



**Emerging Practices to Address the Needs of Latino Children in the Child Welfare System: Innovations and Advances in California**

Beyond the Bench XXII: Equal Access to Justice for Children and Families

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**Latinos in the United States**

- As of 2010, the Latino population represented 16.3% of the total U.S. population, an increase of 43% (15.2 million people) since 2000.<sup>1</sup>
- Latino children represent 22% of all children under the age of 18 in the United States.<sup>1</sup>
- Among all Latinos in the U.S., nearly 40% are foreign-born.<sup>2</sup>
- Among Latino children, only 11% are foreign-born.<sup>2</sup>
- However, more than half (52%) of all Latino children have at least one foreign-born parent.<sup>3</sup>

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**Latino Children in Child Welfare**

- Since 1995, the percentage of children confirmed as victims of maltreatment who are Latino has more than doubled from 10.0% to 21.4% as of 2010.<sup>4,5</sup>
- Similarly, the population of Latino children in foster care has more than doubled from 8% in 1990 to 21% in 2010.<sup>6</sup>

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## Disproportionality of Latino Children

- Although slightly underrepresented at the national level, there are significant state differences in the representation of Latino children.
- As of 2010, Latino children represented 18.3% of children in foster care compared to 20.1% of children in the general population.<sup>7</sup>
- Yet Latino children were overrepresented in 6 states, and considerably underrepresented in 17 states where Latino children were represented at a proportion less than half their percentage in the general population.<sup>7</sup>

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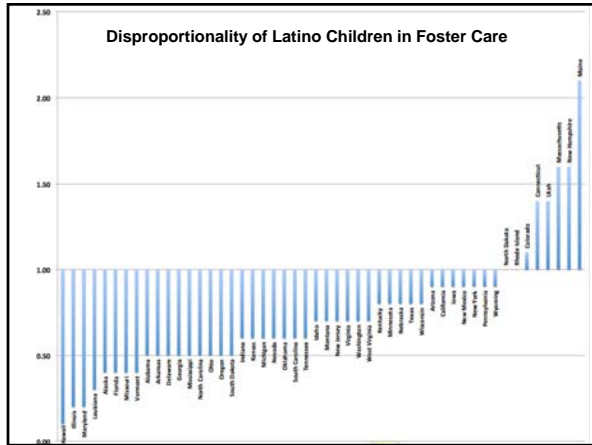
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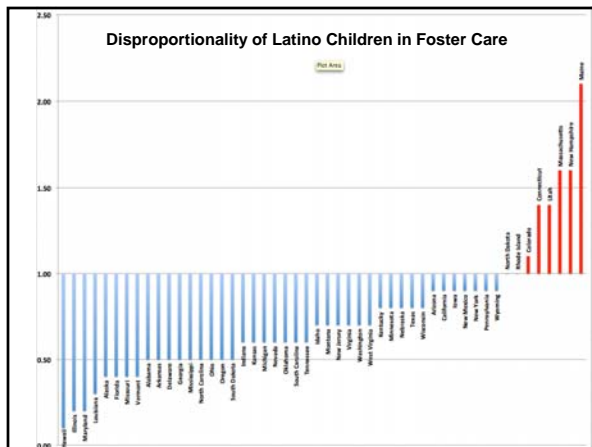
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### Underrepresented or Underreported?

- Although underrepresentation may be indicative of lower rates of maltreatment among Latino families, it may also indicate that Latino families in need of intervention are not being properly identified.
- 81% of young children in immigrant families live with at least one non-citizen parent, while nearly 50% live with an undocumented parent.<sup>8</sup>
- Families with undocumented or noncitizen members are known to underutilize public services because they believe they are not eligible or because they are concerned about potential consequences due to their immigration status.<sup>8</sup>

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### Texas: Latino Children of Immigrants Underrepresented; Children of Natives Overrepresented<sup>9</sup>

- Latino immigrants = **1%** of all children in out-of-home care in Texas in March 2006.
- Latino immigrants = **7%** of all children in Texas in 2005.
  
- Latino children of immigrants = **8%** of all children in care.
- Latino children of immigrants = **20%** of all children in Texas.
  
- U.S.-born Latino natives = **33%** of all children in care.
- U.S.-born Latino natives = **22%** of all children in Texas.

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### Latino Immigrant Children and Child Welfare

- Children of immigrants are often considered at increased risk for maltreatment due to stress associated with immigration and acculturation.<sup>10,11</sup>
- Yet the presence of children of immigrants in the child welfare system has been unknown, as these data are not collected uniformly at the state or national level.
- As a result, little is known about the characteristics, risk factors, incidence of maltreatment, or service use among children of immigrants who come to the attention of this system.

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### Analyses of the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being (NSCAW)<sup>12</sup>

- Children living with a foreign-born parent comprise 8.6% of all children who come to the attention of the child welfare system
- More than 4 out of 5 (82.5%) are U.S.-born citizens
- More than two-thirds (67.2%) are Hispanic
  - Non-Hispanic White (14.8%)
  - Non-Hispanic Black (10.0%)
  - Non-Hispanic Asian (7.5%)

In some cases, children are not living with a parent, but rather with another adult relative (e.g., grandparent, aunt, uncle, adult sibling). Inclusive of these children, 9.8% of children who come to the attention of the child welfare system are living with a foreign-born *primary caregiver*.

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### Latino Children<sup>13</sup>

- Among Latino children who come to the attention of the child welfare system
  - 64% have a parent born in the U.S.
  - 36% have a parent not born in the U.S.
- Children of Latino immigrants comprise 5.2% of all children who come to the attention of child welfare agencies
- Nearly 4 out of 5 (79.6%) are U.S.-born citizens

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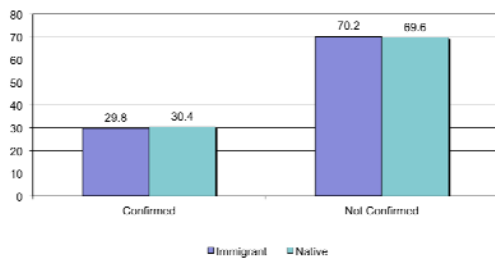
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### Outcome of Maltreatment Investigation



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## Parent and Family Risk Factors

	Native Parent	Immigrant Parent
Active alcohol abuse	11.3	12.9
Active drug abuse	12.7	2.3
Serious mental health or emotional problem	7.1	5.4
Intellectual or cognitive impairment	2.6	0.1
Physical impairment	2.9	1.7
Poor parenting skills	26.0	17.4
Active domestic violence	10.6	13.8
Use of excessive discipline	24.1	19.5
History of maltreatment (of caregiver)	36.6	23.9
Recent history of arrest	5.5	1.9
Low social support	25.3	26.6
High family stress	58.0	42.9
Difficulty meeting basic needs	25.6	13.6

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\*Significant difference at 95% confidence level

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## Community Factors

	Native Parent	Immigrant Parent
Assaults / Muggings	21.5	17.3
Gang activity	34.9	32.7
Open drug use	34.9	24.3
Unsupervised children	42.8	27.8
Teenagers making a nuisance	38.7	19.0
Safe neighborhood	70.8	82.6
Helpful parents	58.2	79.8
Involved parents	60.4	56.0

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### Outcomes for Latino Children

- Very little is known concerning differences in outcomes for Latino children according to generation or citizenship status.
- However, data that are available show that although children of immigrants are underrepresented in child welfare systems, they may be at a disadvantage in terms of permanency outcomes.

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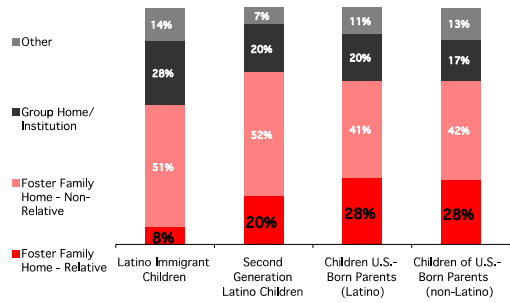
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### Latino Children of Immigrants Less Likely to be Placed with Relatives<sup>9</sup>




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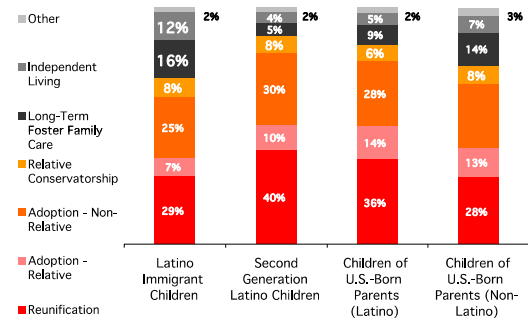
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### Latino Immigrant Children Less Likely to Have Case Goals of Reunification or Placement with Relatives<sup>9</sup>




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### Summary: What We Know

- Recent data indicate that Latino children are overrepresented in a small number of child welfare systems across the country.
- At the same time, Latinos are considerably underrepresented in many states and jurisdictions, which has raised concerns that Latino children may be underreported in certain areas.
- Some data show that differences in risk factors exist, which may explain differences in representation, although research has not been done to identify the source of these differences.
- In California, while disproportionality exists in some jurisdictions, emphasis on disproportionality may be overshadowing the need for culturally competent services in counties where overrepresentation is not a concern, but Latino children are the majority of the child welfare population.

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## Issues in Practice with Latino Families

- Access to culturally competent services and service providers
- Awareness and understanding of unique risks and strengths within Latino families
- Language access
- Impact of immigration enforcement on Latino children who enter the child welfare system
- Placements with undocumented relatives/kin
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and other forms of immigration relief
- Recruitment of Latino foster parents
- Data collection issues

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## California Latino Practice Advisory Committee

- Formed in 2012 to ensure appropriate and effective responses to Latino children and families in California child welfare systems.
- Current activities:
  - County surveys to identify practice innovations with Latino children and families.
  - Identification of Evidence-Based Practices in California and others states that are culturally responsive to Latino children and families.
  - Collection of policies and procedures used by counties regarding Latino and/or immigrant children and families.
  - Web-based collection of information and resources on practice and policy issues with Latino children and families.
  - Data templates to provide easily accessible information on Latino children involved in county child welfare systems.

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**DATA HIGHLIGHT**  
Percent of Population and Entries into Foster Care (Children 0-17 who are Latino, 2000-2012). For more information, click here.

Year	Population (%)	Entries into Foster Care (%)
2000	45	42
2001	46	43
2002	47	44
2003	48	45
2004	49	46
2005	50	47
2006	51	48
2007	52	49
2008	53	50
2009	54	51
2010	54	51
2011	54	51
2012	54	51

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**Practice Innovations in California**

- Cultural brokers
- Promotoras
- Birth parent mentors
- Differential response
- Family Finding
- Safety organized practice
- Family group decision making (FGDM)
- Family to Family

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**Practice Innovations in California**

- Specialized units/positions
- Workforce development strategies
- Partnerships with community based organizations
- Community/staff advisory groups
- Linguistically responsive services
- Adoptive/foster parent recruitment
- Data collection

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