

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

Young Children under 6 in Massachusetts

Among the 424,000 young children in Massachusetts overall, 72 percent are white, 14 percent are Hispanic, 8 percent are black, and 6 percent are Asian. The top languages spoken in young children's homes are English only (64 percent), followed by Spanish (16 percent), Portuguese (5 percent), Creole (2 percent), and Chinese (2 percent). Young children of immigrants constitute 30 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 Massachusetts grew by 66 percent between 1990 and 2011-13. Today, immigrants constitute 20 percent of the overall ECEC workforce, and the foreign-born ECEC workforce alone has grown by 285 percent in the past two decades. The average age of ECEC workers is 39, and an overwhelming majority (96 percent) is female.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

The ECEC workforce in Massachusetts is diverse, with approximately 73 percent identifying as white, 16 percent as Hispanic, 8 percent as black, and 3 percent as Asian. The languages spoken by ECEC workers reasonably reflect the languages represented in the young child population. Nearly 74 percent speak only English, 16 percent speak Spanish, 2 percent Portuguese or Creole (each), and 1 percent Chinese.

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 Massachusetts.

Education, English Proficiency, and Professional Standing

Only 48 percent of Massachusetts' ECEC workers overall have an associate's or higher degree. Six 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: 14 percent have attained less than a high school diploma, compared with only 4 percent of natives. On the other hand, a significant proportion of immigrant ECEC workers (32 percent) hold an associate's or higher degree.

Immigrants tend to be concentrated in lower-paying sectors of the workforce, with 35 percent of all immigrant workers employed as family-based care workers and 20 percent as private home-based child-care workers (versus 16 percent and 13 percent of natives, respectively). Conversely, only 15 percent of immigrant workers are employed as preschool teachers (compared with 33 percent of natives) and 3 percent as program directors (compared with over 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: 13 percent of the ECEC workforce overall, and 55 percent of immigrant ECEC workers, are classified as LEP.

Wages and Income

The average annual income for ECEC workers in Massachusetts overall is \$32,000, which is only \$9,000 higher than the \$23,000 federal poverty level for a family of four. Overall, 13 percent of ECEC workers live in poverty in Massachusetts. Immigrant ECEC workers are almost twice as likely to live in poverty as their native counterparts, at 21 percent compared with 11 percent of natives.

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

Massachusetts		
Children under 6	Total	Children of Immigrants
Size	424,000	127,000
Immigrant share (%)		30.0
Top 5 Languages Spoken at Home		
Language 1	English only	Spanish
Share language 1 (%)	63.7	26.3
Language 2	Spanish	English only
Share language 2 (%)	15.5	14.4
Language 3	Portuguese	Portuguese
Share language 3 (%)	5.1	13.7
Language 4	Creole*	Chinese*
Share language 4 (%)	2.3	6.5
Language 5	Chinese*	Creole*
Share language 5 (%)	2.1	6.1
Race/Ethnicity* (%)		
Non-Hispanic whites	72.1	38.9
Non-Hispanic blacks	7.8	16.3
Non-Hispanic Asians	5.9	20
Hispanics	14.1	24.7

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

Massachusetts			
ECEC Workforce	Total	Immigrants	Natives
Size and Growth			
1990			
ECEC workforce (estimate)	27,000	2,000	25,000
Immigrant share (%)		8.7	
2011-13			
ECEC workforce (estimate)	45,000	9,000	36,000
Immigrant share (%)		20.3	
Percent change: 1990 to 2011-13	65.5	285.3	44.5
Characteristics in 2011-13			
Average age	38.6	43.1	37.5
Share female (%)	95.7	96.6	95.5
Top 5 Languages Spoken			
Language 1	English only	Spanish	English only
Share language 1 (%)	73.5	47.1	88.7
Language 2	Spanish	English only	Spanish
Share language 2 (%)	15.5	14.1	7.5
Language 3	Portuguese	Portuguese	Creole*
Share language 3 (%)	2.2	8.3	1
Language 4	Creole*	Creole*	Portuguese
Share language 4 (%)	2.2	6.7	0.7
Language 5	Chinese*	Chinese*	Italian
Share language 5 (%)	1.2	5.8	0.6
English Proficiency			
Share limited English proficient (LEP)	12.7	54.9	1.9
Race/Ethnicity* (%)			
Non-Hispanic whites	72.5	24.5	84.8
Non-Hispanic blacks	8.3	16.7	61.3
Non-Hispanic Asians	3	10.9	1
Hispanics	15.8	47.7	7.7
Educational Attainment (%)			
Population ages 25 and older	34,000	8,000	25,000
Less than high school	6.1	13.7	3.6
High school/GED/Some college	45.8	54	43
Associate's or higher	48.1	32.3	53.4

Occupational Groups (%)			
Population ages 16 and older	45,000	9,000	36,000
Family-based child-care worker	19.7	35.2	15.7
Private home-based child-care worker	14.1	19.7	12.7
Teacher assistant	3.4	1.8	3.8
Preschool teacher	29.4	15.3	33
Center-based child-care worker	28.6	25.2	29.4
Director of programs	4.9	2.8	5.4
Average Annual Earned Income (\$) **			
All workers	32,000	34,000	31,000
Poverty (%)			
Under 100 percent poverty	12.8	21.1	10.7
100-199 percent poverty	14.8	25	12.2
200 percent or higher	72.4	54	77.1

Notes: *Chinese includes Chinese, Mandarin and Cantonese; Creole includes French or Haitian Creole.

* 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.

© 2015 Migration Policy Institute
All Rights Reserved