

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

### **Young Children under 6 in Illinois**

Among the 936,000 young children in Illinois overall, 56 percent are white, 23 percent are Hispanic, 16 percent are black, and 5 percent are Asian. The top languages spoken in young children's homes are English only (66 percent), followed by Spanish (22 percent), Polish (2 percent), Arabic (1 percent), and Tagalog (1 percent). Young children of immigrants constitute 28 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 Illinois grew by 71 percent between 1990 and 2011-13. Today, immigrants make up 18 percent of the overall ECEC workforce, and the foreign-born ECEC workforce alone has grown by 305 percent in the past two decades. The average age of ECEC workers is 39, and an overwhelming majority (95 percent) is female.

### ***Cultural and Linguistic Diversity***

The ECEC workforce in Illinois is diverse, with approximately 61 percent identifying as white, 22 percent as black, 14 percent as Hispanic, and 3 percent as Asian. The languages spoken by ECEC workers reasonably reflect the languages represented in the young child population. Seventy-eight percent speak only English, 12 percent speak Spanish, 2 percent Polish, and 1 percent Tagalog or French (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 Illinois.

### ***Education, English Proficiency, and Professional Standing***

Only 42 percent of ECEC workers in Illinois overall have an associate's or higher degree. Eight percent are low educated, with less than a high school diploma. Immigrant ECEC workers are more likely than their native counterparts to be low educated: 18 percent have attained less than a high school diploma, compared with only 6 percent of natives. On the other hand, a significant proportion of immigrant ECEC workers (37 percent) hold an associate's or higher degree.

Immigrants tend to be concentrated in lower-paying sectors of the workforce, with 29 percent of all immigrant workers employed as family-based care workers and 24 percent as private home-based child-care workers (versus 22 percent and 12 percent of natives, respectively). Conversely, only 14 percent of immigrant workers are employed as preschool teachers (compared with 23 percent of natives) and 1 percent as program directors (compared with over 4 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: 9 percent of the ECEC workforce overall, and 49 percent of immigrant ECEC workers, are classified as LEP.

### ***Wages and Income***

The average annual income for ECEC workers in Illinois overall is \$26,000, which is only \$3,000 higher than the \$23,000 federal poverty level for a family of four. Overall, 15 percent of ECEC workers live in poverty in Illinois. Immigrant ECEC workers are slightly less likely to live in poverty than their native counterparts, at 14 percent compared with 15 percent of natives.

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

<b>Illinois</b>		
<b>Children under 6</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Children of Immigrants</b>
<b>Size</b>	936,000	262,000
Immigrant share (%)		27.9
<b>Top 5 Languages Spoken at Home</b>		
Language 1	English only	Spanish
Share language 1 (%)	66.1	56.4
Language 2	Spanish	English only
Share language 2 (%)	22.3	7.7
Language 3	Polish	Polish
Share language 3 (%)	2.1	6.5
Language 4	Arabic	Arabic
Share language 4 (%)	1.1	3.8
Language 5	Tagalog	Tagalog
Share language 5 (%)	0.8	2.6
<b>Race/Ethnicity* (%)</b>		
Non-Hispanic whites	56.3	22.8
Non-Hispanic blacks	16.2	3.3
Non-Hispanic Asians	4.6	15.5
Hispanics	22.7	58.3

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

Illinois			
ECEC Workforce	Total	Immigrants	Natives
<b>Size and Growth</b>			
<b>1990</b>			
ECEC workforce (estimate)	46,000	4,000	43,000
Immigrant share (%)		7.8	
<b>2011-13</b>			
ECEC workforce (estimate)	79,000	15,000	65,000
Immigrant share (%)		18.3	
Percent change: 1990 to 2011-13	71.4	304.5	51.8
<b>Characteristics in 2011-13</b>			
Average age	38.6	42.3	37.8
Share female (%)	95.3	96.2	95.1
<b>Top 5 Languages Spoken</b>			
Language 1	English only	Spanish	English only
Share language 1 (%)	78.3	42.6	93.6
Language 2	Spanish	Polish	Spanish
Share language 2 (%)	12	10.5	5.2
Language 3	Polish	English only	German*
Share language 3 (%)	2	10.2	0.3
Language 4	Tagalog	Tagalog	French*
Share language 4 (%)	0.9	4.3	0.2
Language 5	French*	Hindi	Italian
Share language 5 (%)	0.6	2.8	0.2
<b>English Proficiency</b>			
Share limited English proficient (LEP)	9.4	48.8	0.5
<b>Race/Ethnicity* (%)</b>			
Non-Hispanic whites	60.8	34.8	66.7
Non-Hispanic blacks	22	6.5	25.5
Non-Hispanic Asians	3.3	15.7	0.5
Hispanics	13.8	42.8	7.3
<b>Educational Attainment (%)</b>			
Population ages 25 and older	63,000	13,000	50,000
Less than high school	8.1	18.1	5.5
High school/GED/Some college	49.4	44.6	50.6
Associate's or higher	42.6	37.3	44

<b>Occupational Groups (%)</b>			
Population ages 16 and older	79,000	15,000	65,000
Family-based child-care worker	23.2	28.7	21.9
Private home-based child-care worker	14.4	23.7	12.3
Teacher assistant	6.1	5.8	6.2
Preschool teacher	21	13.8	22.6
Center-based child-care worker	31.8	27	32.9
Director of programs	3.6	1	4.2
<b>Average Annual Earned Income (\$) **</b>			
All workers	26,000	28,000	26,000
<b>Poverty (%)</b>			
Under 100 percent poverty	15.2	14.2	15.4
100-199 percent poverty	21.9	26.2	20.9
200 percent or higher	62.9	59.6	63.7

Notes: \* French includes French and Patois; German refers to German and Pennsylvania Dutch.

\* 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](http://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/](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/).

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