MINNESOTA'S SUPERDIVERSE AND GROWING DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNER CHILD POPULATION

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Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary

Immigrants and refugees from across the world have long shaped Minnesota's population. And while migration-related demographic changes have implications for many policy areas and public services, they are particularly important for early childhood programs that aim to set young children on a path to future academic success. Many children in newcomer families are Dual Language Learners (DLLs), meaning they have at least one parent who speaks a language other than English in the home. These children, a rapidly growing group that in 2011–15 comprised 21 percent of all children ages 0 to 8 in the state, represent a wide variety of backgrounds and demonstrate the rising "diversification of diversity" across Minnesota—in urban and suburban communities alike.

Understanding the diversity within this population and its significance for early childhood education and care (ECEC) policy and practice is essential for efforts to provide effective instruction and supports that are critical to children's healthy cognitive and socioemotional development. To sketch a portrait of the state's DLLs—as well as two important but understudied subgroups, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) and Black DLLs—this analysis draws on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and interviews conducted with state ECEC policymakers and local service providers, as well as a insights shared by key stakeholders at a conference held in Minneapolis in 2018.

> *These children ... represent a wide variety of backgrounds and demonstrate the rising "diversification of diversity" across Minnesota.*

A.   Portrait of Minnesota's Diverse Dual Language Learners

Minnesota's DLL population grew by 77 percent between 2000 and 2011–15, when there were 136,000 DLLs across the state. These DLLs exhibit a much higher degree of racial and ethnic diversity than do non-DLLs in Minnesota and are thus driving much of the diversity of the state's young child population. Minnesota's DLL population is also significantly more racially and ethnically heterogenous than DLLs at the national level, a population of about 11.5 million children. Hispanic DLLs are the largest DLL group in Minnesota at 32 percent, followed by AAPI DLLs at 28 percent, Black DLLs at 21 percent, White DLLs at 18 percent, and Native American DLLs at 1 percent. Refugees arriving in Minnesota via the U.S. refugee resettlement program significantly contribute to the diversity of the state's DLLs, and also add to the number of smaller cultural and linguistic immigrant communities in the state.

Parents of DLLs hail from a wide range of countries. Mexico is the most common birth country among foreign-born parents of Minnesota DLLs, at 23 percent, with significant shares of parents also born in Somalia (10 percent), India (9 percent), and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR, 8 percent). Notably, a considerable percentage of parents come from a number of smaller national-origin communities, contributing to a high degree of cultural diversity in the state. This diversity in terms of national origins is reflected in the languages spoken in DLL households; while Spanish is the most common language, spoken by 32 percent of DLL parents, sizable shares of parents speak Hmong (10 percent) and Cushitic languages, including Somali and Oromo (9 percent). Many lower-incidence languages are spoken by smaller shares of parents, with important implications for how ECEC programs connect with DLLs' families and support their early learning. And while bilingual models of instruction have been found to be effective for DLLs, this striking linguistic diversity may mean such programs are not a realistic option for many children in Minnesota.

Parents play a central role in supporting their children's healthy physical and cognitive development, preparing them for kindergarten and future success. An understanding of key parent characteristics can therefore contribute to ECEC system and program design that is relevant and responsive to the needs of families from a two-generation perspective. Key sociodemographic characteristics of Minnesota's diverse DLL families include:

- DLLs are twice as likely as non-DLLs to live in poverty, and are also significantly more likely to live in low-income households, both risk factors to healthy development.

- Parents of DLLs vary considerably in their educational attainment: While approximately one-third have at least a bachelor's degree, they are more than five times more likely to lack a high school diploma than parents of non-DLLs (23 percent compared with 4 percent). This means that a considerable share of DLL parents face difficulties in earning a family-sustaining wage.

- Forty percent of DLL parents reported being Limited English Proficient (LEP), meaning that they speak English "less than very well," and 19 percent reported that they speak English "not well" or "not at all." More than one-quarter of DLLs live in linguistically isolated households with no household member who is fully English proficient. Members of such households may face increased challenges to accessing ECEC, health, and social services that are important to child development and wellbeing.

- DLLs ages 3 to 4 are enrolled in prekindergarten at lower rates than their non-DLL peers—39 percent compared to 47 percent—suggesting that linguistic, cultural, and other barriers may impede their equal access to programming.

B.   Diversity within Diversity: Minnesota's AAPI and Black DLL Families

Within the DLL population as a whole, different subgroups each bring a unique set of characteristics, strengths, and needs to their early learning experiences. These include AAPI and Black DLLs, both of whom make up sizeable shares of Minnesota's overall DLL population but who have been the focus of little research to date.

Minnesota's 39,000 AAPI DLL families are the fastest-growing racial group in the state, and represent a broad spectrum of backgrounds and experiences. This group includes relatively well-off immigrants from India and China as well as diverse groups of refugees from Southeast Asia who are more likely to live in low-income households. Overall, AAPI DLLs as a group fare better than the DLL average on many indicators, including poverty and parental educational attainment. However, documented achievement gaps facing several subgroups within this broad racial category—including the Hmong and Karen populations—point to the importance of looking beyond aggregated data on academic and other outcomes for AAPI children.

Meanwhile, Black DLLs make up just over one-fifth of the state's DLL population, at 30,000. These young children also come from a wide range of backgrounds, with many families fleeing violence, particularly from the Horn of Africa, while other parents may have come to Minnesota to pursue educational or professional opportunities. Black DLLs in aggregate are more likely to face risk factors related to their development and later outcomes than are DLLs overall, and are more likely to live in low-income or linguistically isolated households. Other indicators, such as parental educational attainment, are more mixed for this group. Overall, while policymakers recognize the significant and persisting disparities in outcomes between Black and White families in Minnesota, a nuanced understanding of the experiences of different Black DLL subgroups can contribute to improved policy and practice.

C.   *Responding to DLLs: Minnesota's ECEC Policies and Programs*

Over the past several years, Minnesota has made several investments in improving access to ECEC, including significant expansions of its Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) and School Readiness Plus programs. The state's many early learning offerings differ in how they identify and prioritize DLLs in their services. Overall, the VPK program, because it is integrated into the state's E-12 system (used by the Minnesota Department of Education [MDE] to describe the K-12 system as well as VPK services), appears to have the most robust requirements and regulations regarding the provision of support for DLLs. For example, English Learners (ELs) are identified through a standardized procedure, and teachers are required to be knowledgeable in home- and English-language programs and instruction practices. These same requirements do not apply to other early learning programs, though some districts replicate them across all early learning classrooms. At a systems level, Minnesota recently revised its Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Parent Aware, to include updated standards and indicators that more effectively place a value on cultural and linguistic responsiveness.

In addition to these broader efforts, lawmakers have recently enacted targeted legislation aimed at identifying and addressing the specific needs of DLLs and ELs. A key achievement in this regard is the 2014 passage of the *Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act*, which revised state statutes to improve services for ELs. These changes emphasize the importance of children's home languages and educators' cultural and linguistic competencies. Another notable piece of legislation is the 2016 *All Kids Count Act*, which calls for increased data disaggregation and reporting across the state's E-12 education system. This legislation mandates data to be reported for the largest ethnic communities within the AAPI, Native American, Black, and Latino categories. Data will also be collected on languages spoken in the home and whether students are immigrants, refugees, or ELs, enabling service providers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to more effectively identify achievement gaps and address disparities.

> *The state's many early learning offerings differ in how they identify and prioritize DLLs in their services.*

Overall, ELs have been the focus of considerable policy attention in Minnesota in recent years, and this shift in institutional thinking offers an important opportunity to increase system capacity. The comprehensive implementation of these measures, and efforts to extend them further into the ECEC system, have the potential to significantly improve early learning services for DLLs across the state.

D.   *Ongoing Challenges and Implications*

In spite of these notable strides in improving services for DLLs, the data analysis and research conducted for this report highlight several implications and persisting challenges related to the provision of equitable services for DLLs, including the following:

- The early childhood workforce needs to be prepared to work effectively with rising numbers of DLL students from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Solutions include expanded pre-service and in-service teacher training and the further engagement of families.

- The diversity of Minnesota's ECEC workforce has not kept pace with that of its young children. In addition to expanding the grow-your-own efforts being undertaken on a small scale by some school districts and programs, systematic supports are needed to address this mismatch. Diversifying the workforce as a whole—and leadership positions in particular—would help strengthen the cultural and linguistic competencies of its members.

- Improving processes and instruments to identify and assess DLLs is key to understanding and addressing their needs, and avoiding under- and over-referral to early intervention and special education services. While the VPK program has a protocol for identifying DLLs and their home languages, other ECEC programs do not. Home language assessments are particularly lacking for languages other than Spanish, which are spoken by the majority of Minnesota DLLs.

- Providing adequate translation and interpretation services for families is a challenge, especially those who speak low-incidence languages. This affects not only program outreach and communications but also the day-to-day conversations critical to establishing relationships with and engaging families, pointing to a need for new strategies to engage DLL parents and families in superdiverse contexts.

- Promoting the development and maintenance of DLLs' home languages remains a challenge, and some parents and educators may receive misinformation regarding the detrimental effects of home language use, which has been disproven. For example, some program staff indicated that DLL parents often prioritize their children's English language acquisition, to the detriment of their home language skills. Increasing awareness around the importance and benefits of home language development and bilingualism is therefore essential.

- A considerable share of the state's DLLs come from a refugee background, and have experienced extreme stress or trauma. ECEC and other programs serving these children and their families could benefit from using a trauma-informed approach that includes training staff to identify signs of trauma, incorporating this understanding into services, and providing referrals to outside supports as appropriate.

DLLs make up an increasingly large proportion of Minnesota's young child population, and classrooms and communities across the state are increasingly superdiverse. As the state's early learning system seeks to put all children on a path to education success, policymakers and administrators must recognize the superdiverse contexts in which Minnesota's early childhood programs are operating, and improve system-wide capacities to provide equitable and effective services to children from a wide range of racial and ethnic backgrounds.

I.   Introduction

Home to sizable refugee communities from East Africa and Southeast Asia as well as immigrants from around the world, Minnesota has become increasingly diverse. This diversity is reflected in the state's young child population, where the number of Dual Language Learners[1] (DLLs)—children between ages 0 and 8 who are exposed to at least two languages during their formative early years—more than tripled between 2000 and 2011–15. Approximately one in five young children in Minnesota today are DLLs.[2] These young Minnesotans hail from a variety of linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, contributing to the considerable "diversity within diversity" in the state.

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1   The population this report describes as Dual language Learners (DLLs) are children ages 0 to 8 who have at least one parent (or household member, if no parent is present) who speaks a language other than English at home. Unless otherwise specified, young children refers to all children ages 0 to 8.

2   Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis of U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Census and pooled 2011–15 U.S. American Community Survey (ACS) data.

The linguistic and cultural diversity of DLLs—across both urban and suburban areas of Minnesota[3]—has important implications for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs and systems serving this group. Significant gaps in 4th grade test scores between English Learners (ELs)[4] and non-ELs reflect systemic inequities that urgently need to be addressed in the earliest years.[5] Moreover, several ethnic subgroups (such as the Hmong community) within the DLL population experience particularly pronounced gaps in achievement that are frequently overlooked in studies that include them in a broader racial category (e.g., Asian American and Pacific Islander, AAPI) that fares relatively well overall.[6]

The first years of children's lives are critical for their language development, laying a foundation for kindergarten readiness and academic success. As extensive research shows, support for DLLs' home languages maximizes the cognitive, social, and emotional advantages of bilingualism.[7] However, while bilingual education models have proven effective, they may be an unrealistic option for many children and programs in superdiverse communities, where other strategies for providing DLLs with high-quality instruction and support are needed. The increasing diversity of young children in Minnesota along several sociodemographic dimensions calls for a more nuanced understanding of their strengths and challenges in order to address unique learning needs, and promote equitable access to high-quality ECEC—all of which will contribute to the reduction of later lags in education and other outcomes.

> *While bilingual education models have proven effective, they may be an unrealistic option for many children and programs in superdiverse communities.*

In an effort to provide a deeper understanding of Minnesota's DLL population, this report offers a sociodemographic portrait of these young children based on analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The analysis explores a range of characteristics within this group, including those affecting child wellbeing and development. It also focuses on AAPI and Black DLLs, both groups that make up significant shares of Minnesota's DLLs but are rarely studied on their own. The report also discusses the implications of superdiversity for the state's ECEC policies and programs, drawing on interviews with key state policymakers, service providers, and community stakeholders as well as a symposium in Minneapolis in April 2018 on *Addressing Superdiversity among Minnesota's Dual Language Learners*.

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3   Although immigrants have been largely concentrated in urban centers like the Twin Cities area, they are increasingly moving to suburban parts of the state. See Allison Liuzzi, "Immigration in Minnesota: A Changing Story," *Minnesota Compass*, May 2016, https://www.mncompass.org/trends/insights/2016-05-10-immigration; David Peterson, "'Immigrant Suburbs' Emerge in Latest Census Sweep," *Star Tribune*, December 18, 2013, www.startribune.com/immigrant-suburbs-emerge-in-latest-census-sweep/236316111/. For maps of the top ten main languages spoken at home by Minnesota's students, see Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), "Home Primary Languages," accessed May 11, 2018, http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/DataTopic.jsp?TOPICID=23.
4   Also known as English Language Learners (ELLs), ELs are students in the K-12 system whose first language is not English and who have not yet reached a sufficient level of proficiency to fully engage in English-taught classes.
5   MPI analysis shows that non-ELs scored 49 points higher in reading and 32 points higher in math, on average, according to the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
6   Minnesota Campaign for Achievement Now (MinnCAN), *Asian American and Pacific Islander Student Achievement in Minnesota* (Minneapolis, MN: MinnCAN, 2016), http://minncan.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/05/AAPI-web.pdf.
7   National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2017), https://doi.org/10.17226/24677.

II.   The Concept of Superdiversity

While still a relatively new term in the U.S. context, the concept of superdiversity is helpful when considering the various cross-cutting differences within the Minnesota DLL population.[8] This concept stresses the importance of looking beyond ethnicity to also include factors such as country of origin, languages spoken, immigration status, education, age, and cultural norms, among others, in analyzing the diversity of a particular community. The reasoning here is that all of these factors—and the ways in which they interact—can inform research and policy.[9] This report examines the diversity of Minnesota's DLLs and their families across a range of indicators, including those related to race and ethnicity, country of origin, language, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and employment, all of which can influence the early learning experiences of young children.

III.   A Portrait of Minnesota's Diverse Dual Language Learners

In order to build a well-rounded picture of the superdiversity of Minnesota's DLLs, this report draws on several different data sources. Migration Policy Institute (MPI) researchers analyzed ACS data from the U.S. Census Bureau, pooled over the 2011–15 period for increased accuracy, to examine the sociodemographic characteristics of DLLs in Minnesota and their parents, as well as those of their non-DLL peers. The analysis also draws on data[10] from the U.S. Department of State's Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to provide a portrait of refugee resettlement in Minnesota, as the ACS does not collect information about refugee status.[11] After exploring key sociodemographic characteristics and overall indicators of wellbeing for the state's DLL population, the analysis focuses on AAPI and Black DLLs, two groups that contain significant levels of diversity and are often understudied.

A.   An Increasingly Diverse Young Child Population

As of 2011–15, Minnesota was home to 136,000 DLLs. While DLLs comprised a smaller share of Minnesota's young children than they do of young children nationwide, where the 11.5 million DLLs were about one-third of all children ages 0 to 8, the state's DLL population grew rapidly between 2000 and 2011–15—at a rate of 77 percent, compared to 24 percent nationally.

The racial and ethnic composition of Minnesota's DLL population is also considerably more diverse than that of the DLL population in the United States overall (see Figure 1). In the 2011–15 period, Hispanic DLLs were the largest group in Minnesota, at 32 percent, followed by AAPI DLLs at 28 percent, Black DLLs at 21 percent, White[12] DLLs at 18 percent, and Native American DLLs at 1 percent. The DLL population in Minnesota is also significantly more racially and ethnically diverse than the state's non-DLL population, meaning that DLLs drive much of the overall diversity of the state's young child population.

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8   See Maki Park, Jie Zong, and Jeanne Batalova, *Growing Superdiversity among Young U.S. Dual Language Learners and Its Implications* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2018), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/growing-superdiversity-among-young-us-dual-language-learners-and-its-implications.

9   See Steven Vertovec, "Super-Diversity and Its Implications," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 6 (2007): 1024–54; Fran Meissner and Steven Vertovec, "Comparing Super-Diversity," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 4 (2015): 541–55.

10   The data analyzed include Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) data from 2008-17 for arrivals to Minnesota and fiscal year 2014 data for secondary migration to the state.

11   Additionally, Minnesota does not have a comprehensive way of identifying people who once had refugee status. See Office of the Legislative Auditor, State of Minnesota, *Fiscal Impact of Refugee Resettlement: An Assessment of Data Availability* (St. Paul, MN: Office of the Legislative Auditor, 2018), www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/sreview/refugee.pdf.

12   This category also includes a small number of people who self-identified their race as "other."

On top of this, it is important to note that these large racial and ethnic categories can mask considerable diversity. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau classifies respondents of Middle Eastern and North African origins as White.[13] In this instance and others, respondents may not feel that available survey categories are applicable to them or their experiences.[14] And within the AAPI category, large groups such as Chinese DLLs are included alongside much smaller groups like Cambodian DLLs, which can make it difficult to draw out the distinct characteristics of or challenges faced by particular groups.[15]

Figure 1. Race and Ethnicity of U.S. and Minnesota DLLs, 2011–15
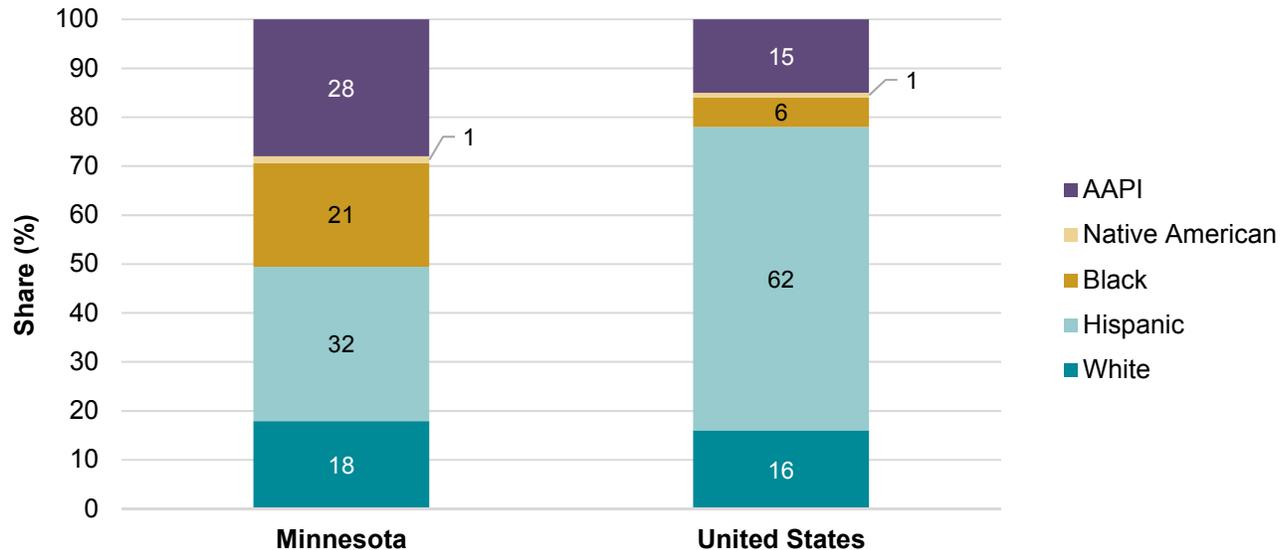
AAPI = Asian American and Pacific Islander.
Source: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 American Community Survey (ACS) data.

I.   A Diverse Linguistic Landscape

In addition to racial and ethnic diversity, Minnesota DLLs live in families where a wide array of languages is spoken, making them a linguistically diverse group overall and within racial and ethnic groups. As Table 1 shows, Spanish was the most common language spoken by DLL parents in 2011–15, at nearly 32 percent (notably, this share is significantly smaller than in the United States overall, where Spanish is by far the most prevalent language spoken by parents of DLLs).[16] Hmong was spoken by 10 percent of DLL parents in Minnesota, while Cushitic languages, including Somali and Oromo,[17] were spoken by 9 percent. Smaller but still significant shares of DLL parents spoke Chinese, Vietnamese, German, Arabic, Russian, Telugu, Kru, Amharic,[18] French, Swahili, and Hindi. A further 17 percent of DLL parents reported speaking another, less common language (i.e., a language not listed in Table 1, which shows the top 15 languages spoken by

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13   U.S. Census Bureau, "Race," updated January 12, 2017, www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html.
14   Kat Chow, "For Some Americans of MENA Descent, Checking a Census Box Is Complicated," NPR, March 11, 2017, www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/03/11/519548276/for-some-arab-americans-checking-a-census-box-is-complicated.
15   See Park, Zong, and Batalova, *Growing Superdiversity among Young U.S. Dual Language Learners*.
16   Ibid., 12–13.
17   The ACS dataset used in this analysis combines Cushitic languages into one language group. This group consists of around 40 languages spoken mostly in the Horn of Africa and parts of Kenya, and includes Somali and Oromo. Before 2016, reflecting the historically low numbers of African immigrants speaking non-Arabic languages, the U.S. Census Bureau grouped African languages by language family or geography. Starting with the 2016 ACS, language data will be further disaggregated, with statistics for Somali and Oromo, among other languages. See Christine Gambino, "Inside the American Community Survey: 2016 Language Data Overhaul," U.S. Census Bureau, Census Blogs, September 14, 2017, www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2017/09/inside_the_american.html; H. Ekkehard Wolff, "Cushitic Languages," Encyclopedia Britannica, updated March 22, 2018, www.britannica.com/topic/Cushitic-languages.
18   This category includes ACS respondents who reported speaking Amharic or "Ethiopian."

parents of DLLs). In the 2016–17 school year, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) recorded 252 languages spoken in students' homes, further illustrating the high degree of linguistic diversity among the student population.[19]

Table 1. Top 15 Languages Spoken by Parents of Minnesota and U.S. DLLs, 2011–15

Minnesota		United States	
Parents of DLLs	**151,000**	**Parents of DLLs**	**12,755,000**
Spanish	31.6%	Spanish	59.0%
English only	11.8%	English only	9.2%
Hmong	9.7%	Chinese	3.3%
Cushitic languages (includes Somali and Oromo)	8.8%	Tagalog	1.9%
Chinese	2.7%	Vietnamese	1.9%
Vietnamese	2.4%	Arabic	1.9%
German	2.4%	Hindi	1.4%
Arabic	2.2%	French	1.3%
Russian	2.0%	German	1.2%
Telugu	1.9%	Korean	1.1%
Kru	1.7%	Russian	1.1%
Amharic	1.5%	French or Haitian Creole	1.1%
French	1.3%	Portuguese	0.9%
Swahili	1.3%	Telugu	0.9%
Hindi	1.3%	Urdu	0.8%

Notes: Hmong includes Miao-Yao, Mien, Miao, and Hmong; Chinese includes Cantonese, Mandarin, and other Chinese languages; French includes French and Patois; and Amharic includes respondents who reported speaking Amharic and "Ethiopian." The ACS dataset used in this analysis combines Cushitic languages into one language group. Five-year ACS data were pooled to generate statistically significant estimates and thus the result here may not be representative of the language composition in 2017. The Census Bureau has traditionally had more difficulty reaching and counting LEP groups, particularly those who speak less common languages and are new arrivals, which can affect the accuracy of language data collected. During the 2016-17 school year, MDE reported the following as the top non-English home languages of Minnesota students (ordered from largest to smallest): Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Vietnamese, Karen, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Oromo, and Amharic. See U.S. Census Bureau, *National Advisory Committee: Language Working Group Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016), www2.census.gov/cac/nac/reports/2016-11-language-wg-report.pdf; MDE, *English Learner Education in Minnesota* (Roseville, MN: MDE, 2017), 15, https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE035523&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Taking a closer look at languages spoken among DLL families at the county level, moreover, shows that language profiles differ significantly by locality. Table 2 shows the top five languages spoken by parents of DLLs in three large Minnesota counties with significant DLL populations: Hennepin, Ramsey, and Dakota. This breakdown illustrates the particularly high prevalence of Hmong speakers in Ramsey County, where Hmong was the most commonly spoken language among DLL parents, at 28 percent. In Hennepin and Dakota counties, meanwhile, Spanish was the most common, at 32 percent. Cushitic languages (which

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19   This represents a 10 percent increase over the 230 home languages identified during the 2012–13 school year. See MDE, Division of Student Support, *English Learner Education in Minnesota* (Roseville, MN: MDE, 2017), 15, http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE035523&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary.

include Somali and Oromo) were well represented across all three counties, while the prevalence of other languages varied. For example, Arabic made it into the top five in Ramsey County but not in Hennepin County, where Russian was more common. Dakota County, meanwhile, was home to small but significant shares of Telugu and Khmer speakers.[20]

Table 2. Top Five Languages Spoken by Parents of DLLs in Dakota, Hennepin, and Ramsey Counties, 2011–15

Dakota County		Hennepin County		Ramsey County	
Parents of DLLs	**15,000**	**Parents of DLLs**	**50,000**	**Parents of DLLs**	**28,000**
Spanish	31.7%	Spanish	31.9%	Hmong	28.2%
Cushitic languages (includes Somali and Oromo)	14.9%	Cushitic languages (includes Somali and Oromo)	11.5%	Spanish	21.2%
English only	11.8%	English only	10.2%	Cushitic languages (includes Somali and Oromo)	8.0%
Telugu	4.4%	Hmong	6.6%	English only	7.5%
Khmer	3.5%	Russian	3.7%	Arabic	3.1%

Notes: Hmong includes Miao-Yao, Mien, Miao, and Hmong. The ACS dataset used in this analysis combines Cushitic languages into one language group.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Linguistic diversity has critical implications for ensuring that DLL families in Minnesota have equitable access to services, given the challenges of offering even basic translation and interpretation in many less commonly spoken languages.[21] And there is little research to guide successful approaches to teaching in ECEC classrooms where learners speak a multitude of languages not spoken by teachers and other staff. Indeed, key elements of program quality —including teacher preparation, authentic assessments, and parent engagement strategies—are all affected and oftentimes complicated by linguistic diversity. In particular, ECEC programs may have limited capacity to provide meaningful family engagement opportunities and programming which are known to influence children's academic outcomes in this context due to linguistic and other barriers.[22]

2.   A Wide Array of National Origins

In addition to the impressive diversity of languages spoken, the provenance of DLL families is similarly varied. The approximately 109,000 foreign-born parents of Minnesota's DLLs hail from a wide range of countries and world regions. Table 3 shows their top 15 countries of origin as of 2011–15. Mexico was the top origin country, representing 23 percent of foreign-born parents, followed by Somalia at 10 percent, India at 9 percent, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) at 8 percent. Approximately one-quarter of foreign-born DLL parents come from countries beyond the top 15. The diversity of national origins within the Minnesota immigrant population contrasts with trends seen prior to the 1970s, when most immigrants to the state were from Western European countries, particularly Germany, Norway, and Sweden.[23]

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20   See appendices for additional analyses of Dakota, Hennepin, and Ramsey Counties.
21   Park, Zong, and Batalova, *Growing Superdiversity among Young U.S. Dual Language Learners.*
22   Maki Park and Margie McHugh, *Immigrant Parents and Early Childhood Programs: Addressing Barriers of Literacy, Culture, and Systems Knowledge* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2014), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigrant-parents-early-childhood-programs-barriers.
23   Liuzzi, "Immigration in Minnesota."

Table 3. Top 15 Origin Countries of Foreign-Born Parents of Minnesota DLLs, 2011–15

Foreign-Born Parents of DLLs	109,000
Mexico	23.3%
Somalia	9.6%
India	8.9%
Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR)	7.5%
Thailand	4.2%
Ethiopia	3.7%
Vietnam	2.9%
China	2.7%
El Salvador	2.5%
Myanmar (also known as Burma)	2.3%
Kenya	2.1%
Guatemala	1.8%
Honduras	1.5%
Nigeria	1.3%
Philippines	1.2%

Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

3.   Refugee Resettlement as a Driver of Superdiversity in Minnesota

Refugee resettlement in Minnesota contributes significantly to the diversity of DLL families, and most children of refugees are DLLs. Minnesota is one of the top destinations of refugees arriving in the country, and the impact of resettlement in the state is even larger when per capita numbers are considered.[24] Hmong refugees from Lao PDR began arriving in the state in the mid-1970s; they were later joined by significant numbers of refugees from Bosnia, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Liberia, Somalia, the former Soviet Union, and Vietnam. More recently, refugees from Myanmar, Bhutan, and Iraq have been the largest groups to resettle in Minnesota.[25] Refugees have contributed to the diversity of the state's population overall, as well as that of its young child population. From 2008 to 2017, nearly 19,000 refugees resettled directly in Minnesota.[26] Arrivals in 2017 alone hailed from 20 different countries, the top three being Somalia, Myanmar, and Ethiopia.[27] Additionally, Minnesota receives significant numbers of "secondary refugees"—those who move to the state after having initially been resettled in another. According to

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24 Phillip Connor, "U.S. Resettles Fewer Refugees, Even as Global Number of Displaced People Grows," Pew Research Center, October 12, 2017, www.pewglobal.org/2017/10/12/u-s-resettles-fewer-refugees-even-as-global-number-of-displaced-people-grows/.

25 Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, "Minnesota Issues Resource Guides: Immigrants in Minnesota," updated June 2017, www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/guides/guides?issue=immigration; Arrive Ministries, "Minnesota Refugee Population," accessed January 17, 2018, http://arriveministries.org/who-we-serve/about-refugees-asylees/minnesota-refugees/.

26 This number excludes refugees who were initially resettled in other states and then moved to Minnesota (known as secondary refugees). Refugee Processing Center, "Refugee Arrivals: Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System," accessed January 16, 2018, http://ireports.wrapsnet.org/Interactive-Reporting/EnumType/Report?ItemPath=/rpt_WebArrivalsReports/MX%20-%20Arrivals%20by%20Destination%20and%20Nationality.

27 Because of the Trump administration's actions to restrict refugee admissions, refugee arrivals in Minnesota in 2017 were considerably lower than in previous years. For instance, 2016 arrivals to the state hailed from 25 different countries, with the largest groups from Somalia (1,405), Myanmar (658), Ethiopia (277), Iraq (167), and Bhutan (126). See ibid.

ORR data, in fiscal year (FY) 2014, Minnesota received the most secondary refugees of any state in the country—more than double that of the second-ranked state (Florida).[28]

Overall, the sizable population of refugees has contributed to the state's high degree of linguistic and cultural diversity. Even refugees arriving from the same country of origin may represent a variety of languages and cultures—a fact that further complicates the provision of services to these groups, particularly those speaking less-common languages. For instance, refugees from Myanmar who were resettled across the United States between FY 2008 and FY 2017 reported speaking 74 native languages.[29]

> *Even refugees arriving from the same country of origin may represent a variety of languages and cultures.*

Young children in refugee families comprise a significant share of the AAPI and Black DLL populations discussed below, and may require unique supports given their families' experiences of flight and resettlement. Children who have spent time living in refugee camps, for example, are likely to have had interrupted access to education and other services, experienced extreme economic hardship, and may face mental health challenges as a result of primary or secondary trauma, social isolation, and discrimination.[30] While the majority of children of refugees were born in the United States, their parents' experiences of and exposure to trauma may still affect their early development. Early childhood services that incorporate principles of trauma-informed care and take a holistic approach toward service provision can be highly beneficial in serving this population.

B. A Closer Look at Minnesota's DLLs and Their Families

The significant and growing racial, ethnic, national-origin, and linguistic diversity of Minnesota's young children and families affects all aspects of ECEC, education, and other health and social services, pointing to the need for informed and inclusive approaches to serving them. At the same time, a range of other factors, including poverty, parental educational attainment, family structure, and linguistic isolation, have the potential to significantly influence young children's development and future outcomes. Taking a closer look at the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of DLLs and their parents can contribute to a better understanding of these young children's varying strengths, needs, and early learning experiences.

1. Key Characteristics of Minnesota's DLLs

As of 2011–15, 21 percent of the 642,000 young children ages 0 to 8 in Minnesota were DLLs. Table 4 outlines several key characteristics of young children in Minnesota, both DLLs and their peers who live in English-only households—providing insight into the family contexts and wellbeing of these young children.

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28   ORR includes Cuban/Haitian entrants in addition to refugees in the number of reported secondary refugees. See U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, ORR, *ORR Indicators for Refugee Resettlement Stakeholders* (Washington, DC: ORR, 2015), 16–17, www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/orr/508_compliant_fy_2016_orr_indicators_for_refugee_resettlement.pdf; Office of the Legislative Auditor, *Fiscal Impact of Refugee Resettlement*, 11–12.

29   Park, Zong, and Batalova, *Growing Superdiversity among Young U.S. Dual Language Learners*, 24.

30   Selcuk R. Sirin and Lauren Rogers-Sirin, *The Educational and Mental Health Needs of Syrian Refugee Children* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2015), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/educational-and-mental-health-needs-syrian-refugee-children.

Table 4. Sociodemographic Profile of Young Children (ages 0 to 8) in Minnesota, 2011–15

	DLLs		Non-DLLs	
	Number	Share (%)	Number	Share (%)
Children ages 0 to 8	**136,000**	**100.0**	**506,000**	**100.0**
Age				
0 to 2	46,000	33.4	161,000	31.7
3 to 4	30,000	21.8	112,000	22.2
5 to 8	61,000	44.9	233,000	46.0
Race and Ethnicity				
Hispanic	43,000	31.5	17,000	3.3
AAPI	38,000	28.0	12,000	2.3
Black	29,000	21.2	45,000	8.8
White	24,000	17.9	422,000	83.4
Native American	2,000	1.4	11,000	2.1
Nativity				
Foreign born	9,000	6.6	3,000	0.7
U.S. born	127,000	93.4	503,000	99.3
Family Structure				
Two parents	108,000	79.2	403,000	79.7
Single mother	24,000	17.4	73,000	14.5
Single father	3,000	2.4	20,000	3.9
No parent present	1,000	1.0	10,000	2.0
Linguistic Isolation				
Residing in linguistically isolated households	37,000	27.1	N/A	N/A
Poverty and Income				
Under 100 percent federal poverty level (FPL)	39,000	28.2	69,000	13.6
100–199 percent FPL	39,000	28.6	89,000	17.6
200 percent FPL or higher	59,000	43.2	348,000	68.8
Health Insurance Coverage				
Private health insurance	68,000	49.5	374,000	73.8
Public health insurance only	58,000	42.2	113,000	22.4
No insurance	11,000	8.3	19,000	3.8

DLLs = Dual Language Learners; AAPI = Asian American and Pacific Islander.
Notes: The White racial category also includes a small number of people who self-identified their race as "other."
Linguistically isolated refers to households where no one over the age of 14 speaks English very well. Poverty level refers to the poverty thresholds used by the Census Bureau to measure the share of the population living in poverty.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

- *Nativity.* As illustrated in Table 4, the vast majority of Minnesota DLLs are U.S. born. As of 2011–15, however, slightly more than 80 percent had at least one immigrant parent. Although most DLLs are U.S. citizens, the eligibility rules of some public services can make it challenging or impossible for immigrant parents to access programs, subsidies, or other supports that may benefit their families. Additionally, a fear of deportation may affect parents' willingness to utilize services, even when they or their children qualify to do so.[31]

- *Family structure.* Family structure is also an important factor in child wellbeing. Overall, children in families with two adults are more likely to experience better emotional and behavioral outcomes, as well as better access to health care, whereas those in single-parent families face a higher risk of poor academic outcomes, psychological problems, and lower income.[32] Most Minnesota DLLs—79 percent, as of 2011–15—live in two-parent families, a rate that is similar to that of their non-DLL peers. Similar proportions of DLLs and non-DLLs live in single-mother- and single-father-headed households.

Linguistic isolation, particularly for speakers of lower-incidence minority languages, may make it more challenging for children and their parents to access education, health, and social services.

- *Linguistic isolation.* Another important contextual factor for child development is relative linguistic isolation. Nearly three-quarters of DLLs in Minnesota have a household member who is fully proficient in English. More than one-quarter, however, live in linguistically isolated households, where no one over the age of 14 speaks English very well.[33] While the many benefits of bilingualism are well documented,[34] linguistic isolation, particularly for speakers of lower-incidence minority languages, may make it more challenging for children and their parents to access education, health, and social services that promote children's healthy development.[35]

- *Household income and health insurance.* Poverty and its related challenges can also place stress on families and pose risks to children's development.[36] Minnesota DLLs are twice as likely to be living in poor households than their non-DLL peers: in 2011–15, 28 percent lived below 100 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), compared with 14 percent of non-DLLs. And 57 percent of DLLs were living in low-income households (those with incomes below 200 percent of the FPL), compared with 31 percent of non-DLLs. In contrast, 43 percent of DLLs were living in families with income at 200 percent of the FPL or higher, compared with 69 percent of their non-DLL peers. In addition, a lack of health insurance can negatively affect family finances and can act as

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31 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of Human Services Policy, "Barriers to Immigrants' Access to Health and Human Services Programs" (ASPE issue brief, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Washington, DC, May 2012), https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/76471/rb.pdf.

32 Child Trends, *Family Structure: Indicators on Children and Youth* (Bethesda, MD: Child Trends, 2015), www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/59_Family_Structure.pdf.

33 U.S. Census Bureau, "Linguistic Isolation," accessed October 23, 2017, https://factfinder.census.gov/help/en/linguistic_isolation.htm.

34 See, for example, Dina C. Castro, Eugene E. García, and Amy M. Markos, *Dual Language Learners: Research Informing Policy* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, 2013), http://fpg.unc.edu/node/6000.

35 See, for example, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Barriers to Immigrants' Access to Health and Human Services Programs."

36 Hirokazu Yoshikawa, J. Lawrence Aber, and William R. Beardslee, "The Effects of Poverty on the Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health of Children and Youth: Implications for Prevention," *American Psychologist* 67, no. 4 (2012): 272–84.

a serious obstacle to child and parent health and wellbeing. While 92 percent of Minnesota DLLs had some type of health insurance in 2011–15, they were still more likely to lack coverage than non-DLLs.

▪ *Pre-K Enrollment.* A final key factor to consider regarding child wellbeing is pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) enrollment. Overwhelming evidence demonstrates that high-quality ECEC services can lay a foundation for children's future success,[37] and studies have also shown that DLLs stand to gain even more from high-quality ECEC than do their non-DLL peers.[38] However, DLLs ages 3 and 4 in Minnesota were less likely to be enrolled in preschool[39] than their non-DLL peers in 2011–15, at 39 percent compared to 47 percent, as shown in Table 5. These enrollment rates, moreover, were lower than the U.S. average of 42 percent for DLLs and 48 percent for non-DLLs. The discrepancy in access may be due to a multitude of factors, including cost, transportation, a lack of linguistically or culturally responsive services, challenges in navigating ECEC systems and bureaucracy, or irregular or conflicting work schedules. Ultimately, these data point to an opportunity gap that likely contributes to later lags in academic outcomes for this population.

Table 5. Preschool Enrollment of Young Children (ages 3 to 4) in Minnesota, 2011–15

	DLLs		Non-DLLs	
	Number	Share (%)	Number	Share (%)
Children ages 3 to 4 (not in kindergarten)	**29,000**	**100.0**	**112,000**	**100.0**
Enrolled in preschool	11,000	38.5	52,000	46.9

DLLs = Dual Language Learners.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

2.   Characteristics of Parents of Minnesota DLLs

While significant research demonstrates that immigrant and refugee parents possess many factors that benefit their young children's development, such as placing a high value on education and having high educational expectations for their children, other characteristics (e.g., lower levels of formal education and English skills) can pose serious challenges. Table 6 lists key sociodemographic characteristics of parents with young children (both DLLs and non-DLLs) in Minnesota, with implications for these children's well-being, development, and access to ECEC services.

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37   See, for example, Robert C. Pianta, W. Steven Barnett, Margaret Burchinal, and Kathy R. Thornburg, "The Effects of Preschool Education: What We Know, How Public Policy Is or Is Not Aligned with the Evidence Base, and What We Need to Know," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 10, no. 2 (2009): 49–88; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Starting Strong 2017: Key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2017), www.oecd.org/education/starting-strong-2017-9789264276116-en.htm.

38   Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Christina Weiland, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, "When Does Preschool Matter?" *The Future of Children* 26, no. 2 (2016): 21–35.

39   These numbers exclude children ages 3 to 4 who were enrolled in kindergarten, and data are self-reported. As a result, these data are not restricted to publicly provided pre-K services.

Table 6. Sociodemographic Profile of Parents of Young Children (ages 0 to 8) in Minnesota, 2011–15

	Parents of DLL Children		Parents of Non-DLL Children	
	Number	Share (%)	Number	Share (%)
Parents of children ages 0 to 8	**151,000**	**100.0**	**567,000**	**100.0**
Nativity				
U.S. born	42,000	28.0	554,000	97.7
Foreign born	109,000	72.0	13,000	2.3
Years of U.S. Residence (foreign born)				
Less than 5	14,000	12.7	-	-
5 to 9	23,000	20.9	-	-
10 to 14	30,000	27.6	3,000	19.6
15 to 19	18,000	16.9	2,000	13.6
20 or more	24,000	22.0	6,000	48.2
Educational Attainment				
Parents ages 25 and older	139,000	100.0	534,000	100.0
0 to 8th grade	18,000	13.1	3,000	0.5
9th to 12th grade	13,000	9.4	16,000	3.0
High school diploma or equivalent	27,000	19.6	88,000	16.5
Some college	34,000	24.2	197,000	36.9
Bachelor's degree or higher	47,000	33.8	230,000	43.1
English Proficiency				
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	61,000	40.2	N/A	N/A
Low LEP	28,000	18.5	N/A	N/A
LEP Status of Low-Educated Parents (ages 25+)				
Parents with less than high school diploma or equivalent	31,000	100.0	19,000	100.0
LEP	25,000	79.7	N/A	N/A
Employment Status (civilian population)				
Mothers ages 16 and older	81,000	100.0	303,000	100.0
Employed	52,000	64.0	231,000	76.3
Unemployed	5,000	6.5	11,000	3.7
Not in the labor force	24,000	29.5	61,000	20.1
Fathers ages 16 and older	70,000	100.0	263,000	100.0
Employed	62,000	88.9	242,000	91.9
Unemployed	4,000	5.5	9,000	3.6
Not in the labor force	4,000	5.6	12,000	4.5

DLL = Dual Language Learner.
Notes: "-" indicates a sample size too small to generate result. LEP refers to American Community Survey (ACS) respondents who indicated that they speak English less than "very well"; low LEP refers to ACS respondents who indicated that they speak English less than "well."
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

- ***Nativity and years of residence in United States.*** Nativity and length of time in the United States can impact access to services, since new arrivals may find it difficult to navigate various systems and programs and determine their eligibility for services and may require help navigating paperwork and options. These factors are also often related to parental English-language skills, and thus can influence when children learn their first and second languages, as well as their level of mastery of both languages.[40] As of 2011–15, nearly three-quarters of DLL parents were foreign born. There was considerable variation in the length of time they had resided in the United States, from those who had been in the country for fewer than five years (13 percent) to U.S. residents of 20 or more years (22 percent).

- ***Educational attainment.*** Parental educational attainment is strongly correlated with their children's academic success, and it is an important predictor of future outcomes.[41] Parents of DLLs have varying levels of educational attainment. In 2011–15, more than one-fifth had less than a high school diploma or equivalent, while one-third had a bachelor's degree or higher. However, parents of DLLs were more than five times more likely to lack a high school diploma than parents of non-DLLs, and they were also considerably less likely to have some college education or a degree.

- ***English proficiency.*** A lack of English proficiency can act as a serious obstacle to accessing services. While 60 percent of parents of DLLs indicated that they spoke English "very well" in 2011–15, the remaining 40 percent were Limited English Proficient (LEP).[42] Of these LEP parents, 19 percent are considered low LEP, having reported that they speak English "not well" or "not at all." Among parents who lack a high-school-equivalent education, 80 percent are also LEP. These data suggest that a considerable portion of DLL parents face significant challenges in accessing and actively engaging in ECEC and other services.

- ***Employment.*** A final key parental characteristic that shapes young children's home environments is employment status. In addition to its impact on family finances, employment may also influence whether parents decide to enroll their child in an ECEC program.[43] Fathers of DLLs are slightly less likely to be employed than fathers of non-DLLs. The employment rate of mothers of DLLs, meanwhile, is considerably lower than that of mothers of non-DLLs. This finding is in line with studies showing that immigrant mothers are more likely to stay at home to care for their young children than their U.S.-born counterparts for a variety of reasons, including preference, the high cost of child care, or limited employment options.[44]

C.   A Focus on Minnesota's AAPI and Black DLL Families

AAPI and Black DLLs comprise considerably larger shares of the overall DLL population in Minnesota than they do the national one. However, in part because these groups are relatively small, and because a large percentage of families in both arrived relatively recently, they have rarely been the focus of studies. This section provides a brief portrait of AAPI and Black DLL families in Minnesota, and contrasts this with DLL families overall, analyzing characteristics that are relevant to the effective provision of ECEC and other services (see appendices for more in-depth data tables).

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40   National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children*, 142.

41   Zha Blong Xiong, Kao Kalia Yang, and Jesse Kao Lee, *What Helps and Hinders Hmong Pre-Kindergartener's School Readiness: Learning From and About the Hmong in St. Paul, Minnesota* (St. Paul, MN: Ready 4K, 2008), www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/38403954/what-helps-and-hinders-hmong-pre-kindergartners-data-center/2.

42   ACS respondents who speak a language other than English at home are asked to indicate whether they speak English "very well," "well," "not well," or "not at all."

43   State Capacity Building Center, Office of Child Care, "How Do Parents Make Decisions about ECE Arrangements?" (NSECE summary brief 3, Office of Child Care, Washington, DC, 2017), 2, https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/3_householdsearchforece_briefdraft_2017.5.7_coded.pdf.

44   Maki Park, Margie McHugh, and Caitlin Katsiaficas, *Serving Immigrant Families through Two-Generation Programs: Identifying Family Needs and Responsive Program Approaches* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2016), 14, www.migrationpolicy.org/research/serving-immigrant-families-through-two-generation-programs-identifying-family-needs-and; D'Vera Cohn, Gretchen Livingston, and Wendy Wang, *After Decades of Decline, a Rise in Stay-at-Home Mothers* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2014), www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/04/08/after-decades-of-decline-a-rise-in-stay-at-home-mothers/.

I.   AAPI DLL Families

As of 2011–15, 39,000 AAPI DLLs resided across Minnesota, comprising 28 percent of the state's overall DLL population. AAPIs are the fastest-growing ethnic group in Minnesota, reflecting national trends. The group represents a wide range of backgrounds, migration experiences, and languages. While large numbers of well-educated immigrants from countries such as India and China, for example, strongly influence analyses of AAPI outcomes, Minnesota is also home to a significant population of Southeast Asian refugees, many of whom face extreme language barriers and poverty and have lower levels of educational attainment.

Parents of AAPI DLLs in Minnesota hail from an array of countries, as Table 7 illustrates. In 2011–15, nearly one-quarter were from India. Other top countries of origin were Lao PDR (21 percent), Thailand (12 percent), Vietnam (8 percent), China (8 percent), and Myanmar (7 percent), with smaller shares from the Philippines, Cambodia, Korea, and Taiwan. Notably, these country-level data mask a great deal of the significant ethnic diversity within origin countries such as Myanmar.[45]

Table 7. Top Ten Countries of Birth of Foreign-Born Parents of AAPI DLLs in Minnesota, 2011–15

Foreign-Born Parents of AAPI DLLs	38,000
India	24.4%
Lao PDR	21.4%
Thailand	11.7%
Vietnam	8.2%
China	7.8%
Myanmar	6.6%
Philippines	3.1%
Cambodia	2.7%
Korea	2.0%
Taiwan	1.6%

AAPI= Asian American and Pacific Islander.
Note: "Korea" includes immigrants from both North Korea and South Korea; however, due to the small number of North Korean immigrants, the data are more representative of South Korean immigrants.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

The AAPI population in Minnesota also exhibits great linguistic diversity. As shown in Table 8, nearly one-third of AAPI DLL parents were speakers of Hmong, as of 2011–15, and a further 8 percent each were Chinese and Vietnamese speakers. Notably, nearly one-quarter were speakers of less-common languages (i.e., those outside of the top ten). The high degree of cultural and linguistic diversity among AAPI DLL parents, and in particular the large share who speak relatively low-incidence languages, highlights potential communication challenges for service providers. And the characteristics of some linguistic groups raise unique considerations for ECEC programs and systems: Hmong, for example, is a language rooted in a strong oral tradition, and written assessments may not fully capture all aspects of the language.

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45   Center for Applied Linguistics, *Refugees from Burma: Their Backgrounds and Refugee Experiences* (Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, 2007), www.culturalorientation.net/content/download/1338/7825/version/2/file/refugeesfromburma.pdf.

Table 8. Top Ten Languages Spoken by Parents of AAPI DLLs in Minnesota, 2011–15

Parents of AAPI DLLs	48,000
Hmong	30.5%
Chinese	8.4%
English only	8.4%
Vietnamese	7.5%
Telugu	5.5%
Hindi	3.9%
Lao	3.6%
Khmer	3.6%
Tamil	3.4%
Tagalog	2.1%

AAPI= Asian American and Pacific Islander.
Note: Hmong includes Miao-Yao, Mien, Miao, and Hmong. Chinese includes Cantonese, Mandarin, and other Chinese languages.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

The vast majority of AAPI DLLs were born in the United States. However, their parents' length of residence varies significantly: as of 2011–15, 18 percent had lived in the country for less than 5 years, and 38 percent for less than 10 years, while 34 percent had lived in the United States for 20 years or more.[46] Recent arrivals are likely to face the stiffest challenges in adjustment and integration, including accessing and navigating ECEC systems and services.

AAPI DLLs are somewhat less likely than DLLs overall to live in linguistically isolated households.

In terms of common indicators of children's outcomes, AAPI DLLs fare relatively well compared to DLLs in aggregate. For instance, they are more likely to live in two-parent households and less likely to be living in low-income households than DLLs overall,[47] although they are more likely to reside in low-income households than their non-DLL peers (see). Additionally, AAPI DLLs are somewhat less likely than DLLs overall to live in linguistically isolated households, and parents of AAPI DLLs are slightly less likely than DLL parents overall to be LEP. AAPI DLL parents also tend to be more highly educated: they are considerably more likely than all parents of DLLs to have at least a bachelor's degree, and they are less likely to lack a high school education. However, among parents of AAPI DLLs who have less than a high school diploma or equivalent, 90 percent are also low LEP—a higher share than the DLL parent average, suggesting that this subgroup of parents and their children may face greater challenges around ECEC access and outcomes.

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46   Ibid.
47   Low income is defined as under 200 percent of the FPL.

Figure 2. Household Income and Poverty Levels of Families of DLLs and non-DLLs, 2011–15
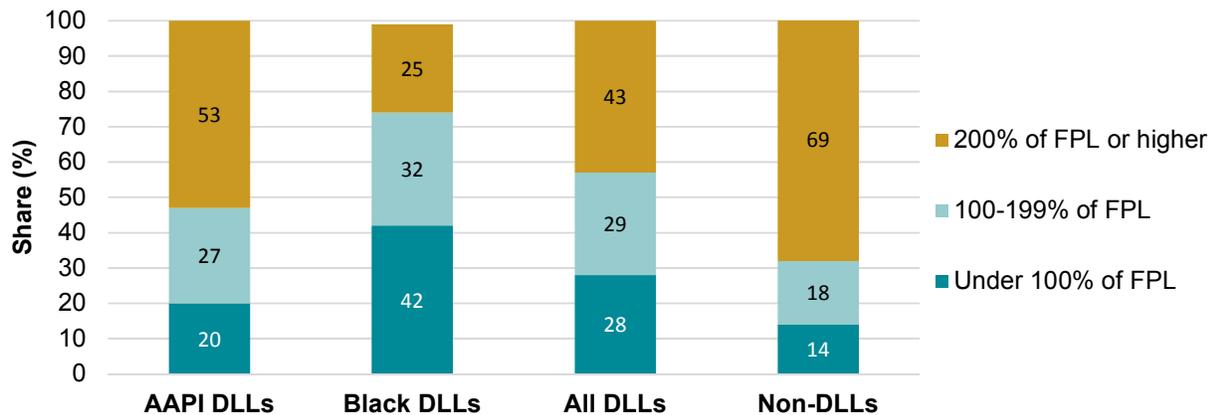
AAPI= Asian American and Pacific Islander; DLL = Dual Language Learner; FPL = federal poverty level.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Altogether, while AAPIs fare better than DLLs on average on most socioeconomic indicators, it is critical to recognize the considerable variation within this group. For example, Minnesota is home to the largest populations of both Hmong and Karen in the United States, both groups that have high rates of poverty and significantly lower levels of educational attainment relative to the AAPI DLL group overall. Substantial gaps in academic outcomes have been documented for young children in these communities.[48] Indeed, Minnesota is near the bottom of national rankings for AAPI student achievement overall.[49] In recent years, some advocates in Minnesota have pushed for data disaggregation efforts that would reveal more of the disparities between subgroups in this diverse ethnic category, as a way to better inform policy deliberations.

2.   Black DLL Families

Thirty thousand Black DLLs, primarily of African origin, made up 21 percent of DLLs overall in Minnesota in 2011–15. Many of these young children's families arrived in the state after fleeing political persecution or civil war in their home countries in central or eastern Africa. Others are the children of doctors, engineers, and other professionals drawn to colleges and universities in the state, adding to the wide spectrum of backgrounds and characteristics within this group. A small number of Black DLLs in Minnesota come from countries in the Caribbean.

Unlike AAPI DLL parents or DLL parents overall, few Black DLL parents have resided in the United States for 20 years or more.

Nearly all Black DLLs were born in the United States. However, they are considerably more likely than DLLs on average to have at least one immigrant parent. Unlike AAPI DLL parents or DLL parents overall, few Black DLL parents have resided in the United States for 20 years or more (just 11 percent). As relative newcomers, Black DLL families may find cultural and systems knowledge and navigation a challenge. The vast majority of foreign-born parents in this group, at 42 percent in 2011–15, come from Somalia (see Table 9). Ethiopia ranked second, at 17 percent, and Kenya, third, at 9 percent.

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48   Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, *Asian Pacific Students in Minnesota: Facts, Not Fiction* (St. Paul, MN: Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, 2012), https://mn.gov/capm/assets/edureport2012_tcm1051-114470.pdf.
49   MinnCAN, *Asian American and Pacific Islander Student Achievement*, 8.

Table 9. Top Ten Countries of Birth of Foreign-Born Parents of Black DLLs, 2011–15

Foreign-Born Parents of Black DLLs	25,000
Somalia	41.5%
Ethiopia	16.5%
Kenya	9.0%
Nigeria	5.7%
Liberia	4.6%
Ghana	2.6%
Sudan	2.5%
Cameroon	2.2%
Eritrea	1.8%
Togo	1.7%

Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

In terms of language, Cushitic languages, including Somali and Oromo, are the most commonly spoken: nearly half of Black DLL parents speak one of these languages at home (see Table 10). And speakers of this linguistic group more than quadrupled between 2000 and 2011–15, from 3,000 to 13,000.[50] Kru was the next most common non-English language, as of 2011–15, at 9 percent, followed by Ethiopian at 8 percent and Swahili at 7 percent. Eight percent of parents reported speaking English only, and around 4 percent of parents, a language beyond the top ten. As with the AAPI DLL population, the linguistic diversity within this population poses challenges to the provision of effective ECEC services as well as instructional quality.

Table 10. Top Ten Languages Spoken by Parents of Black DLLs, 2011–15

Parents of Black DLLs	27,000
Cushitic languages (includes Somali and Oromo)	48.1%
Kru	9.3%
Amharic	8.1%
English only	7.5%
Swahili	7.0%
Other African languages	5.6%
French	4.0%
Spanish	3.2%
Arabic	2.0%
French or Haitian Creole	1.5%

Notes: The ACS dataset used in this analysis combines Cushitic languages into one language group. Amharic includes respondents who reported speaking "Ethiopian." "Other African languages" include Bantu, Mande, Fulani, and other African languages, some specified and some not.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Black DLL families are more likely than DLLs overall to face certain risk factors to child outcomes. For instance, Black DLLs are markedly more likely to be living in low-income families, considerably less likely to live in two-parent households, and slightly more likely to reside in linguistically isolated households. This means that many Black DLLs may face considerable and disproportionate challenges to their

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50   MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Census and pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

wellbeing and future success. However, other indicators of children's outcomes are more mixed. For example, parents of Black DLLs are considerably less likely than DLL parents overall to have at least a bachelor's degree, but they are also slightly less likely than DLL parents on average to lack a high school education. Additionally, similar shares of Black DLL parents and all DLL parents are LEP, but Black DLL parents are less likely to be low LEP.

Importantly, while Black DLLs experience a greater prevalence of risk factors compared to DLLs overall, the great degree of diversity within this group means that some children will be disproportionately affected. And while serious racial disparities between the outcomes of White and Black Minnesotans are widely recognized by policymakers, less is known about the specific experiences of subgroups within the Black DLL community. According to national analyses, for example, Somali refugees are one of the most likely to live in poverty and to have low levels of literacy in their native language, indicating that young children in this group may be particularly at risk for later gaps in achievement.[51]

3. Pre-K Enrollment Rates across DLL Subgroups

Preschool and other high-quality early learning services can contribute significantly toward mitigating risk factors for at-risk groups and set a strong foundation for their future academic success. Overall, enrollment rates across the Minnesota DLL subgroups studied in this report are relatively similar: 39 percent for DLLs overall, 38 percent for Black DLLs, and 37 percent for AAPI DLLs. However, DLLs across the board are less likely to be enrolled in preschool than their non-DLL peers (see Figure 3), raising concerns about potential barriers specific to these groups that may impact their participation rates.

Figure 3. Preschool Enrollment of Minnesota Children (ages 3 to 4), 2011–15
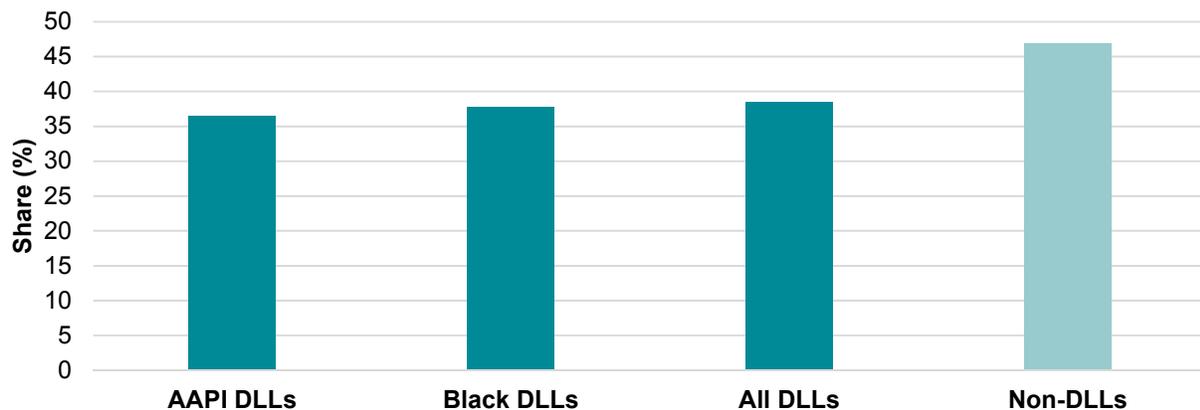
AAPI= Asian American and Pacific Islander; DLL = Dual Language Learner.
Note: These numbers exclude children ages 3 to 4 who were enrolled in kindergarten.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

As a significant and growing segment of Minnesota's young child population, DLLs are an important group for policymakers and service providers to consider in program design and provision. Amid the heterogeneity and growing diversity of the state DLL population, systems and services must be calibrated to meet varied learning needs and leverage unique strengths. With DLLs relatively under-enrolled in ECEC programs, a vision of quality and access that is relevant to all young Minnesotans will be critical as the state works to expand system capacity.

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51   Randy Capps et al., *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees: Successes and Challenges* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2015), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/integration-outcomes-us-refugees-successes-and-challenges.

IV. The Benefits and Importance of High-Quality ECEC Services for DLLs

An established body of research demonstrates that high-quality ECEC services promote the healthy cognitive and socioemotional development of young children, boosting school readiness and building a foundation for future school success.[52] Of particular relevance for DLLs, well-designed ECEC programs can help foster both home and English language skills.[53] Such programs can support children in gaining full proficiency in two (or more) languages, enabling them to reap the cognitive, social, and emotional benefits of bilingualism.[54] In addition to disproportionately benefiting children of immigrants,[55] ECEC programs also have the potential to build meaningful relationships with parents, engage them in their young children's early learning, and boost their understanding of the U.S. education system—all supports that can bolster long-term academic success.[56]

However, the elements that constitute a high-quality ECEC program for young learners on average may not necessarily translate into high-quality services for DLLs specifically. Of particular use to DLLs, for instance, would be teachers' use of language development strategies that are effective for DLLs, including an asset-based approach to bilingualism, respect for home languages and cultures, as well as the linguistically and culturally responsive engagement of parents and families.[57] Moreover, while a significant body of research has examined the use of bilingual education models, less evidence is available on strategies for effective instruction in multilingual, multicultural settings—despite the fact that superdiversity is a reality in many areas.[58] Superdiverse environments can pose added challenges to the development and maintenance of home language skills that lay an important foundation for the development of English language and literacy development and school readiness.[59] The significant linguistic and cultural diversity of Minnesota's DLL population underscores the need for new approaches that successfully prevent gaps and disparities in education and other outcomes.

V. Supports for DLLs in Minnesota's ECEC Policies and Programs

In recent years, Minnesota has made substantial investments in expanding access to early learning statewide. At the same time, the state is making progress in identifying and addressing the early learning needs of its growing and diversifying DLL population through targeted legislation. This section provides a brief overview of state-level programming and policies that impact DLL access to high-quality ECEC services in Minnesota, with a focus on the implications for superdiverse environments.

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52 See, for example, OECD, *Starting Strong 2017*; Dana Charles McCoy et al., "Impacts of Early Childhood Education on Medium- and Long-Term Educational Outcomes," *Educational Researcher* 46, no. 8 (2017): 474–87.

53 Nicola Dolan and Catherine Sherlock, "Family Support through Childcare Services: Meeting the Needs of Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Families," *Child Care in Practice* 16, no. 2 (2010): 147–165, 156.

54 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children*, 23.

55 It should be noted that, while there is significant overlap, not all children of immigrants are DLLs and not all DLLs are the children of immigrants. Julia Gelatt, Gina Adams, and Sandra Huerta, *Supporting Immigrant Families' Access to Prekindergarten* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2014), www.urban.org/research/publication/supporting-immigrant-families-access-prekindergarten.

56 Park and McHugh, *Immigrant Parents and Early Childhood Programs*; Park, McHugh, and Katsiaficas*, Serving Immigrant Families*.

57 Dina C. Castro, Linda M. Espinosa, and Mariela M. Páez, "Defining and Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Practices That Promote Dual Language Learners' Development and Learning," in *Quality Measurement in Early Childhood Settings*, eds. Martha Zaslow, Ivelisse Martinez-Beck, Kathryn Tout, and Tamara Halle (Baltimore: Brookes, 2011): 257–80.

58 Park, Zong, and Batalova, *Growing Superdiversity among Young U.S. Dual Language Learners*; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children*, 194*.*

59 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children*.

A.   Provisions for DLLs in State ECEC Programs

Minnesota offers a complex array of ECEC programming and services supported by state funds and has sought to significantly expand access to these early learning opportunities.[60] Several state initiatives—many of them newly formalized in the past five years—provide funding to ECEC programs, school districts, and families to support young children. These include the Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), Child Care Assistance, Family Home Visiting, School Readiness and School Readiness Plus, Early Learning Scholarships, and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) programs. In 2017, the Minnesota legislature allocated $50 million in new, one-time funding for the VPK and School Readiness Plus programs in an effort to help schools increase the pre-K enrollment of 4-year-olds.

Minnesota's many early childhood programs vary in their approaches to serving DLLs and ELs,[61] as well as the degree to which they recognize and track access and service provision for these populations. The newly established School Readiness Plus program, for instance, includes EL status as one of the risk factors that make children eligible for services, while other programs, such as VPK (which is open to all 4-year-olds), do not consider specific risk factors in determining eligibility.[62] With regard to data collection, some (but not all) programs track EL status or home language, making them more visible to program administrators and policymakers. The VPK program, for example, as part of Minnesota's E-12 education system (this term is used by MDE to describe the K-12 system as well as VPK services), has a procedure in place for classifying young children as ELs, in line with federal law.[63] The Early Learning Scholarships program, similarly, reports the number and percentage of children it serves each year who speak a language other than English at home.[64] Other programs, such as the Family Home Visiting Program, do not gather or report home language information. With incomplete data on DLL enrollment, the ECEC sector cannot systematically gauge the backgrounds and needs of the young children they serve.

Some (but not all) programs track EL status or home language, making them more visible to program administrators and policymakers.

Generally speaking, the VPK program appears to have the most robust formal requirements and regulations for the support of DLLs among early learning programs due to its formal inclusion in the E-12 system. As a result of its inclusion, VPK is required to meet all of the state's statutes that apply to ELs in K-12 schools. This means, for instance, that a standardized procedure is in place to ensure that ELs are identified in VPK programs and these programs have professional development requirements to ensure

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60   See Erin Hinrichs, "Minnesota Adds a New Pre-Kindergarten Program to an Already Confusing Early-Ed Landscape," *MinnPost*, June 23, 2017, www.minnpost.com/education/2017/06/minnesota-adds-new-pre-kindergarten-program-already-confusing-early-ed-landscape.

61   Whereas the report uses DLL to refer to children ages 0 to 8 who have at least one parent speaking a language other than English at home, the *Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act* and MDE use the term English Learner (EL). Also known as English Language Learner (ELL), EL refers to students in voluntary pre-K (VPK) programs or the K-12 system whose first language is not English and who have not yet reached a sufficient level of proficiency in English to fully engage in English-taught classes. This report uses EL in addition to DLL when referencing MDE's policies and programs. See MDE, *English Learner Education in Minnesota*.

62   MDE, "Early Learning Program Comparison Chart" (chart, MDE, Roseville, MN, 2017), http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE071425&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary.

63   U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, *Dear Colleague Letter: English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, 2015), www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf.

64   Fiscal year 2017 ran from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017. Of the 15,079 children awarded scholarships, 11,164 were reported as living in English-speaking households, and information was not provided for 1,094. See MDE, *Early Learning Scholarships 2017: Scholarship Use in Minnesota* (Roseville, MN: MDE, 2018), http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE059051&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary.

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that teachers are knowledgeable in native- and English-language programs and instruction.[65] Some districts have replicated these same practices in other programs, such as in ECFE classrooms, although such efforts are not mandated or resourced.[66] In an ideal scenario, the more comprehensive requirements to serve ELs under VPK would have a similar, positive spillover effect into other programs in the early learning system, serving as a catalyst for programs to develop capacities to more effectively serve DLLs and their families. However, as funding remains a challenge, this may further stretch existing capacity and resources to provide these provisions. The possibility of changes in funding to VPK and other programs from year to year may also make districts hesitant to invest in building these important program capacities and skills.

In terms of quality service provision for DLLs within the ECEC system overall, Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Parent Aware, was recently revised with updated standards and indicators, improving the system's cultural and linguistic responsiveness. For example, the QRIS system previously had only one indicator specifically related to serving DLLs, and it applied only to programs seeking the system's highest program ratings.[67] Now, several quality indicators apply at the lower tiers of the system, placing a value on linguistic and cultural competence across most levels of the quality-rating system. These include an indicator related to sharing information with families, including those that speak languages other than English, and an indicator related to programs' use of a self-assessment tool to improve overall cultural responsiveness.[68]

However, while these new measures will likely help the families of immigrant and DLL children to receive information on ECEC services and make these children feel welcomed in such programs, they do not address several key elements of program quality or effectiveness. A comprehensive examination of the state's QRIS system is required to ensure that all its measures and components respond to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse children and families. Such an effort should also recognize that, in order to promote equitable access to effective services for diverse families, participation and advancement opportunities for immigrant, LEP, and other diverse providers must be vigorously pursued.[69]

B.   DLL- and EL-Specific Legislation and Support

In the past five years, Minnesota has passed two notable pieces of legislation that directly seek to improve the quality of educational services and programming for DLLs and ELs. The *Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success (LEAPS) Act*, passed in 2014, revises Minnesota's statutes to improve services for ELs.[70] Rooted in the principle that multilingualism and multiculturalism constitute assets and strengths, the LEAPS Act emphasizes the importance of supporting children's home languages, tracking EL progress, engaging families in their children's language development, and boosting educators' cultural and

65   MDE, *Minnesota Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program Implementation Manual* (Roseville, MN: MDE, 2016), http://mn-stem. com/mdeprod/groups/educ/documents/basic/bwrl/mdu4/~edisp/mde058845.pdf.

66   MPI interviews with school district staff, February 2018.

67   Julie Sugarman and Maki Park, *Quality for Whom? Supporting Diverse Children and Workers in Early Childhood Quality Rating and Improvement Systems* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2017), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/supporting-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-children-and-workers; Parent Aware, "Indicators and Scoring: Full Rating for Child Care Centers," updated April 2016, http://parentaware.org/content/uploads/2016/05/PA-035-Indicators-and-Scoring-for-CCC-JULY-2016-FINAL.pdf; Parent Aware, "Indicators and Scoring: Full Rating for Family Child Care Providers," updated April 2016, http://parentaware.org/content/uploads/2016/05/PA-036-Indicators-and-Scoring-For-FCC-JULY-2016-FINAL.pdf.

68   Minnesota Department of Human Services, *Parent Aware Quality Rating and Improvement System: Standards and Indicators* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Department of Human Services, 2016), https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-6346B-ENG.

69   Sugarman and Park, *Quality for Whom?*

70   *Minnesota Statutes 2014*, Chapter 272—H.F. No. 2397, Article 1, 2014, http://wdoc.house.leg.state.mn.us/leg/LS88/HF2397.4.pdf.

linguistic competencies and knowledge of EL instruction. While the LEAPS Act focuses primarily on K-12 education, some of its key provisions affect DLLs in the state's ECEC system, including:

- Head Start providers are instructed to submit a plan to MDE that shows that DLL parents will be informed of their children's progress in both English and native language development (where practicable).

- ECFE programs are encouraged to offer translated information to DLL parents so they can track and support their children's progress in developing their English and native language skills

- School Readiness programs are required to employ teachers knowledgeable about English and native language development.

- School boards are required to identify strategies to strengthen instruction and outcomes for ELs in both English and native languages, where practicable, and to review annually ways in which they can strengthen cultural competency.

- ELs are explicitly included in the goal of ensuring that all students are proficient readers by the end of third grade. Relatedly, assessments in English as well as the predominant languages within a district's student body are required (as practicable), along with the provision of EL-appropriate instruction, parent engagement efforts, and the tracking of EL progress; and school districts must identify relevant workforce development needs, and adopt a literacy plan that includes ELs.

- In line with federal requirements, the state education commissioner is charged with leading annual reporting on ELs' progress toward English proficiency and academic outcomes. Notably, reporting must also track students' native language development when instruction is provided in this language.

- MDE is to create plans to engage parents in their children's English and native language development and to communicate in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

While the LEAPS Act includes an impressive range of provisions aimed at improving outcomes for ELs, few of its provisions specifically address early learning. Nevertheless, the legislation opens up important opportunities to explore strategies for providing explicit home language and home culture support for DLLs and their families, even though many challenges remain regarding the capacity for successful implementation, including availability of relevant pre-service and in-service training opportunities as well as assessments in children's home languages.[71] The legislation does not provide resources for home language assessments, and many of its provisions regarding these assessments and translated/interpreted communications with families are to be fulfilled when "practicable." Concerns persist that in superdiverse communities the needs of families who speak low-incidence languages will remain unaddressed. Yet, given the wide diversity of backgrounds and languages evident in this report's analysis, the need for appropriate assessment and other instructional tools—as well as basic, translated materials in many languages beyond those most commonly spoken—is critical.[72]

Another recent boost for DLLs and ELs in Minnesota—particularly in the context of superdiversity—occurred with the 2016 passage of the *All Kids Count Act*, which aims to improve student data collection and increase data disaggregation and reporting.[73] The legislation requires MDE to collect and report data on students' ethnicity, race, and home languages, as well as whether they are immigrants, refugees, or ELs, beginning in the 2017–18 school year. The agency is also required to disaggregate academic

71   Conor P. Williams, *Pluralism on the Prairie: Helping Minnesota's Dual Language Learners Leap Forward* (Washington, DC: New America, 2016), https://na-production.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Pluralism-on-the-Prairie-2.pdf; MPI interviews with school district staff, February 2018.

72   Ibid; MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

73   *All Kids Count Act*, SF 2597, 89th Legislature (2015–16), Minnesota State Legislature, www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=SF2597&version=1&session_year=2016&session_number=0.

achievement data along these categories to reveal disparities.[74] Additionally, MDE will continue to track the academic outcomes of ELs after they have been declassified as such, with current ELs' achievement data disaggregated from former ELs' data.[75] According to the law, reporting categories will include the top seven largest AAPI communities in addition to Karen,[76] the top seven Latino communities, the top five Black communities, and the top three Native American communities.[77] These improved data collection measures are scheduled to be implemented in five sites during the 2018–19 school year, and rolled out in districts statewide in the 2019–20 school year.[78]

These new measures will mark a significant step forward by allowing schools and districts to identify differences in student subgroup performance that are otherwise invisible in existing data and under current racial categories. The disaggregated data are expected to be particularly helpful in identifying several underperforming subgroups within the AAPI population, and thereby facilitating the development of targeted strategies to help close performance gaps. However, the enhanced data collection and reporting is currently limited to Minnesota's E-12 education system, which means that obtaining a clear picture of DLLs in their earlier years will remain a challenge, with disparate programs collecting unaligned and nonstandardized data prior to children's entry into the school system. This lack of data in the earliest years (ages 0 to 3) represents a critical concern, given extensive research on the importance of early brain and language development.[79]

Minnesota's ESSA implementation plan includes several elements that have the potential to boost accountability and outcomes for the state's EL population.

Finally, at the federal level, the 2015 *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) mandates as part of its new accountability requirements that states provide more detailed public information regarding ELs' academic achievement and progress in developing English language proficiency. Responding to the new law, Minnesota's ESSA implementation plan includes several elements that have the potential to boost accountability and outcomes for the state's EL population. Notably, though federal law requires only that states identify at least the most prevalent language other than English, Minnesota's ESSA plan defines three: Spanish, Somali, and Hmong. Furthermore, the state plans to provide translation accommodations in these three languages for the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) beginning in 2018. These translations will enable educators to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' abilities in different subject areas. Additionally, the state will include subgroup performance in school ratings, which will enable administrators to determine whether schools are adequately serving key subgroups of students, including ELs.[80]

Taken together, policies and supports for ELs in Minnesota have been the focus of considerable attention, leading to the adoption of several measures that aim to improve instruction and outcomes for this population. While many of these new initiatives will not be implemented across the ECEC system as a whole, they mark a shift in institutional thinking and culture and have the potential to catalyze continued expansion of capacities to work effectively with diverse, young DLLs and their families.

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74 *Minnesota Statutes 2016*, section 120B.31, subdivision 4, and section 120B.35, subdivision 3, www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/?year=2016&type=0&doctype=Chapter&id=189.

75 *Minnesota Statutes 2016*, section 124D.59, subdivision 9.

76 *All Kids Count Act*, subdivision 3(b)(2).

77 *Minnesota Statutes 2017*, section 120B.35, subdivision 3(a)(2), www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=120b.35.

78 KaYing Yang, "Effectively Serving Children in a Superdiverse Classroom: Implications for the Early Education System," webinar, Migration Policy Institute, February 22, 2018, www.migrationpolicy.org/events/effectively-serving-children-superdiverse-classroom-implications-early-education-system.

79 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children.*

80 MDE, "Minnesota State Plan," updated May 9, 2018, https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/ESSA/mnstp/.

C.   Ongoing Challenges and Implications

While the state has taken several positive steps to expand and strengthen the provision of early learning services for DLLs, several hurdles remain to be overcome before the early learning system can expect to equitably and effectively meets the needs of all the state's young children. Most immediately, it will be critical to ensure that specific key provisions of recent legislation that can improve system capacities for serving DLL and EL children are enforced and fully implemented. Looking more broadly, this sociodemographic analysis as well as findings from a 2017 National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report,[81] point to several key issues state should address as it seeks to improve outcomes for ELs from the prenatal through postsecondary years. These include:

- *Include DLL-relevant skills in licensing and teacher preparation programs.* As the share of DLLs in the state continues to grow, building a culturally and linguistically competent workforce that is well versed in home and English language development and strategies for engaging DLL families from a variety of backgrounds is increasingly important. Preservice and in-service training that incorporates these elements thus requires strengthening. Notably, while K-12 teachers can be licensed to teach ELs, the state's English as a Second Language (ESL) license does not extend to Pre-K or below.[82] Incorporating comprehensive training on multilingual environments—particularly in the context of superdiversity—into early childhood licensure programs, as well as in-service professional development, would bolster the skills of educators to effectively work with the large and growing number of DLLs in their programs. At a national level, the NAS study indicates that the educator workforce overall is inadequately prepared to promote desired educational outcomes for DLLs and ELs, pointing to the need for institutions of higher education to provide more relevant preservice training for teachers.[83]

- *Promote workforce diversity.* Just as the skills of Minnesota's ECEC workforce have not kept pace with the growing diversity of its young child population, a mismatch between the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of staff and children persists, as evidenced by a well-documented shortage of bilingual and bicultural educators in the state. Overall, only 4 percent of Minnesota's teachers are AAPI, Black, Hispanic, or Native American, while approximately one-third of all Minnesota's students fit that demographic profile.[84] This imbalance between students and staff has also been documented in the ECEC realm specifically.[85] Local grow-your-own efforts such as those in the Minneapolis and Richfield Public Schools aim to address this challenge by creating a pipeline for talented multilingual and multicultural staff to join their district's teaching workforce. While initiatives like these are critical in beginning to meet workforce needs, systemic efforts are necessary to adequately address this shortage in programs across the state. In addition, initiatives and avenues that explicitly seek to increase the representation of diverse communities in leadership positions, such as those of principals and superintendents, are imperative, to create school and district cultures that are responsive to diverse needs.

- *Develop relevant identification and assessment instruments for diverse learners.* Formally identifying DLLs and their key characteristics, including their home languages, is a critical first step toward recognizing what services and supports might best facilitate their language development and academic success. While Minnesota's VPK program has a standardized procedure in place to identify DLLs and track home languages, in alignment with the K-12 system, other ECEC programs are not required to do the same, leading to gaps in program and policy knowledge.

  At the same time, screening and assessment tools must be relevant and appropriate for children speaking the wide range of home languages represented by DLLs in Minnesota. The NAS report

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81   National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success of Children.*

82   MPI interviews with school district staff, February 2018.

83   National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success.*

84   Williams, *Pluralism on the Prairie*, 18.

85   Xiong, Yang, and Lee, *What Helps and Hinders Hmong Pre-Kindergartener's School Readiness*, 16.

explicitly recommends that state agencies and organizations that regulate programs and services for DLLs provide information about valid assessment tools and methods specific to DLLs, along with guidelines for their appropriate use.[86] Assessment of both English and home language skills is needed in order to correctly understand a child's development trajectory and identify their pedagogical needs, as well as to avoid inappropriate under- or over-referral of DLLs to early intervention or special education services.[87] Valid instruments with which to do so are still lacking, particularly in languages other than Spanish. Indeed, this issue remains an outstanding challenge across the country, though Minnesota as discussed above has signaled in its ESSA plan a commitment to begin addressing this issue for a larger share of its K-12 EL students. The state also has a partnership with WIDA Early Years, which is currently developing (and piloting in Nevada) a suite of authentic early language development screeners intended to provide educators and families a portrait of each child's language environment and their developing English language skills.

▪ *Address language access challenges, particularly for low-incidence languages.* As programs work to bridge communication gaps with LEP families, providing adequate interpretation and translation services for families in superdiverse contexts can be difficult and costly, particularly for families speaking less commonly spoken languages. Furthermore, even in circumstances where translated forms and other written materials are available, important day-to-day communication with families remains a persistent challenge, particularly when languages spoken among staff and families do not align—as is often the case. While some of these challenges can be addressed by enhancing workforce diversity and skills, as noted earlier, other strategies and supports are urgently needed. These can include the design and implementation of translation and interpretation program plans of the sort required in K-12 school districts and of federally funded programs more generally, as well as the development of multiple parent outreach positions (volunteer or paid) to allow for basic communication—and ideally, more meaningful engagement with—parents and families whose children attend superdiverse ECEC programs.

▪ *Raise awareness of the importance of home language development and maintenance.* Supporting the use of home languages both at home and in school environments is essential to promote young children's overall cognitive development, thereby better positioning them to both develop academic proficiency in English, and to potentially have the future benefits of being fully proficient in more than one language. However, despite a wide body of research demonstrating the importance of rich home language use, misinformation that promoting a child's home language will harm English language development persists.[88] Increasing knowledge of the important role that home language plays in a child's education among both parents and service providers is thus essential. Since a child's first years are so crucial to their language development—and because demographic realities among the young child population and workforce mean that educators are often unable to speak a child's home language—parents play an especially critical role in the development and maintenance of the home language. State and local agencies can address this issue by initiating informational campaigns on the benefits of bilingualism and the capacity of young children to learn more than one language, and by incorporating specific skills for supporting language development among young DLLs into parenting programs, teacher preparation coursework, and staff training programs.

▪ *Employ a trauma-informed approach to working with DLL families.* A considerable share of Minnesota's DLLs and their families have refugee or immigrant backgrounds and may have experienced stressors and trauma that differ from those affecting the broader young child population. Children of refugees may face unique challenges due to their pre- and post-resettlement experiences including exposure to violence, persecution, time spent in refugee camps, and/or a lack of social networks. Children from immigrant families may also face challenges due to traumatic or stressful experiences prior to, during, and following migration.

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86   Ibid.
87   National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *Promoting the Educational Success.*
88   Ibid., 125.

A trauma-informed approach to serving these families can therefore be highly beneficial, but remains rare and under-resourced across the ECEC field.[89]

VI.   Conclusion

Minnesota's DLLs are a highly heterogenous group with wide-ranging backgrounds. The substantial cultural, linguistic, and other forms of diversity within this group point to the need for ECEC programs to avoid assumptions and generalizations when it comes to deciding how best to serve these young learners, who bring unique experiences and valuable language skills into their early learning programs. It also calls for systems and programs to continually adapt to meet the needs of a changing population. Moreover, building the capacity of systems and services to meet the needs of diverse families with young children is key to providing responsive, effective early childhood services that can help close gaps in short- and long-term outcomes. As Minnesota works to promote the academic success of all its students, an increasing share of whom are part of immigrant and refugee families, this type of responsive, highly adaptive service provision will be invaluable.

Building the capacity of systems and services to meet the needs of diverse families with young children is key to providing responsive, effective early childhood services.

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89   See Maki Park, Caitlin Katsiaficas, and Margie McHugh, *Responding to the ECEC Needs of Children of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Europe and North America* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2018), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/responding-ecec-needs-children-refugees-asylum-seekers-europe-north-america.

Appendices

Appendix A. Minnesota Data

Table A-1. Sociodemographic Profile of DLL Groups in Minnesota, 2011–15

	All DLLs	AAPI DLLs	Black DLLs
DLL children	**136,000**	**39,000**	**30,000**
Nativity			
Foreign born	6.6%	10.3%	7.0%
U.S. born	93.4%	89.7%	93.0%
Children of Immigrant Parents			
Children of immigrant parent(s)	80.6%	88.3%	95.1%
Family Structure			
Two parents	79.2%	86.4%	67.1%
Single mother	17.4%	10.0%	29.6%
Single father	2.4%	-	-
No parent present	1.0%	-	-
Linguistic Isolation			
Residing in linguistically isolated households	27.1%	22.9%	31.0%
Poverty and Income			
Under 100 percent federal poverty level (FPL)	28.2%	19.8%	42.4%
100–199 percent FPL	28.6%	27.4%	32.4%
200 percent FPL or higher	43.2%	52.8%	25.2%
Health Insurance Coverage			
Private health insurance	49.5%	67.4%	34.0%
Public health insurance only	42.2%	27.6%	60.8%
No insurance	8.3%	5.0%	5.2%
Preschool Enrollment			
Children ages 3 to 4 (not in kindergarten)	29,000	8,000	6,000
Enrolled in preschool	38.5%	36.5%	37.7%

AAPI = Asian American and Pacific Islander; DLL = Dual Language Learner.
Notes: "-" indicates a sample size too small to generate results. Linguistically isolated refers to households where no one over the age of 14 speaks English very well. Poverty level refers to the poverty thresholds used by the Census Bureau to measure the share of the population living in poverty.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Table A-2. Sociodemographic Profile of Parents of DLLs in Minnesota, 2011–15

	Parents of All DLLs	Parents of AAPI DLLs	Parents of Black DLLs
Parents of DLLs	**151,000**	**48,000**	**27,000**
Nativity			
U.S. born	28.0%	20.1%	10.3%
Foreign born	72.0%	79.9%	89.7%
Years of U.S. Residence (foreign born)			
Less than 5	12.7%	17.5%	12.3%
5 to 9	20.9%	20.1%	21.8%
10 to 14	27.6%	15.8%	32.8%
15 to 19	16.9%	12.1%	21.7%
20 or more	22.0%	34.4%	11.4%
English Proficiency			
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	40.2%	36.8%	42.0%
Low LEP	18.5%	15.5%	14.0%
Educational Attainment			
Parents ages 25 and older	139,000	45,000	26,000
0 to 8th grade	13.1%	9.0%	12.0%
9th to 12th grade	9.4%	5.1%	7.3%
High school diploma or equivalent	19.6%	15.2%	26.4%
Some college	24.2%	22.1%	35.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher	33.8%	48.7%	19.1%
LEP Status of Low-Educated Parents (ages 25+)			
Parents with less than high school diploma or equivalent	31,000	6,000	5,000
LEP	79.7%	89.6%	77.4%
Employment Status (civilian population)			
Mothers ages 16 and older	81,000	24,000	15,000
Employed	64.0%	65.9%	68.2%
Unemployed	6.5%	4.2%	10.3%
Not in the labor force	29.5%	29.9%	21.5%
Fathers ages 16 and older	70,000	24,000	12,000
Employed	88.9%	88.2%	79.7%
Unemployed	5.5%	4.8%	-
Not in the labor force	5.6%	7.0%	-

AAPI = Asian American and Pacific Islander; DLL = Dual Language Learner.
Notes: "-" indicates a sample size too small to generate results. LEP refers to ACS respondents who indicated that they speak English less than "very well"; low LEP refers to ACS respondents who indicated that they speak English less than "well."
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Appendix B. Dakota County, MN

Table A-3. Sociodemographic Profile of Young Children (ages 0 to 8) in Dakota County, 2011–15

	DLLs	Non-DLLs
Children ages 0 to 8	**12,000**	**39,000**
Age		
0 to 2	29.5%	31.0%
3 to 4	15.9%	23.3%
5 to 8	54.7%	45.7%
Race and Ethnicity		
Native American	0.4%	-
Asian	20.7%	-
Black	25.8%	8.7%
Hispanic	37.6%	-
White/other	15.5%	84.1%
Nativity		
Foreign born	4.0%	0.4%
U.S. born	96.0%	99.6%
Children of Immigrant Parents		
Children of immigrant parent(s)	81.7%	-
Linguistic Isolation		
Residing in linguistically isolated households	27.5%	N/A
Poverty		
Under 100 percent federal poverty level (FPL)	37.9%	8.3%
100–199 percent FPL	17.7%	12.6%
200 percent FPL or higher	44.5%	79.1%
Health Insurance Coverage		
Private health insurance	48.9%	83.2%
Public health insurance only	41.9%	14.0%
No insurance	9.2%	2.8%
Preschool Enrollment		
Children ages 3 to 4 (not in kindergarten)	2,000	9,000
Enrolled in preschool	-	44.9%

DLL = Dual Language Learner.
Notes: "-" indicates a sample size too small to generate result. The White racial category also includes a small number of people who self-identified their race as "other." Linguistically isolated refers to households where no one over the age of 14 speaks English very well. Poverty level refers to the poverty thresholds used by the Census Bureau to measure the share of the population living in poverty.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Table A-4. Sociodemographic Profile of Parents of Young Children (ages 0 to 8) in Dakota County, 2011–15

	Parents of DLLs	Parents of Non-DLLs
Parents of children ages 0 to 8	**15,000**	**45,000**
Nativity		
U.S. born	24.6%	97.2%
Foreign born	75.4%	2.8%
English Proficiency		
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	38.4%	N/A
Low LEP	-	N/A
Educational Attainment		
Parents ages 25 and older	15,000	43,000
Less than a high school degree	18.9%	2.1%
High school diploma or equivalent	20.1%	13.8%
Some college	23.1%	34.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	37.9%	49.4%
Employment Status (civilian population)		
Mothers ages 16 and older	8,000	24,000
Employed	66.5%	76.8%
Fathers ages 16 and older	7,000	21,000
Employed	87.1%	92.1%

DLL = Dual Language Learner.
Notes: "-" indicates a sample size too small to generate result. LEP refers to ACS respondents who indicated that they speak English less than "very well"; low LEP refers to ACS respondents who indicated that they speak English less than "well."
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Appendix C. Hennepin County, MN

Table A-5. Sociodemographic Profile of Young Children (ages 0 to 8) in Hennepin County, 2011–15

	DLLs	Non-DLLs
Children ages 0 to 8	**46,000**	**94,000**
Age		
0 to 2	33.5%	32.3%
3 to 4	22.2%	23.0%
5 to 8	44.3%	44.8%
Race and Ethnicity		
Native American	0.4%	1.2%
Asian	25.0%	3.6%
Black	25.9%	20.7%
Hispanic	33.4%	3.2%
White/other	15.3%	71.3%
Nativity		
Foreign born	7.5%	1.0%
U.S. born	92.5%	99.0%
Children of Immigrant Parents		
Children of immigrant parent(s)	88.7%	5.7%
Linguistic Isolation		
Residing in linguistically isolated households	30.6%	N/A
Poverty		
Under 100 percent federal poverty level (FPL)	24.9%	14.1%
100–199 percent FPL	28.9%	13.0%
200 percent FPL or higher	46.2%	72.9%
Health Insurance Coverage		
Private health insurance	51.1%	75.6%
Public health insurance only	39.8%	22.4%
No insurance	9.1%	2.0%
Preschool Enrollment		
Children ages 3 to 4 (not in kindergarten)	10,000	21,000
Enrolled in preschool	43.0%	53.6%

DLL = Dual Language Learner.
Notes: "-" indicates a sample size too small to generate results. The White racial category also includes a small number of people who self-identified their race as "other." Linguistically isolated refers to households where no one over the age of 14 speaks English very well. Poverty level refers to the poverty thresholds used by the Census Bureau to measure the share of the population living in poverty.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Table A-6. Sociodemographic Profile of Parents of Young Children (ages 0 to 8) in Hennepin County, 2011–15

	Parents of DLLs	Parents of Non-DLLs
Parents of children ages 0 to 8	**50,000**	**105,000**
Nativity		
U.S. born	20.2%	95.6%
Foreign born	79.8%	4.4%
English Proficiency		
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	42.0%	N/A
Low LEP	19.2%	N/A
Educational Attainment		
Parents ages 25 and older	47,000	102,000
Less than a high school degree	20.5%	3.9%
High school diploma or equivalent	21.9%	9.5%
Some college	20.0%	27.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	37.6%	59.6%
Employment Status (civilian population)		
Mothers ages 16 and older	27,000	58,000
Employed	65.0%	72.8%
Fathers ages 16 and older	24,000	47,000
Employed	91.8%	91.1%

DLL = Dual Language Learner.
Notes: "-" indicates a sample size too small to generate results. LEP refers to ACS respondents who indicated that they speak English less than "very well"; low LEP refers to ACS respondents who indicated that they speak English less than "well."
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Appendix D. Ramsey County, MN

Table A-7. Sociodemographic Profile of Young Children (ages 0 to 8) in Ramsey County, 2011–15

	DLLs	Non-DLLs
Children ages 0 to 8	**27,000**	**38,000**
Age		
0 to 2	36.0%	36.2%
3 to 4	23.0%	21.8%
5 to 8	41.0%	42.0%
Race and Ethnicity		
Native American	-	-
Asian	49.9%	-
Black	23.3%	20.3%
Hispanic	18.9%	7.2%
White/other	-	66.8%
Nativity		
Foreign born	9.2%	1.0%
U.S. born	90.8%	99.0%
Children of Immigrant Parents		
Children of immigrant parent(s)	83.8%	-
Linguistic Isolation		
Residing in linguistically isolated households	34.9%	N/A
Poverty		
Under 100 percent federal poverty level (FPL)	34.8%	17.8%
100–199 percent FPL	35.6%	17.5%
200 percent FPL or higher	29.5%	64.7%
Health Insurance Coverage		
Private health insurance	38.5%	67.8%
Public health insurance only	55.3%	28.7%
No insurance	6.2%	3.5%
Preschool Enrollment		
Children ages 3 to 4 (not in kindergarten)	6,000	8,000
Enrolled in preschool	33.2%	45.1%

DLL = Dual Language Learner.
Notes: "-" indicates a sample size too small to generate results. The White racial category also includes a small number of people who self-identified their race as "other." Linguistically isolated refers to households where no one over the age of 14 speaks English very well. Poverty level refers to the poverty thresholds used by the Census Bureau to measure the share of the population living in poverty.
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

Table A-8. Sociodemographic Profile of Parents of Young Children (ages 0 to 8) in Ramsey County, 2011–15

	Parents of DLLs	Parents of non-DLLs
Parents of children ages 0 to 8	**28,000**	**39,000**
Nativity		
U.S. born	22.4%	97.0%
Foreign born	77.6%	3.0%
English Proficiency		
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	48.5%	N/A
Low LEP	23.6%	N/A
Educational Attainment		
Parents ages 25 and older	26,000	36,000
Less than a high school degree	25.6%	4.7%
High school diploma or equivalent	19.9%	15.1%
Some college	25.6%	30.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	28.9%	50.1%
Employment Status (civilian population)		
Mothers ages 16 and older	15,000	22,000
Employed	66.9%	78.3%
Fathers ages 16 and older	13,000	17,000
Employed	85.2%	90.6%

DLL = Dual Language Learner.
Notes: "-" indicates a sample size too small to generate results. LEP refers to ACS respondents who indicated that they speak English less than "very well;" low LEP refers to ACS respondents who indicated that they speak English less than "well."
Source: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2011–15 ACS data.

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