

California: Quick Stats on Young Children and Workers Providing Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Young Children under 6 in California

Among the 2.9 million young children in California overall, 50 percent are Hispanic, 31 percent are white, 13 percent are Asian, and 5 percent are black. The top languages spoken in young children's homes are Spanish (44 percent), followed by English only (41 percent), Chinese (3 percent), Tagalog (2 percent), and Vietnamese (2 percent). Young children of immigrants constitute 47 percent of all children ages 5 and under in the state. The young child population's ethnic, racial, and linguistic diversity calls attention to the need for increased cultural and linguistic competence in the early childhood workforce in order to effectively serve these children and their families.

ECEC Workforce

The early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce in California grew by 58 percent between 1990 and 2011-13. Today, immigrants make up 39 percent of the overall ECEC workforce, and the foreign-born ECEC workforce alone has grown by 145 percent in the past two decades. The average age of ECEC workers is 40, and an overwhelming majority (94 percent) is female.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

The ECEC workforce in California is very diverse, with approximately 46 percent identifying as Hispanic, 38 percent as white, 10 percent as Asian, and 6 percent as black. The languages spoken by ECEC workers reasonably reflect the languages represented in the young child population. Nearly 50 percent speak only English, 37 percent speak Spanish, 2 percent Chinese, and 1 percent Tagalog or Vietnamese (each).

Immigrants provide much of the ethnic and language diversity present in the workforce and are therefore an important contributor of cultural and linguistic competence and skills in California.

Education, English Proficiency, and Professional Standing

Only 35 percent of California's ECEC workers overall have an associate's or higher degree. Nineteen percent are low educated, with less than a high school diploma. Immigrant ECEC workers are far more likely than their native counterparts to be low educated: 34 percent have attained less than a high school diploma, compared with only 7 percent of natives. On the other hand, a significant proportion of immigrant ECEC workers (27 percent) hold an associate's or higher degree.

Immigrants tend to be concentrated in lower-paying sectors of the workforce, with 36 percent of all immigrant workers employed as family-based care workers and 19 percent as private home-based child-care workers (versus 19 percent and 13 percent of natives, respectively). Conversely, only 14 percent of immigrant workers are employed as preschool teachers (compared with 24 percent of natives) and 1 percent as program directors (compared with almost 5 percent of natives). These data raise concerns about potential barriers to advancement for immigrant workers.

One such barrier to advancement may be the issue of limited English proficiency: 27 percent of the ECEC workforce overall, and 65 percent of immigrant ECEC workers, are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP).

Wages and Income

The average annual income for ECEC workers in California overall is \$30,000, which is only \$7,000 higher than the \$23,000 federal poverty level for a family of four. Overall, 17 percent of ECEC workers live in poverty in California. Immigrant ECEC workers are more likely to live in poverty than their native counterparts (at 21 percent compared with 14 percent).

Number, Race and Ethnicity, and Top 5 Languages Spoken for All Children and Children of Immigrants under Age 6

California		
Children under 6	Total	Children of Immigrants
Size	2,902,000	1,370,000
Immigrant share (%)		47.2
Top 5 Languages Spoken at Home		
Language 1	Spanish	Spanish
Share language 1 (%)	44.1	63.6
Language 2	English only	English only
Share language 2 (%)	40.7	6.8
Language 3	Chinese*	Chinese*
Share language 3 (%)	2.7	5.1
Language 4	Tagalog	Tagalog
Share language 4 (%)	2.2	4.2
Language 5	Vietnamese	Vietnamese
Share language 5 (%)	1.5	3
Race/Ethnicity* (%)		
Non-Hispanic whites	31.5	12.3
Non-Hispanic blacks	5.4	1.3
Non-Hispanic Asians	13	22.5
Hispanics	49.6	63.8

Size, Growth, and Key Characteristics of the Total, Immigrant, and Native ECEC Workforce

California			
ECEC Workforce	Total	Immigrants	Natives
Size and Growth			
1990			
ECEC workforce (estimate)	131,000	33,000	98,000
Immigrant share (%)		25.2	
2011-13			
ECEC workforce (estimate)	207,000	81,000	126,000
Immigrant share (%)		39.1	
Percent change: 1990 to 2011-13	58.1	145.4	28.7
Characteristics in 2011-13			
Average age	40.2	45.3	36.8
Share female (%)	94.4	97.6	92.3
Top 5 Languages Spoken			
Language 1	English only	Spanish	English only
Share language 1 (%)	49.7	66.1	77.5
Language 2	Spanish	English only	Spanish
Share language 2 (%)	37.3	6.5	18.8
Language 3	Chinese*	Chinese*	Chinese*
Share language 3 (%)	2.3	4.8	0.6
Language 4	Tagalog	Tagalog	Tagalog
Share language 4 (%)	1.4	3	0.3
Language 5	Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese
Share language 5 (%)	1	2.1	0.3
English Proficiency			
Share limited English proficient (LEP)	27.3	64.8	3.2
Race/Ethnicity* (%)			
Non-Hispanic whites	37.7	13.1	53.5
Non-Hispanic blacks	5.9	1.1	9.0
Non-Hispanic Asians	10.2	18.6	4.8
Hispanics	45.7	67.2	31.9
Educational Attainment (%)			
Population ages 25 and older	169,000	77,000	92,000
Less than high school	19.2	34.2	6.7
High school/GED/Some college	45.6	38.8	51.2
Associate's or higher	35.2	27	42.1

Occupational Groups (%)			
Population ages 16 and older	207,000	81,000	126,000
Family-based child-care worker	25.4	35.5	19
Private home-based child-care worker	15.2	18.5	13.1
Teacher assistant	4.3	4.1	4.5
Preschool teacher	20	14	23.8
Center-based child-care worker	31.8	26.6	35.1
Director of programs	3.3	1.3	4.6
Average Annual Earned Income (\$) **			
All workers	30,000	29,000	30,000
By occupational group			
Family-based child-care worker	29,000	32,000	27,000
Private home-based child-care worker	27,000	28,000	26,000
Preschool teacher	31,000	30,000	32,000
Center-based child-care worker	25,000	21,000	27,000
Poverty (%)			
Under 100 percent poverty	16.8	21.3	13.9
100-199 percent poverty	23.2	27.3	20.7
200 percent or higher	59.9	51.4	65.4

Notes: *Chinese includes Chinese, Mandarin and Cantonese;

* Other race is not included due to small numbers

** Workers who worked full time year around and earned at least 1 dollar in previous year

This fact sheet is based on analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011-13 (pooled) American Community Survey (ACS). For definitions and national-level trends, see *Immigrant and Refugee Workers in the Early Childhood Field: Taking a Closer Look*, www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigrant-and-refugee-workers-early-childhood-field-taking-closer-look.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) status applies to persons who reported speaking English less than "very well" in the ACS.

The 2012 federal poverty threshold for a family of four with two children under age 18 was \$23,283 and for an unrelated individual, \$11,720. See U.S. Census Bureau, "Poverty Thresholds for 2012 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children under 18 Years," accessed April 3, 2015, www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/.

This state fact sheet is a project of the Migration Policy Institute's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy. For more on the Center, visit: www.migrationpolicy.org/integration.

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