

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

Young Children under 6 in Virginia

Among the 593,000 young children in Virginia overall, 61 percent are white, 22 percent are black, 11 percent are Hispanic, and 7 percent are Asian. The top languages spoken in young children's homes are English only (75 percent), followed by Spanish (12 percent) and Arabic, French, or Vietnamese (1 percent each). Young children of immigrants constitute 23 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 Virginia grew by 50 percent between 1990 and 2011-13. Today, immigrants make up 26 percent of the overall ECEC workforce, and the foreign-born ECEC workforce alone has grown by 286 percent in the past two decades. The average age of ECEC workers is 38, and an overwhelming majority (95 percent) is female.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

The ECEC workforce in Virginia is diverse, with approximately 55 percent identifying as white, 21 percent as black, 17 percent as Hispanic, and 7 percent as Asian. The languages spoken by ECEC workers reasonably reflect the languages represented in the young child population. Seventy-three percent speak only English, 15 percent speak Spanish, and 1 percent speak Tagalog, German, or Urdu (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 Virginia.

Education, English Proficiency, and Professional Standing

Forty percent of Virginia's ECEC workers overall have an associate's or higher degree. Ten percent are low educated, with less than a high school diploma. Immigrant ECEC workers are significantly more likely than their native counterparts to be low educated: 22 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 (40 percent) hold an associate's or higher degree.

Immigrants tend to be concentrated in lower-paying sectors of the workforce, with 21 percent of all immigrant workers employed as family-based care workers and 24 percent as private home-based child-care workers (versus 20 percent and 11 percent of natives, respectively). Conversely, only 18 percent of immigrant workers are employed as preschool teachers (compared with 28 percent of natives) and 2 percent as program directors (compared with 6 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: 14 percent of the ECEC workforce overall, and 51 percent of immigrant ECEC workers, are classified as LEP.

Wages and Income

The average annual income for ECEC workers in Virginia overall is \$28,000, which is only \$5,000 higher than the \$23,000 federal poverty level for a family of four. Overall, 17 percent of ECEC workers live in poverty in Virginia. Immigrant ECEC workers are more likely to live in poverty than their native counterparts, at 21 percent compared with 16 percent of natives.

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

Virginia		
Children under 6	Total	Children of Immigrants
Size	593,000	137,000
Immigrant share (%)		23.1
Top 5 Languages Spoken at Home		
Language 1	English only	Spanish
Share language 1 (%)	75.4	37.9
Language 2	Spanish	English only
Share language 2 (%)	12	13.4
Language 3	Arabic	Arabic
Share language 3 (%)	1.1	4.4
Language 4	French*	Vietnamese
Share language 4 (%)	0.8	3.3
Language 5	Vietnamese	Urdu
Share language 5 (%)	0.8	3.2
Race/Ethnicity* (%)		
Non-Hispanic whites	60.5	26.3
Non-Hispanic blacks	21.9	10.9
Non-Hispanic Asians	6.5	28.3
Hispanics	10.8	34.4

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

Virginia			
ECEC Workforce	Total	Immigrants	Natives
Size and Growth			
1990			
ECEC workforce (estimate)	35,000	3,000	31,000
Immigrant share (%)		9.9	
2011-13			
ECEC workforce (estimate)	52,000	13,000	39,000
Immigrant share (%)		25.6	
Percent change: 1990 to 2011-13	49.8	286.2	23.7
Characteristics in 2011-13			
Average age	37.6	38.6	37.2
Share female (%)	95.1	98.4	94
Top 5 Languages Spoken			
Language 1	English only	Spanish	English only
Share language 1 (%)	72.7	47.6	93.4
Language 2	Spanish	English only	Spanish
Share language 2 (%)	15.1	12.7	4
Language 3	Tagalog	Tagalog	Arabic
Share language 3 (%)	1.3	5.1	0.4
Language 4	German*	German*	French*
Share language 4 (%)	1.1	3.7	0.3
Language 5	Urdu	Persian, Iranian, Farsi	Vietnamese
Share language 5 (%)	0.8	3	0.2
English Proficiency			
Share limited English proficient (LEP)	13.7	51.3	0.8
Race/Ethnicity* (%)			
Non-Hispanic whites	55.1	21.7	66.6
Non-Hispanic blacks	21.1	5.2	26.5
Non-Hispanic Asians	6.8	22.6	1.4
Hispanics	16.5	50.2	4.9
Educational Attainment (%)			
Population ages 25 and older	39,000	11,000	28,000
Less than high school	10.3	22.1	5.6
High school/GED/Some college	50.3	38	55.2
Associate's or higher	39.4	39.9	39.2

Occupational Groups (%)			
Population ages 16 and older	52,000	13,000	39,000
Family-based child-care worker	20.5	21.2	20.2
Private home-based child-care worker	14.6	23.8	11.4
Teacher assistant	5.1	4.1	5.5
Preschool teacher	25.9	18	28.7
Center-based child-care worker	29.3	30.6	28.8
Director of programs	4.7	2.3	5.5
Average Annual Earned Income (\$) **			
All workers	28,000	27,000	28,000
Poverty (%)			
Under 100 percent poverty	16.7	20.9	15.2
100-199 percent poverty	16.1	17.5	15.6
200 percent or higher	67.2	61.6	69.2

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.

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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