because these rates remain high, we present recommendations for broadening eligibility criteria and for increasing the value of benefits provided by key public programs.

**The Federal Government should maintain, enhance, and in some cases broaden the eligibility criteria of programs that provide for the critical needs of children.**

Findings presented above show that public policies are effective in reducing poverty and near-poverty rates for children, but also that many children remain poor or near-poor. In addition, even among children who have a securely employed parent, parental earnings often are too low to protect against poverty or near-poverty. For example, the official poverty rate among children who had a securely employed parent in 2010 was in the range of 4 to 6 percent for the four White and Asian groups and 10 to 22 percent for the four Hispanic and Black groups, and the corresponding rate of poverty and near-poverty was in the range of 18 to 24 percent for the White and Asian groups and 38 to 59 percent for the Hispanic and Black groups.

Programs such as the Child Tax Credit (CTC), the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (also known as Food Stamps), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act provide essential resources for many children, but many children remain in need and the programs should be expanded.

**Eligibility for the Child Tax Credit (CTC) should be maintained to ensure access for children in immigrant families.**

The CTC was designed to help working parents manage the costs of raising children. Recent proposals would deny the refundable portion of the CTC to approximately 5.5 million children with immigrant parents (Passel and Cohn, 2011). In addition, key improvements that have been made by increasing the value and the refundability of the CTC should be made permanent. Finally, the value of the CTC should be indexed to inflation and made fully refundable to all families.

**The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) should be increased in value and broadened in the number of families that are eligible for it, in order to further reduce the child poverty rate and the rate of poverty and near-poverty for children.**

EITC, a work-support policy, increases the economic resources available to children and families with working parents who, nevertheless, have low incomes. A key recent improvement in the EITC, the “third tier,” provides as much as \$629 per year for families with three or more children. This provision should be made permanent. In addition, the amount of the credit should be increased, because, as indicated by findings presented above, many children remain poor or near-poor even after accounting for a wide range of federal and state policies and programs.

The EITC alone lifted 3.1 million children out of poverty in 2011 (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2013). Thus, the EITC reduced child poverty for various race-ethnic-immigrant groups by 2 to 4 percentage points for the four groups of White and Asian children and by 5 to 9 percentage points for the four groups of Hispanic and Black children. The EITC had a larger effect in reducing child poverty than any other specific program included in the Census Supplemental Poverty Measure. Thus, it could provide an excellent vehicle for further reducing the large number of children in poverty and near-poverty.

**The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program, a safety-net program, should be revised to eliminate eligibility exclusion rules for non-citizen immigrants, including unauthorized immigrants.**

The Welfare Reform Act of 1996 drew, for the first time, a sharp distinction between citizens and non-citizens who

are documented immigrants, carving out non-citizens from eligibility for important public benefits and services, including TANF. Although U.S.-citizen children with immigrant parents are not barred from eligibility for TANF, they experience lower take-up rates than children with U.S.-born parents because many have parents who are barred from TANF. In addition, many non-citizen children are barred from eligibility for TANF. Insofar as excluding some immigrant children and parents from eligibility for welfare programs acts to deprive them of important public benefits and services, and recognizing that most immigrant children and parents are or will become U.S. citizens (Ku, 2009), these exclusions are extremely short-sighted and detrimental. It is in the interest not only of immigrant children and families, but of all Americans to remove these exclusions. This is of particular importance to members of the baby-boom generation who are dependent upon having a healthy and productive labor force to support them during retirement.

**Safety net programs such as SNAP must not be cut.**

In our current policy environment, with its focus on budget-cutting, there is a risk that children of immigrants, including U.S.-citizen children, will lose access to safety net programs such as SNAP, because these programs are at risk of cuts at the federal or state level. Current investments in work-support, nutrition, and other safety-net programs are critical to the economic well-being of many children and parents in immigrant families.

*Investing in Children in Immigrant Families*

**The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act should be adopted.**

This program would provide unauthorized youth who have grown up in the United States and who are highly motivated to achieve in school with increased access to higher education. Not only would the DREAM Act provide these children the opportunity to go to college, but it would provide an incentive for these children to succeed in elementary and high school with the aim of achieving a bachelor’s degree. This act is a critical component of ensuring that we invest in all children, and that all children are provided with the opportunity to realize the American Dream.

**We must implement policies and programs to provide immigrant parents with formal opportunities to improve their English literacy skills.**

Such programs would expedite immigrant parents' ability to become fluent English speakers and thus to find well-paid work and communicate more effectively with schools and other institutions and organizations that support the development of their children. Particularly promising are dual-generation programs that link high-quality PreKindergarten through Third Grade education for children with programs for parents to develop skills for jobs in high-demand industries.

**Comprehensive immigration reform should provide provisional documented status and a clear roadmap to citizenship, and should ensure that immigrants who receive provisional status do not face additional restrictions or excessive waiting periods that would limit their access to critical safety net programs and income supports.**

As indicated earlier, among all children with immigrant parents, 24 percent were U.S.-citizens with an undocumented parent. Provisional documented status for all unauthorized immigrants, including those who are parents now or who will have children in the future, would aid in their employment prospects and remove the threat of deportation. These are among the many challenges confronting U.S.-citizen children with parents who are unauthorized (Capps, 2007; Chaudry, et al, 2010; Yoshikawa, 2011). A clear roadmap to citizenship that eliminates restrictions from accessing critical safety net programs and income supports would foster the speedy social and economic integration of these children and their parents, which would benefit not only these individuals, but also the broader society and economy.

**Conclusion**

We introduced this report with the stark fact of an emerging non-majority generation—a powerful trend that is led by the nation's children. Our nation's response to this trend, and to the children who are driving it, is a test of the extent to which we hold true to our widely-accepted values of fairness and equity. The findings reported here offer both promising insights into the well-being of many children in immigrant

families, and devastating evidence of persistent disparities in children's well-being based on race-ethnicity, home language, and immigrant status.

These findings are encountering an historical moment when public investments in low-income children and families, and especially those who are immigrants, are a topic of intense debate, and when the economic circumstances of even those families whose incomes fall above low-income thresholds are increasingly precarious. We must seek to understand these disparities and craft policies that restore equity for all children. Many children are not receiving the education they need for academic success; many lack health insurance coverage, particularly children with immigrant parents; and, 40 years after the War on Poverty, disturbingly high numbers of children are growing up poor and near-poor. That these circumstances continue to disproportionately affect Black and Hispanic children and children of immigrants is an affront to this nation. Absent a serious national dialogue about how best to confront these inequities and a commitment to making the essential investments to address them, we are seriously jeopardizing the future of our increasingly diverse nation.

**About the Authors**

This research was supported by the Foundation for Child Development. The authors bear sole responsibility for the interpretations and views presented here.

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## Appendix A. Sources and Technical Information for the Indicators in this Report

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March Current Population Survey (CPS) findings in this report were calculated by analyzing the IPUMS data files prepared by King, et al (2010). For indicators from the CPS pertaining to youth over age 17, we included only those who were born in the United States or who had migrated to the United States before age 18. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) has been used to adjust all dollar values in this report to the year 2011. Vital statistics findings in this report were calculated by analyzing the “births,” the “period linked birth-infant death,” and the “mortality multiple cause” microdata files. Throughout this report, White, Black, and Asian children include only those who are non-Hispanic, while Hispanic children include all Hispanic children regardless of race.

### *Family Economic Resources*

#### **Child Poverty** (Current Population Survey, March)

- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Asian children with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011)

#### **Low-Income** (Current Population Survey, March)

- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Asian children with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011)

#### **Median Family Income** (Current Population Survey, March)

- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Asian children with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011), and adjusted to 2011 dollar values using the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

#### **Secure Parental Employment** (Current Population Survey, March)

- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Asian children with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011)

### *Health*

#### **Low Birthweight** (Vital Statistics)

- 3-year moving average (2008-2010), except 5-year moving average for Asian children with U.S.-born parents (2006-2010)

#### **Infant Mortality** (Birth to age 1) (Vital Statistics)

- 3-year moving average (2006-2008), except 5-year moving average for Asian children with U.S.-born parents (2004-2008)

#### **Child Mortality** (Ages 1-19) (Vital Statistics)

- 3-year moving average (2008-2010), except 5-year moving average for Asian children with U.S.-born parents (2006-2010)

#### **Activity Limitations** (National Interview Health Survey)

- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Black children with immigrant parents and Asian children with immigrant and with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011)

#### **Very Good or Excellent Health** (National Health Interview Survey)

- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Black children with immigrant parents and Asian children with immigrant and with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011)

#### **Health Insurance** (Current Population Survey, March)

- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Asian children with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011)

### *Educational Attainments*

#### **Reading Proficiency** (4th Grade) (National Assessment of Educational Progress)

- Data for 2011

#### **Mathematics Proficiency** (4th Grade) (National Assessment of Educational Progress)

- Data for 2011

#### **PreKindergarten Enrollment** (Ages 3-4) (Current Population Survey, March)

- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Black children with immigrant parents and Asian children with immigrant and with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011)

#### **High School Graduation** (ages 18-24) (Current Population Survey, March)

- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Black children with immigrant parents and Asian children with immigrant and with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011)

#### **Bachelor's Degree** (ages 25-29) (Current Population Survey, March)

- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Black children with immigrant parents and Asian children with immigrant and with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011)

#### **Youth Neither Enrolled in School nor Working** (ages 16-19) (Current Population Survey, March)

- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Asian children with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011)

### *Demographic Indicators*

#### **Teen Births** (ages 10-17) (Vital Statistics)

- 3-year moving average (2008-2010), except 5-year moving average for Asian children with U.S.-born parents (2006-2010)

#### **One-Parent Families** (Current Population Survey, March)

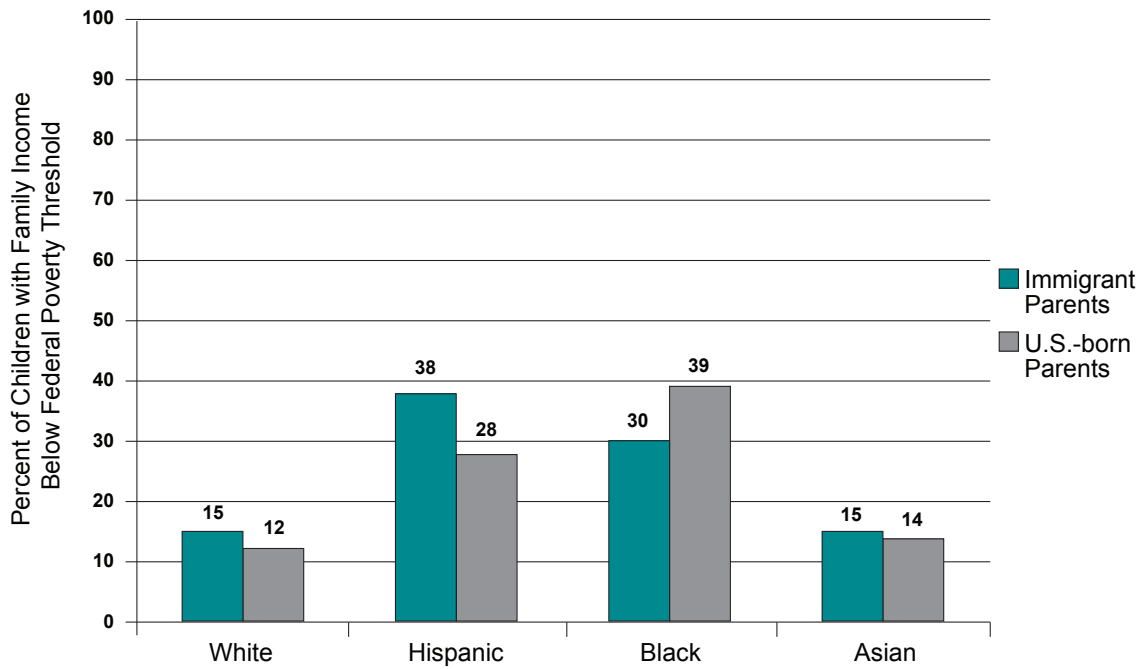
- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Asian children with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011)

#### **Residential Mobility** (Current Population Survey, March)

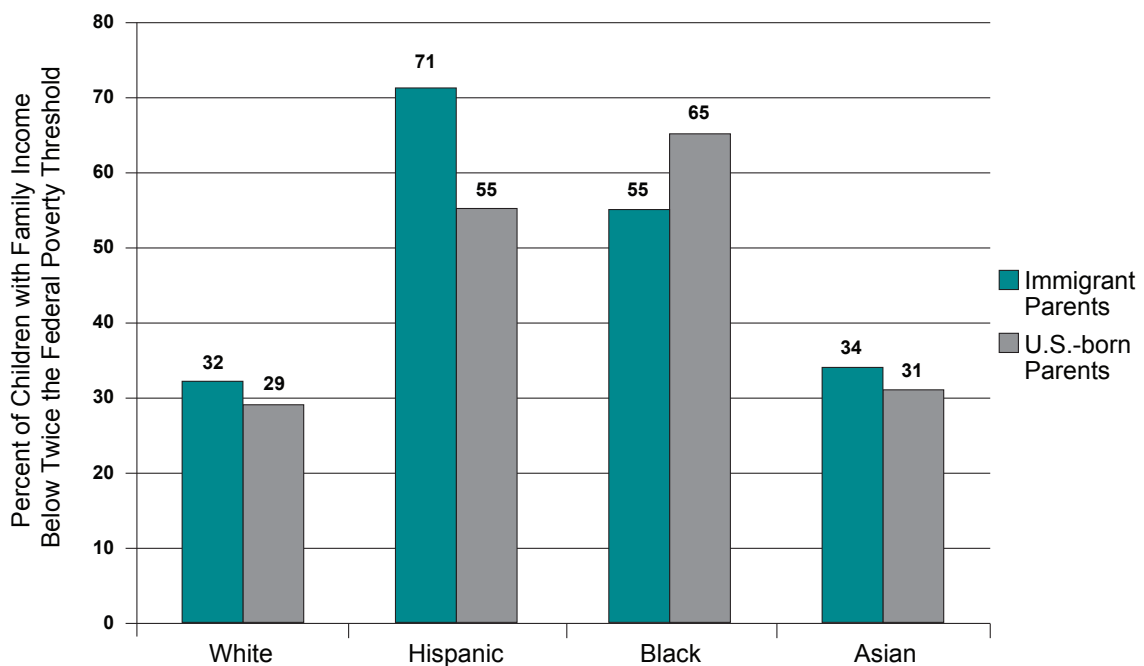
- 3-year moving average (2009-2011), except 5-year moving average for Asian children with U.S.-born parents (2007-2011)

## Appendix B. Results on the 19 Indicators for the Eight Race-Ethnic-Immigrant-Status Groups in this Report

**Figure 1. Poverty Rate: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**

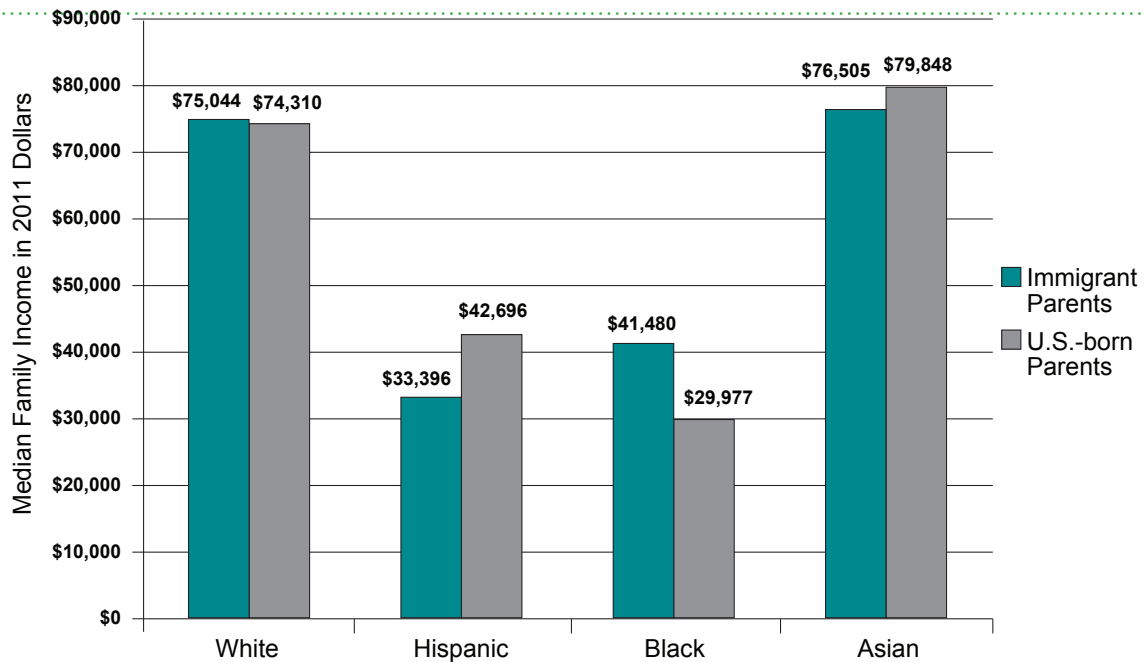


**Figure 2. Rate of Poverty and Near-Poverty: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**

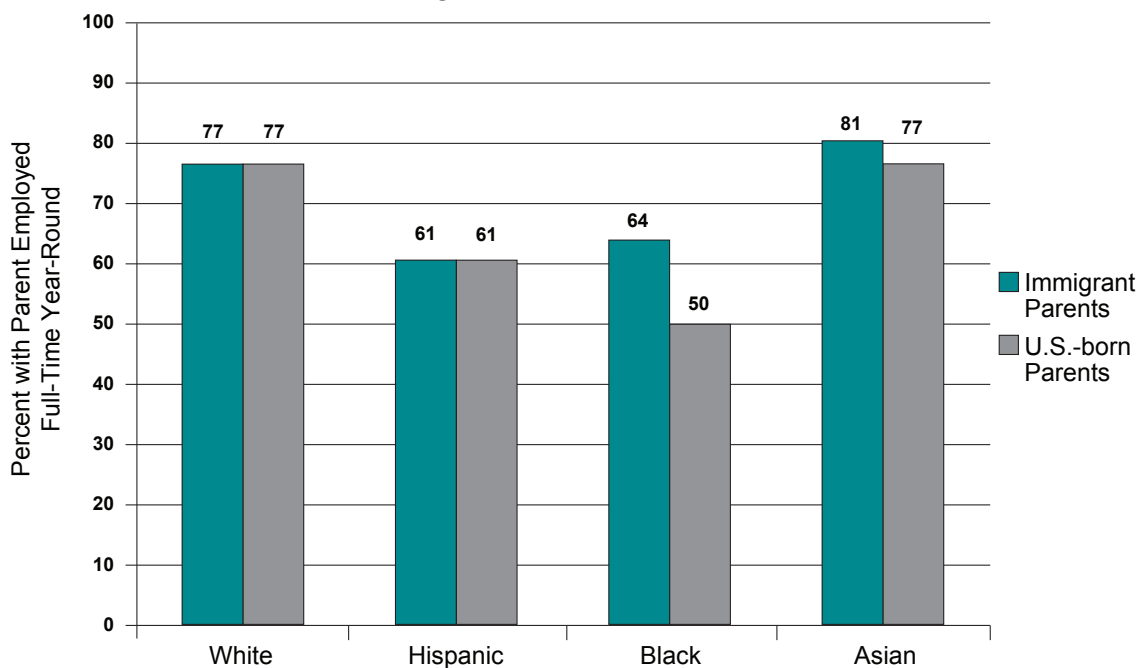


## Appendix B. Results on the 19 Indicators for the Eight Race-Ethnic-Immigrant-Status Groups in this Report

**Figure 3. Median Family Income: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**



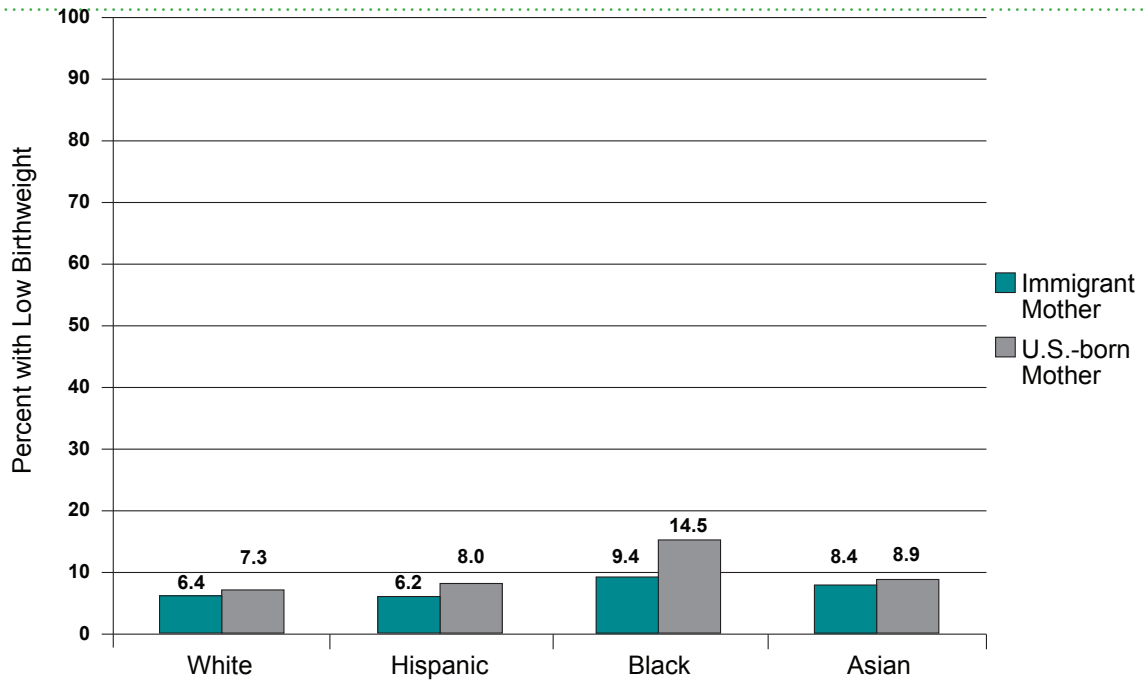
**Figure 4. Secure Parental Employment: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**



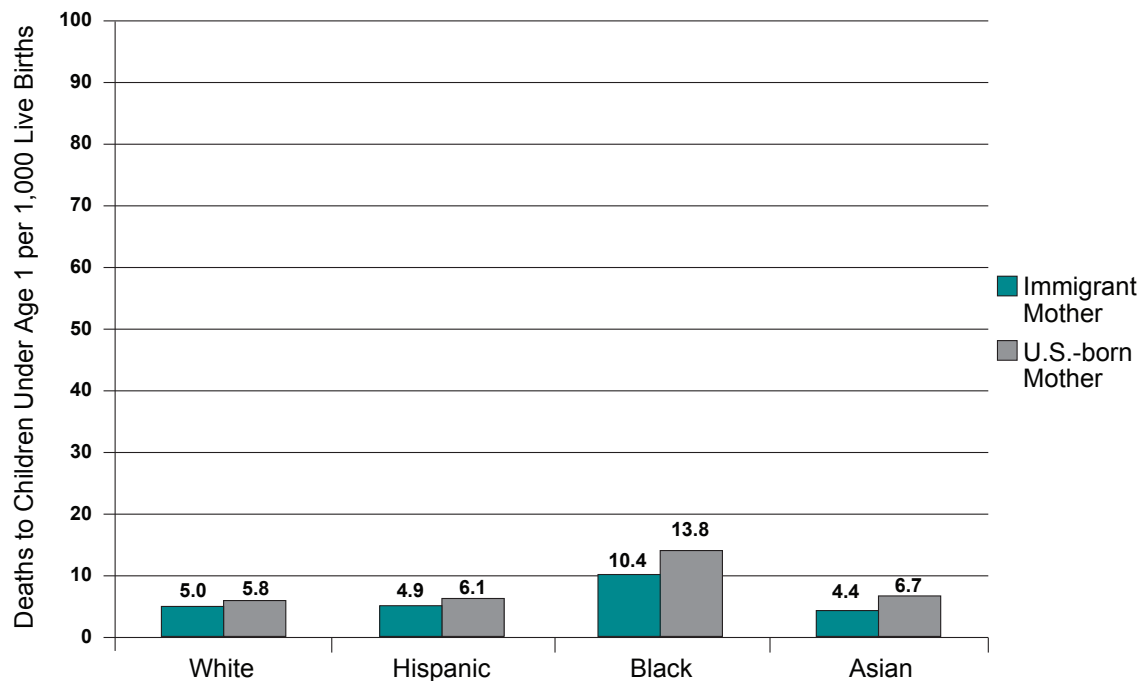


**Appendix B. Results on the 19 Indicators for the Eight Race-Ethnic-Immigrant-Status Groups in this Report**

**Figure 5. Low Birthweight: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Mothers and with U.S.-born Mothers, 2009**

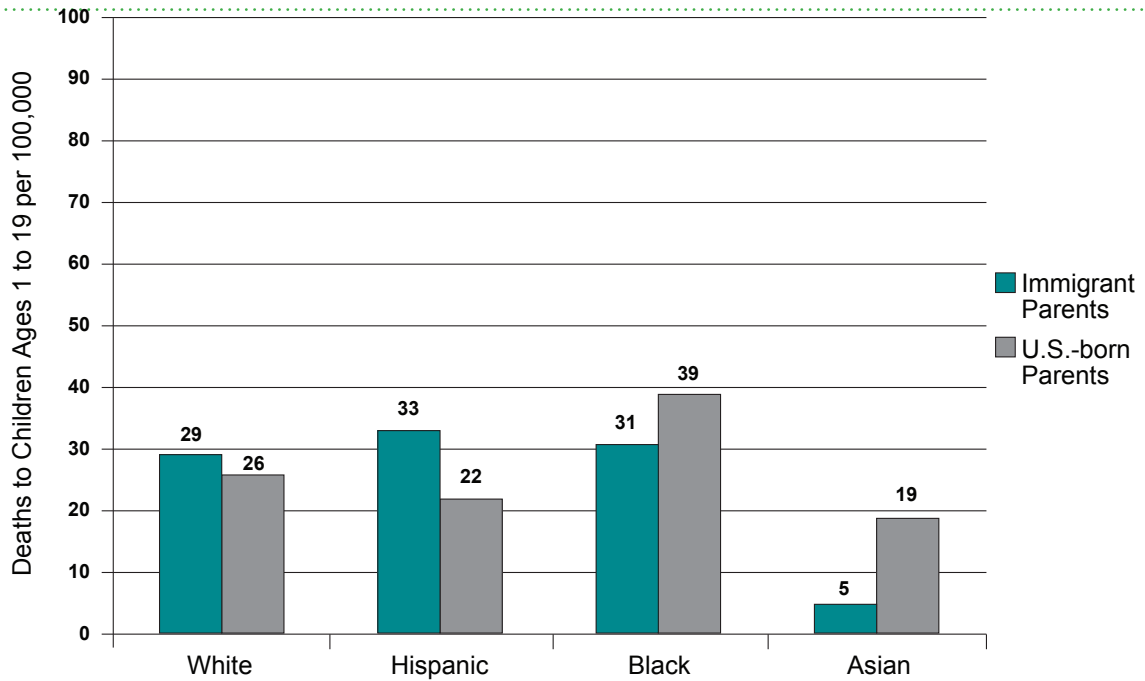


**Figure 6. Infant Mortality: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Mothers and with U.S.-born Mothers, 2007**

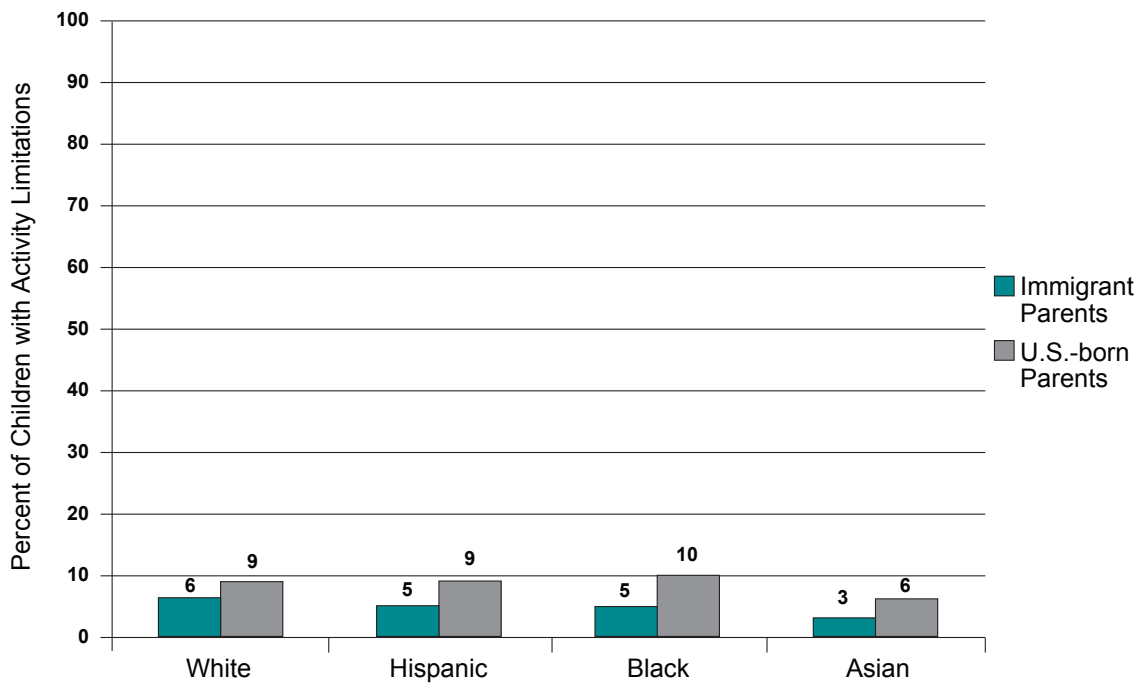


**Appendix B. Results on the 19 Indicators for the Eight Race-Ethnic-Immigrant-Status Groups in this Report**

**Figure 7. Child Mortality: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Immigrant and U.S.-born Children, 2009**

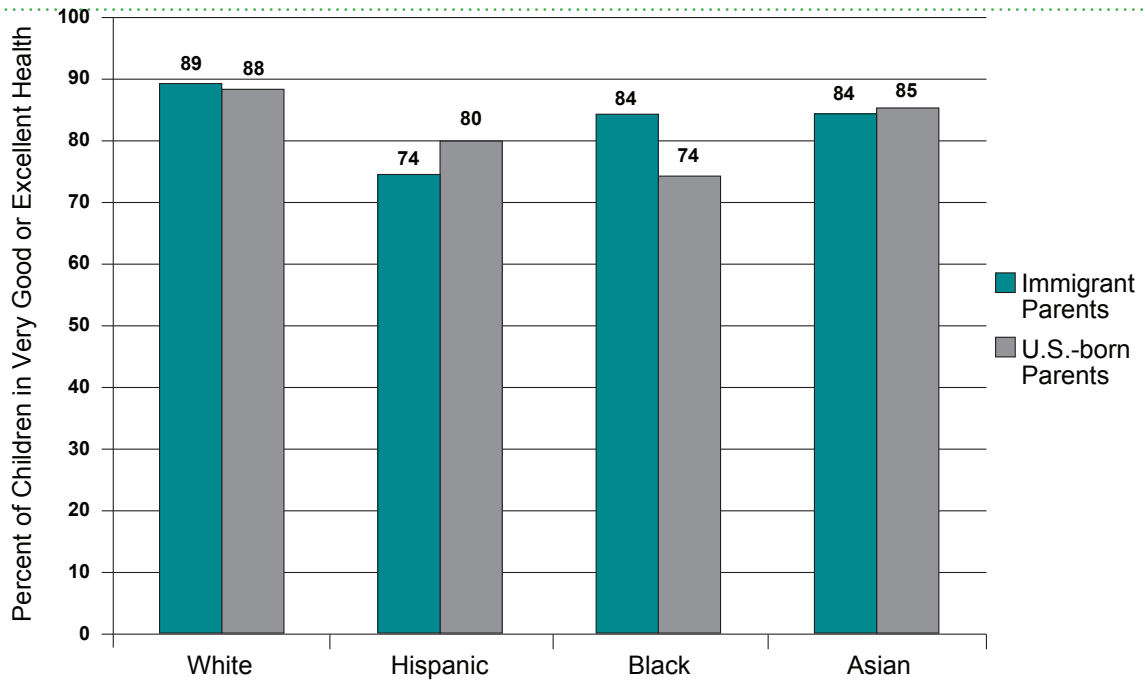


**Figure 8. Activity Limitations: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**

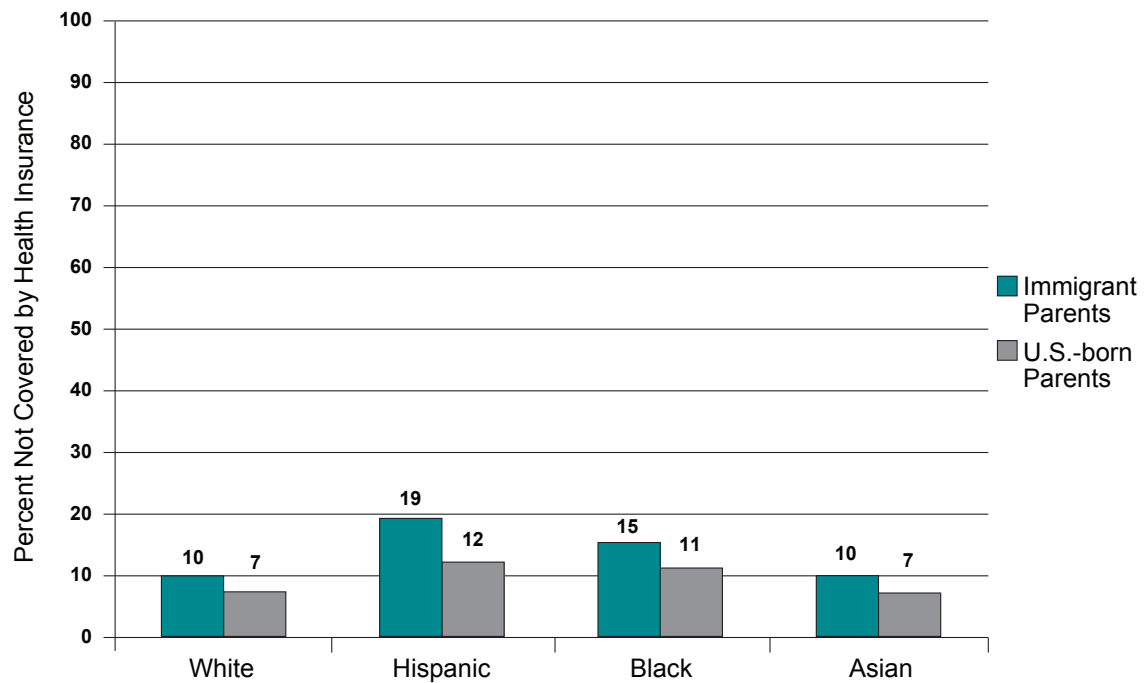


**Appendix B. Results on the 19 Indicators for the Eight Race-Ethnic-Immigrant-Status Groups in this Report**

**Figure 9. Very Good or Excellent Health: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**

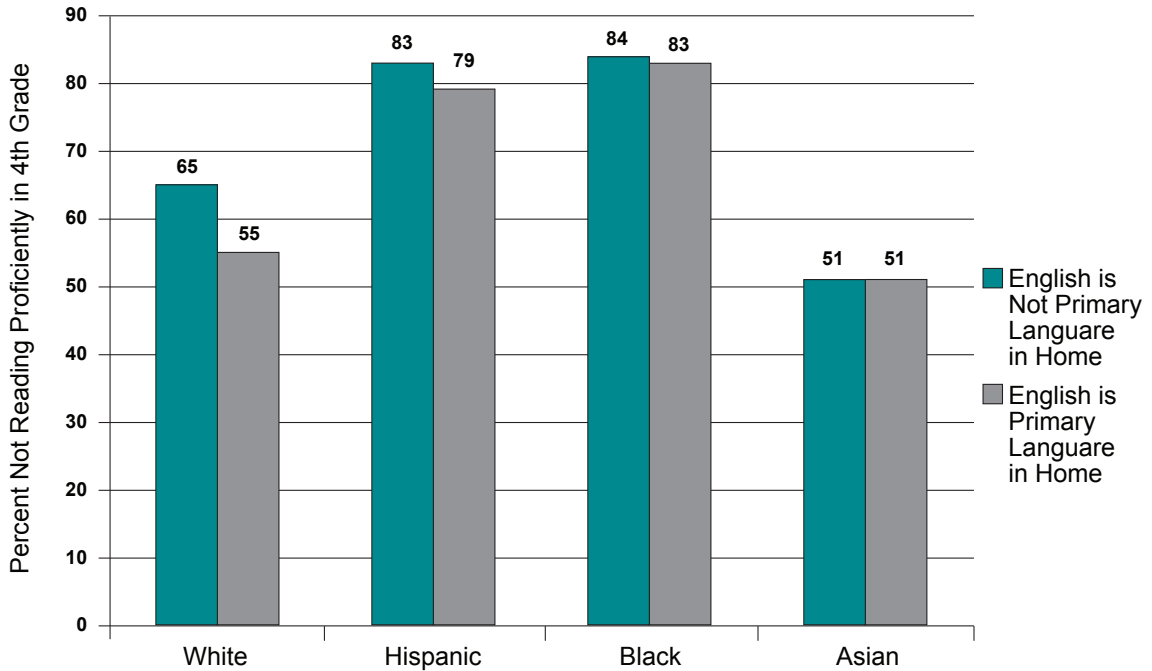


**Figure 10. Not Covered by Health Insurance: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**

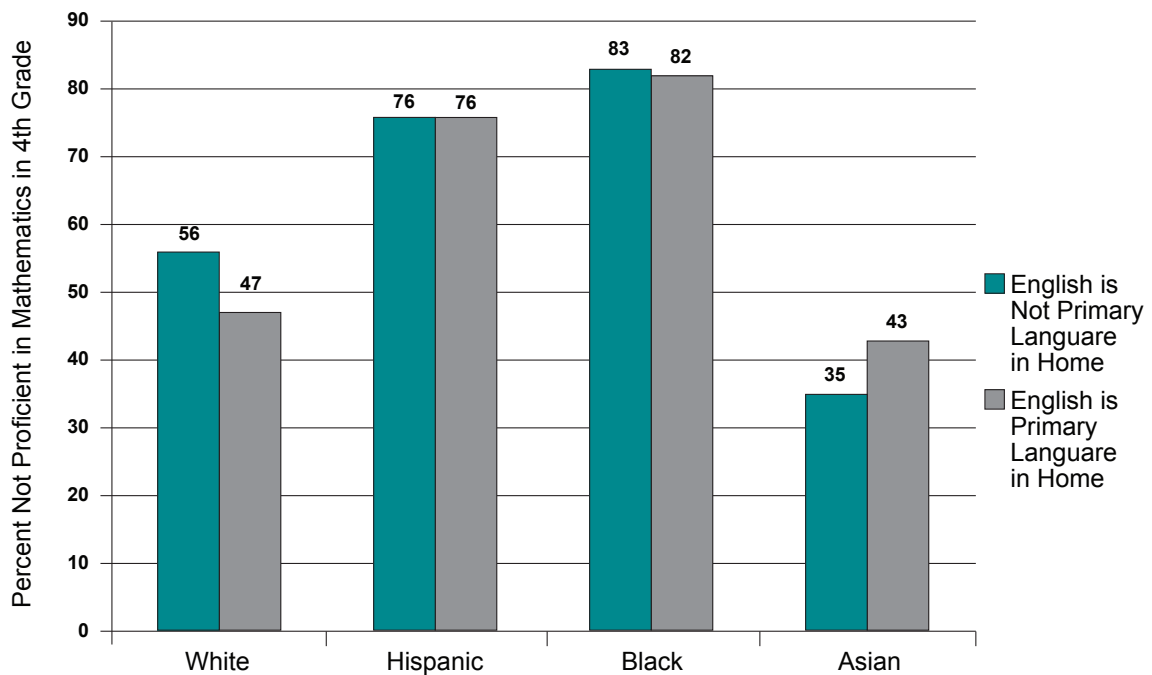


**Appendix B. Results on the 19 Indicators for the Eight Race-Ethnic-Immigrant-Status Groups in this Report**

**Figure 11. Not Reading Proficiently: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children in Homes Where English is not the Primary Language and Where English is the Primary Language, 2011**

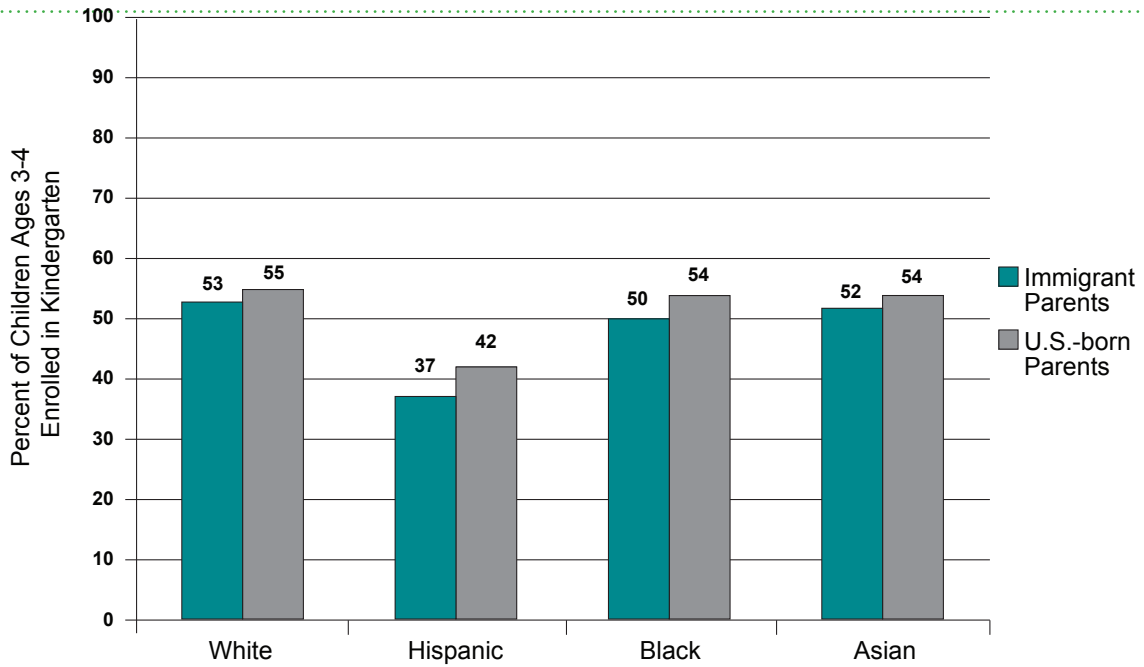


**Figure 12. Not Proficient in Mathematics: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children in Homes Where English is not the Primary Language and Where English is the Primary Language, 2011**

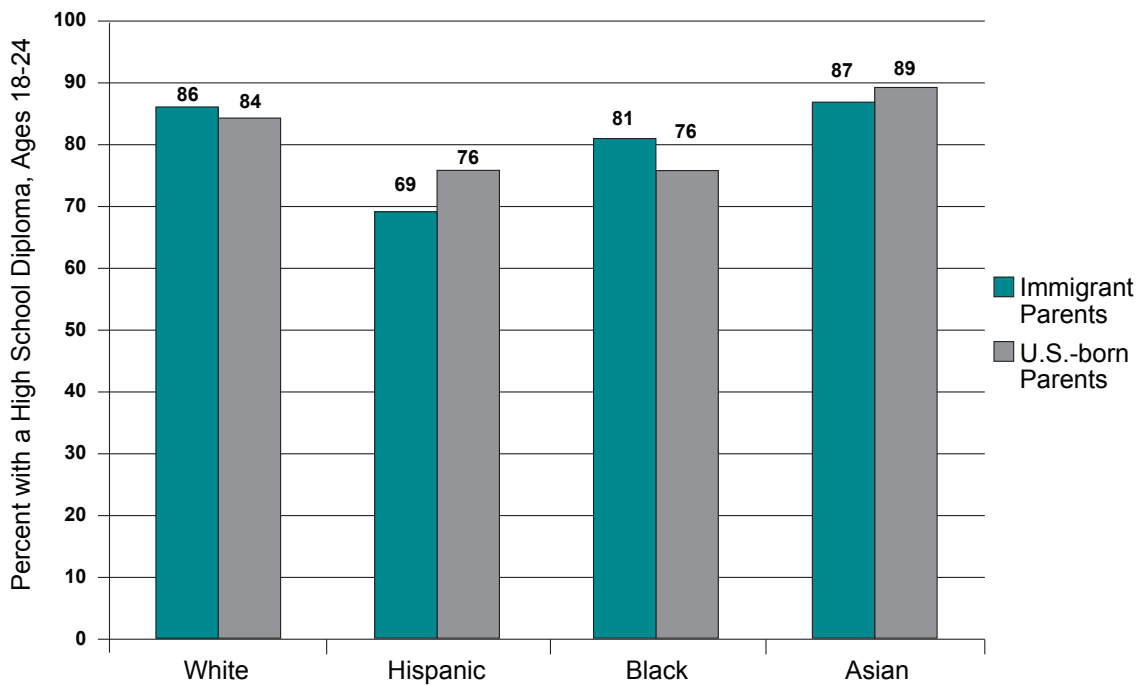


**Appendix B. Results on the 19 Indicators for the Eight Race-Ethnic-Immigrant-Status Groups in this Report**

**Figure 13. PreKindergarten Enrollment: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**



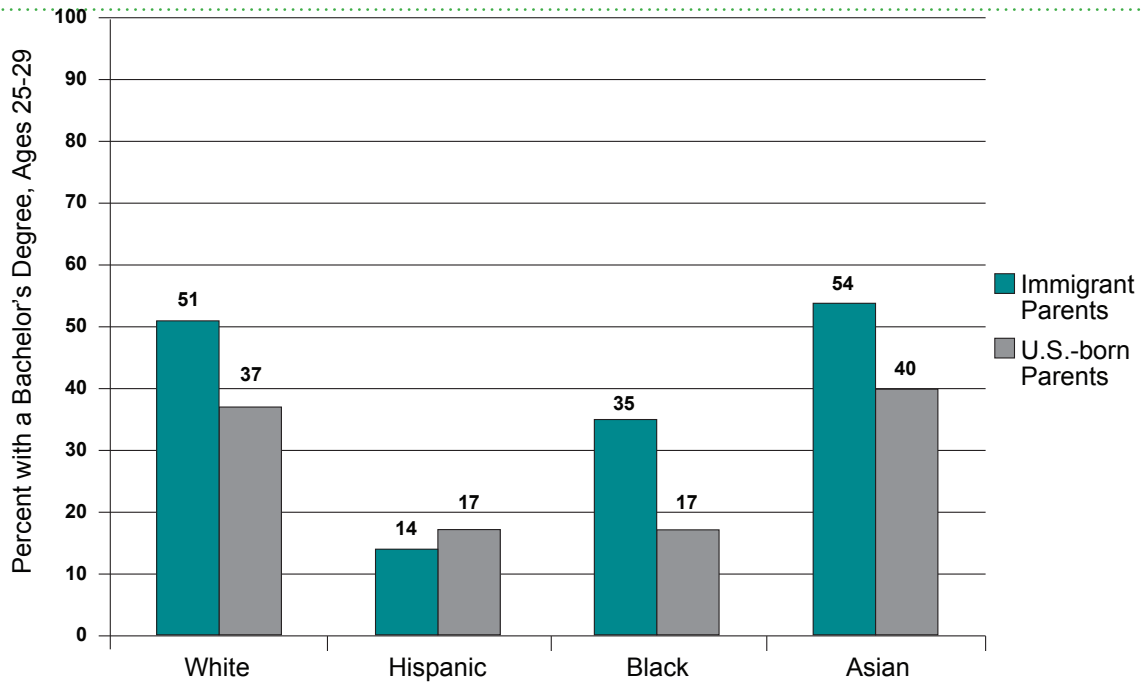
**Figure 14. High School Graduate: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Young Adults with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**



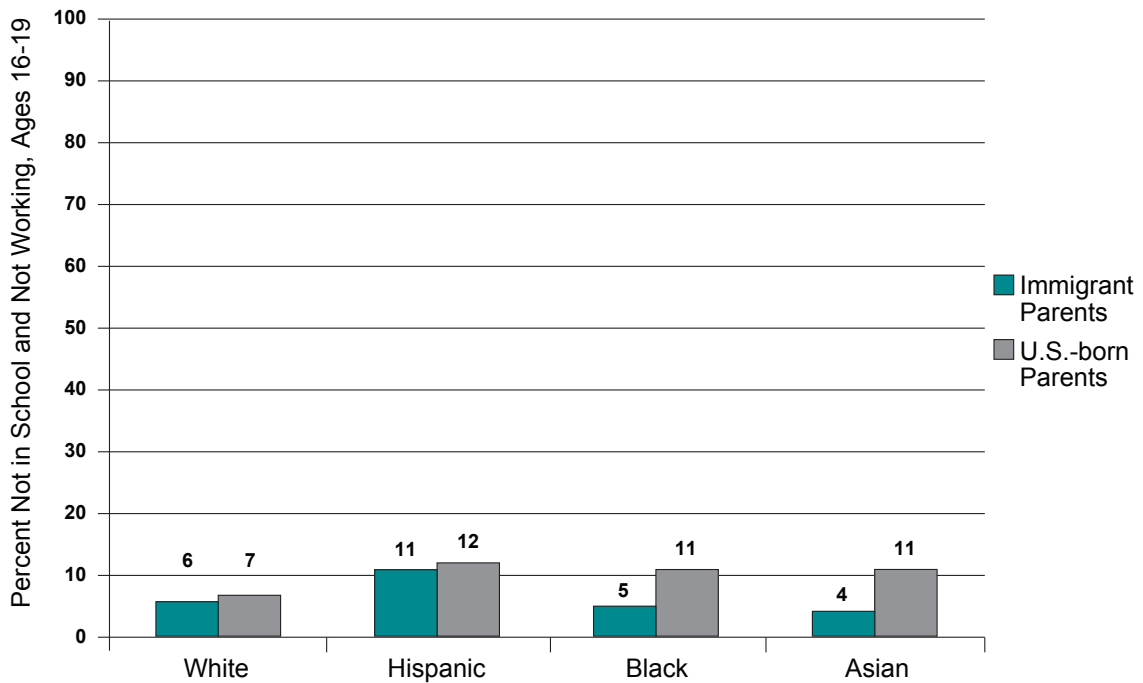


**Appendix B. Results on the 19 Indicators for the Eight Race-Ethnic-Immigrant-Status Groups in this Report**

**Figure 15. Received Bachelor's Degree: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Young Adults with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**

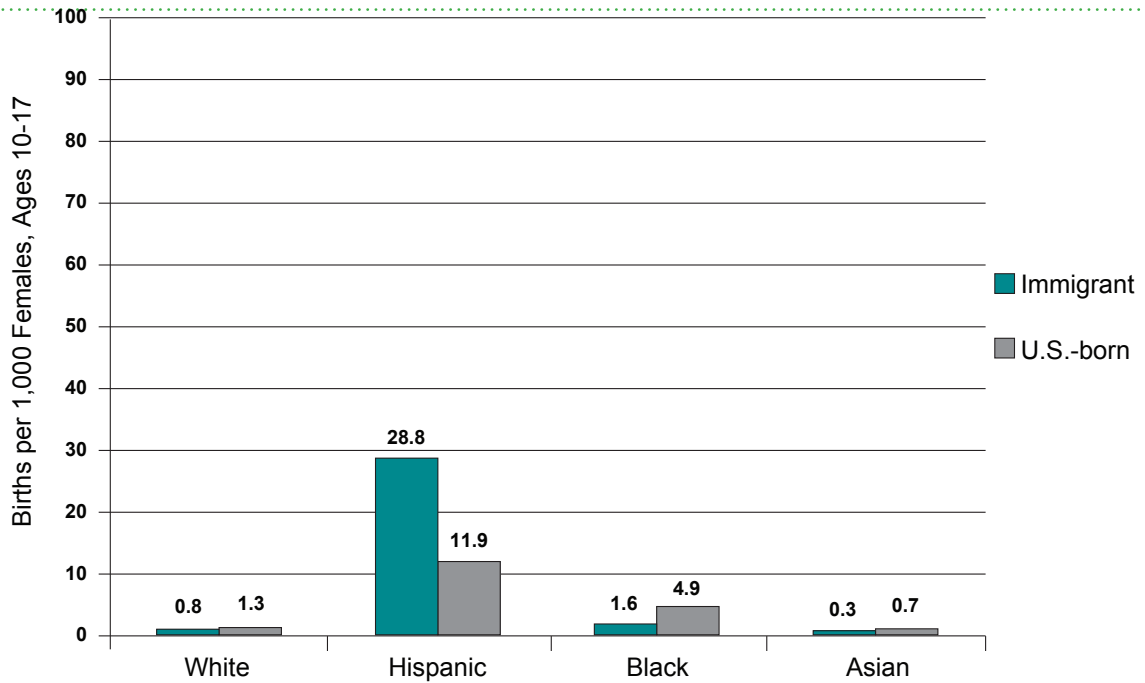


**Figure 16. Not in School and Not Working: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Youth with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**

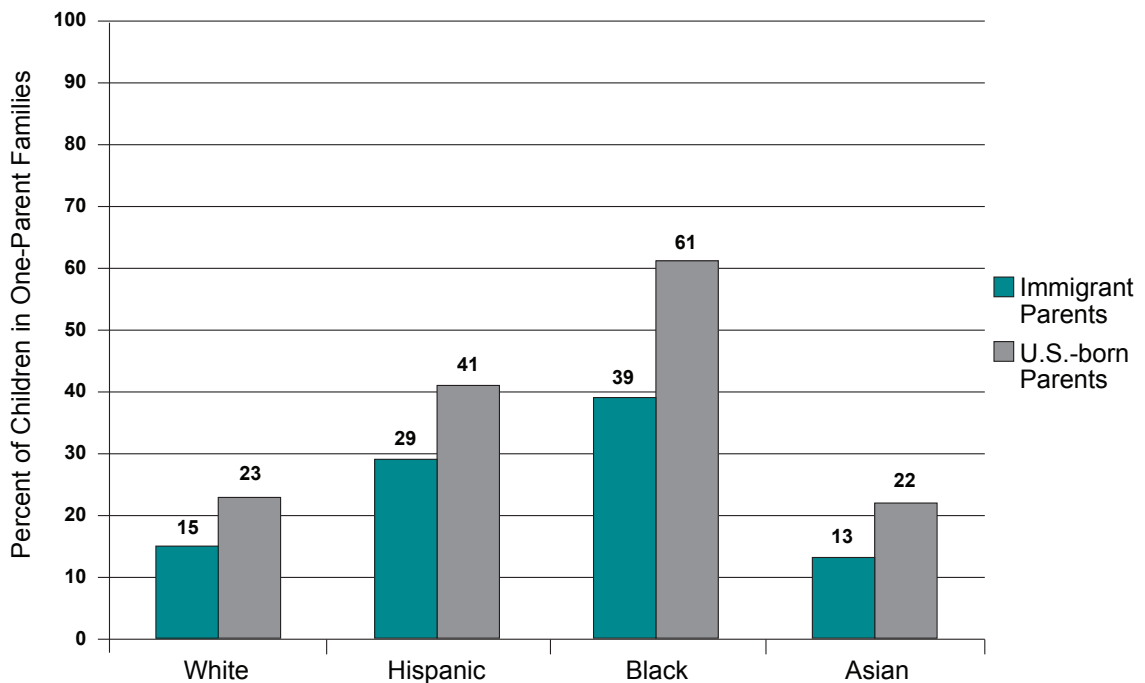


**Appendix B. Results on the 19 Indicators for the Eight Race-Ethnic-Immigrant-Status Groups in this Report**

**Figure 17. Teen Births: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Immigrant and U.S.-Born Adolescents, 2009**

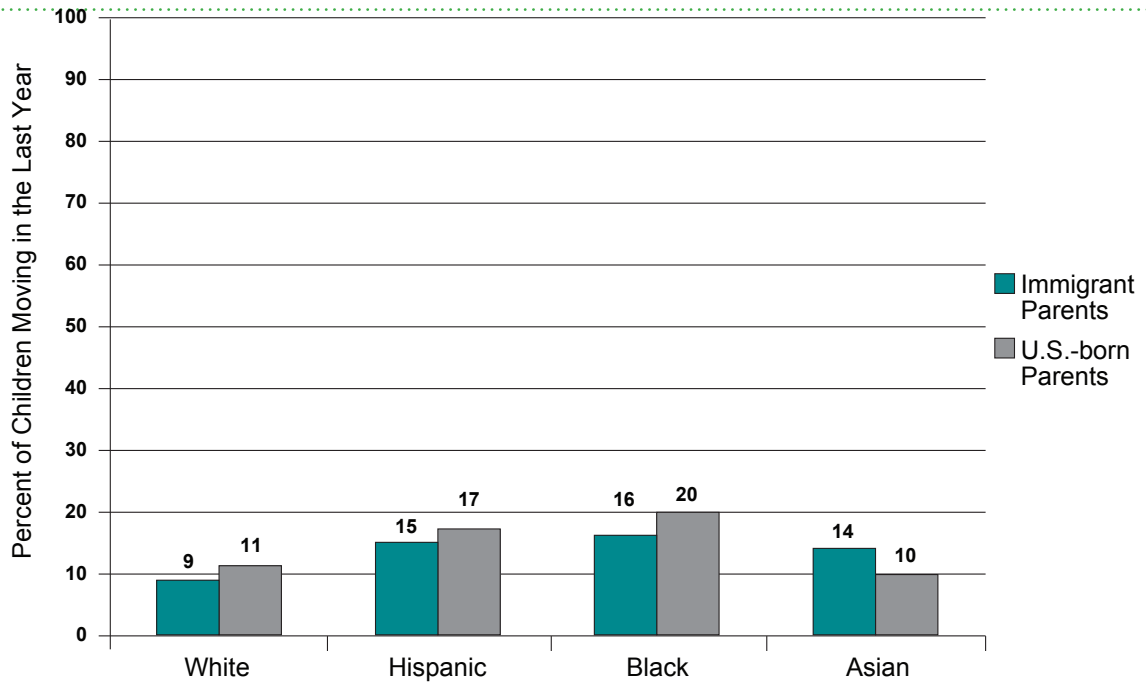


**Figure 18. One-Parent Families: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**



## Appendix B. Results on the 19 Indicators for the Eight Race-Ethnic-Immigrant-Status Groups in this Report

**Figure 19. Residential Mobility: White, Hispanic, Black, and Asian Children with Immigrant Parents and with U.S.-born Parents, 2010**



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