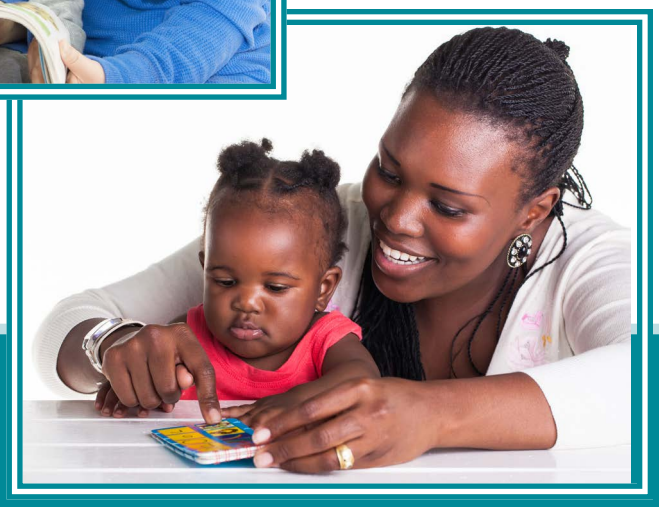
IMMIGRANT PARENTS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Addressing Barriers of Literacy, Culture, and Systems Knowledge



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Executive Summary

The role of parents in supporting their young children's early cognitive and socioemotional development is undisputed, as is their role as gatekeepers for their children's participation in programs designed to support early learning and reduce gaps in school readiness among those at risk for poor educational outcomes. However, immigrant parents face significant barriers as they try to engage with their children's early educational experiences—including greatly restricted access for many due to limited English proficiency and functional literacy.

A rapid increase in the size and share of the U.S. young-child population with at least one immigrant parent poses challenges to policymakers and front-line programs in the early childhood arena. These historic demographic changes are converging with efforts in many states to scale early childhood services and improve their quality. With one in four young children in the United States living in an immigrant family, efforts to build trust and establish meaningful two-way communication with these families is an urgent priority if system expansion efforts are to realize their purpose.

In recognition of the importance of parenting skill and engagement to their children's future success, support for parents is promoted at the federal and state levels through programs such as home visiting, early learning, Head Start, and pre-K, as well as in elementary schools—though these efforts are generally under-resourced and disjointed in their delivery.

Immigrant parents face significant barriers as they try to engage with their children's early educational experiences.

Many programs face difficulties engaging with immigrant and refugee parents who often require support building U.S. cultural and systems knowledge and in overcoming English language and literacy barriers. These difficulties have been exacerbated in recent years as adult basic education and English instruction programs—which early childhood programs such as Head Start had previously relied on to support parents in need of these skills—have been significantly reduced.

Against this backdrop, the National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy (NCIIP) at the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) conducted a study to determine the unique needs of newcomer parents across the range of expectations for parent skill, engagement, and leadership sought by early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs, and strategies undertaken to address these needs. The study's mixed-methods approach included field research in six states, expert interviews, a literature review, and a sociodemographic analysis.

The report's findings underscore the urgent need to address barriers facing low-literate and Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents of young children, and to act on policy opportunities for more broadly improving the quality of parent-focused efforts in the ECEC arena and their relevance to the needs of diverse families.

A. Demographics of Children of Immigrants and their Parents

Children of immigrants comprise more than 25 percent of the total U.S. young-child population ages 8 and under, requiring an improved understanding of their characteristics and the obstacles they face in achieving educational success. The significant increase in both the share and number of children with

at least one foreign-born parent presents a new demographic reality and new challenges for early childhood programs that in many cases are unprepared to meet the needs of these families. Young children of immigrants now make up a significant share of the population across all 50 states in the United States, comprising more than 20 percent of the young child population in 19 states.

The foreign-born parents of these young children, who make up 21 percent of parents of young children overall, face many challenges that may impede their access to and meaningful participation in family engagement programming and activities. Forty-five percent of these parents are low-income, and 47 percent are LEP. Moreover, immigrant and refugee parents are more than twice as likely as native-born parents to be low-educated (meaning they have less than a high school diploma or its equivalent), comprising 45 percent of all U.S. parents of young children who lack a high school credential. This represents a significant risk factor for many young children of immigrants, given that maternal educational attainment is closely linked with education outcomes for children, and parental education is closely linked with family earnings and economic well-being.

B. *Importance of Parent Engagement for Child Outcomes and Current Provisions*

A growing body of research has highlighted the importance of children's early years in setting a foundation for healthy development and academic success, and the crucial role that parents play as their children's first and most important teachers. Meanwhile, longitudinal data show an achievement gap between many immigrant groups and their native peers that is evident even prior to kindergarten enrollment, pointing to the urgency of providing children with a strong foundation in their early years. Emerging research also clearly supports the positive impact of strong partnerships between families and early childhood programs, which lead to future academic success and increased socioemotional skills for young children. Parent involvement has been shown to be beneficial across all levels of academic achievement for all minority groups, and particularly for Latino populations.

The U.S. adult education system has severely limited capacity to reach low-literate and LEP parents of young children.

At the federal level, provisions to support parent engagement in children's early education are offered primarily under the Department of Health and Human Services through the Home Visiting and Head Start programs. The Department of Education also provides support for parent engagement activities through Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*; 1 percent of all Title I funds must be spent on parental involvement activities. Dual-generation programs, including family literacy initiatives funded through the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act*, as well as the recently defunded Even Start program, also engage parents of young children in literacy and parenting activities.

While these major programs make provisions and offer guidelines for parent-focused programming in the early childhood arena, accountability measures for quality of programming and relevance to the needs of immigrants are weak, and sufficient funding to support these parent-focused initiatives is largely lacking. Moreover, the elimination of Even Start, which worked with many of the country's poorest families, nearly half of whom were Hispanic, has left a significant gap in services for immigrant and refugee parents.

Meanwhile, the U.S. adult education system has severely limited capacity to reach low-literate and LEP parents of young children. Mainstream program designs and measures often do not meet such parents' needs for flexibility in scheduling and learning goals. The shortage of foundational adult education program availability is a significant concern for early childhood programs that serve immigrant and refugee parents, as they are unable to meet parents' needs for basic education, literacy development, and English language skills, yet cannot meaningfully engage with them due to language and literacy barriers.

C. Addressing the Gaps in Programming and Services: Research Findings

This report outlines significant gaps in services for immigrant and refugee parents of young children, and the challenges faced by those who are committed to successfully serving these populations:

A lack of English proficiency and functional literacy present almost insurmountable barriers to many immigrant and refugee parents' engagement efforts and their participation in ECEC programs generally, as well as their parent engagement efforts in particular. Gaps in parents' English proficiency and functional literacy are widely cited by program directors and immigrant parents themselves as critical barriers to their effective engagement in early childhood programs and parent engagement efforts. Focus group participants said that many ECEC programs are providing only minimal translation and interpretation services, limited to program handouts in commonly spoken languages of enrolled families. In many cases, these limitations are due either to funding constraints or a false assumption that these basic provisions are sufficient and that they reach all parents. Meanwhile, though several programs provide referrals to adult education programs, long waiting lists and inconvenient hours as well as a lack of child care make these opportunities inaccessible to the majority of parents, despite a strong and nearly universal desire to participate in such classes. As a result, many parents expressed that they were unable to communicate their questions and needs effectively to ECEC staff or to participate in available parent programming.

Currently, no public funding explicitly supports language, cultural access, or other immigrant family-specific needs in parent engagement programming. Staff in programs that are successfully engaging diverse, low-literate, and LEP parents said that doing so requires significant resources not provided by mainstream funding. Program directors report painstakingly patching together funding from private sources, a time-intensive strategy often leading to unreliable and discontinuous funding that cannot be sustained for longer than one or two years at a time. In addition, sequestration and other funding cuts have stressed Head Start budgets, leading to the elimination of services (such as transportation to parent programming) that disproportionately benefited immigrant populations.

A lack of alignment between efforts in early childhood and K-12 parent engagement programming leads to parent alienation from their children's schooling—particularly among those who are low-literate or LEP. Some parents who reported feeling welcomed in their children's ECEC programs said they no longer felt included after their children transitioned to the K-12 system. Many of these parents found it difficult to obtain even basic information about kindergarten enrollment. Head Start administrators, meanwhile, indicated that although Head Start has a mandate to collaborate with school districts to facilitate smooth transitions, many districts are uncooperative and dismissive of the need for collaboration with ECEC staff.

Smaller minority groups and speakers of less common languages are particularly underserved and struggle with basic access to high-quality ECEC and parent engagement opportunities. In focus groups, speakers of less-common languages reported that they were left out of even the most basic language access and outreach efforts. Additionally, they often had more limited social networks, further reducing their ability to engage with ECEC opportunities. This lack of capacity to ensure access for speakers of less prevalent languages is a violation of federal civil-rights provisions, and affects a significant number of individuals across many states.

Pockets of good practice are often surrounded by communities and school districts that may be ambivalent or even hostile toward diverse populations. Community support and a positive climate toward immigrant communities play a critical role in providing a comfortable and welcoming environment for immigrant parents. Focus groups and interviews revealed that immigrant and refugee families faced radically different host-community climates depending on their school districts and communities. These differences created wide disparities in approaches across schools and other institutions—from availability and referrals to ECEC and parent programming, to provision of basic language-access services.

A lack of pertinent data at the federal, state, and school-district levels hinders efforts to take the needs of newcomer families into account in planning and program development. Most states and local early childhood systems do not collect centralized data on parents' levels of education and language proficiency or children's Dual Language Learner (DLL) status until entry to kindergarten—if they do at all—making these needs invisible during the critical years of children's development from ages 0 to 5. This lack of information makes it impossible to determine what policies or resources may be necessary to ensure that immigrant families' needs are being met in programming, and to incentivize programs to effectively reach out to these populations, which are often the most underserved and hardest to reach.

Potential opportunities to expand effective parent programming in the early years exist at all levels of government.

D. Key Recommendations

Potential opportunities to expand effective parent programming in the early years exist at all levels of government and across several significant service-delivery systems. Such programming promises to help immigrant and refugee parents act as full partners in their young children's future school success. Recommended policy actions, budgetary investments, and innovations in program design include the following:

Expand parent education, literacy, and English language programs. Expanded and innovative programs are urgently needed to address disparities affecting low-literate and LEP parents of young children. While, in the past, adult education providers were often relied upon to address these needs, the capacity of the adult education system is now greatly reduced and increasingly focused on students who seek to progress along career pathways and transition to postsecondary education. The evolution of the system's program and accountability frameworks in this direction and loss of enrollment capacity have left early childhood programs without options to address the language and literacy development needs of parents who need these skills in order to navigate information and programs on their children's behalf, and be full partners in developing their children's early language and literacy skills. Opportunities to create or expand programs that would address the range of needs of these parents include:

- Creating a large-scale pilot program, jointly funded and administered by the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education. The capacity of the adult education system is extremely limited and is increasingly focused on those who seek to progress along career pathways and transition to postsecondary education. Such a program would serve low-literate and LEP parents of young children—and thus address the unique needs at the convergence of the early childhood and adult education fields. The program could allow a variety of promising approaches at the state and local levels to expand and be studied, and thereby build knowledge and momentum in the field for effective, scalable approaches. Measures and outcomes might include increases in parent skill, support for young children's healthy cognitive and socioemotional development (with a particular focus on language and literacy development), information on how to navigate the U.S. education system, cultural knowledge, digital and English-language literacy, and creation of a personal education/training plan.
- The Preschool for All initiative being advanced by President Obama and congressional leaders can be leveraged to include comprehensive and purposeful parent engagement strategies for low-literate and LEP parents—both native-born and foreign-born—as part of state expansion of universal pre-K programs. Such strategies would provide a bridge between ECEC parent-focused programs and those of K-12 schools.
- The Senate immigration bill passed in June 2013 (S. 744) includes provisions for a pilot grant

program to support immigrant integration at the state and local levels, and specifically included the needs of LEP parents with young children as a target for such programming. Similar provisions could be included in House legislation and any final immigration reform law, along with authorization of funds for such purposes.

- Increased support for "traditional" family literacy programs or a slightly evolved version of such programs could be proposed and enacted as part of potential federal legislation to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act. Such an investment would support programming for all low-literate parents, not only those who are immigrants or refugees.

Strengthen incentives and accountability for existing program funds. Adapting regulations that govern existing programs and funding streams which touch on parent skill, literacy, and engagement issues to ensure that they more effectively serve parents of at-risk children could also be a focus of system reform and capacity-building efforts. For example:

- *The Family Engagement Act of 2013*, federal legislation which addresses the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*'s Title I family engagement provisions, seeks to expand capacity-building and technical assistance at the state and local levels in order to strengthen the overall quality and effectiveness of family engagement programs. Incentives and/or accountability for funds could be further strengthened by requiring schools and districts to take into account key demographic characteristics and use strategies that address parents' cultural and functional literacy knowledge needs.

- Head Start eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance criteria could give priority to young children of parents with low levels of education and those who are LEP, with the highest priority afforded to those whose parents have less than a fifth-grade education, followed by those with less than an eighth-grade education and those with less than a high school diploma; categorical eligibility could also be provided for children whose parents have less than an eighth-grade education.

- Given the wider availability of census and other public-use data sets, community needs assessments for federal and state-funded early childhood programs could require rigorous analysis of parent and family characteristics associated with poor child outcomes. Agency funding decisions could in turn be guided by a comprehensive framework for measuring risk factors that might affect children's success, and ensure that funds are equitably distributed to serve the most at-risk children and families.

- Revision of Head Start performance standards could incorporate accountability measures for parent engagement and skill outcomes, and reflect the additional resources necessary to effectively serve low-literate and LEP parents.

Leverage state policymaking and capacity-building efforts. As states build and continue to develop their ECEC infrastructure—including the expansion of pre-K programs and implementation of Quality Rating Improvement Systems—stakeholders can ensure that parent skill, education, and engagement support, especially in underserved communities, is included as a critical priority. Key efforts may include the following:

- The creation of data systems that collect and share pertinent parent information—e.g., family home language and parents' English proficiency (speaking, writing, and reading)—for all programs serving children ages 0 to 8, available in a centralized location, disaggregated by subgroup.

- Designated leadership and responsibility for these issues at the state level, including senior specialists accountable for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of parent engagement efforts, particularly for minorities and other subgroups.

- Inclusion of metrics for effectiveness in meeting parent skill, education, and engagement needs in program rating systems.
- State departments of education could offer a competitive grant program open to ECEC providers who wish to deliver comprehensive support to low-literate and LEP parents in partnership with community colleges and other adult education providers. Alternatively, in order to improve equitable access for low-literate and LEP parents, the federal Head Start program could offer grants to state departments of education for this purpose, which would in turn re-grant these funds to providers and oversee programs.

Build evidence and awareness of gaps. Policy and capacity-building efforts in the ECEC field are still at an early stage in their evolution. At the same time, public awareness of the intersection of immigrant integration needs with key policy issues—such as those in the ECEC field—is just emerging. In order to make apparent and reinforce the urgency of addressing these intersections, several efforts can be taken to underscore the inadequate linguistic and cultural competences of many ECEC systems—and the barriers they present to immigrant, refugee, and/or LEP parents might include:

- A federal Government Accountability Office (GAO) study, commissioned to determine language and cultural barriers that impede access to federally supported early childhood and K-3 services.
- A compliance review, to be initiated by the Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights, aimed at strengthening language and cultural access provisions across ECEC services to ensure that LEP parents can effectively participate in and benefit from parent-facing services.

The enormous costs to society of current rates of student failure and weaknesses in our country's education pipeline provide fuel for reform initiatives at all levels of the education system. However, nowhere is research and political will better aligned than in the early childhood arena, where research on early brain development has motivated policymakers to undertake a range of historic new investments to put all children on an even footing before kindergarten begins. Parents are a central focus of these strategies since they play the most important role in their children's development and also because they control their children's access to program supports.

Nowhere is research and political will better aligned than in the early childhood arena.

The era of early childhood system-building is coinciding with the impacts of an equally historic chapter in U.S. immigration policy. Decades of high rates of immigration have transformed the demographics of the country's young families, placing the early childhood field on the front line of efforts that are essential to meet the integration needs of foreign-born parents.

The additional efforts needed to help these parents fill gaps in cultural and systems knowledge and build language and literacy skills require recognition and action at all levels of government. With the changing demography of the country's young families already a well-established fact, the need for concerted action to address the challenges outlined in this report is immediate.

I. Introduction

A significant body of evidence from the early childhood and brain development fields demonstrates the critical importance of socioemotional and cognitive development in young children.[1] Healthy development from ages 0 to 8 helps mitigate the onset of academic achievement gaps across student subpopulations—gaps that have been shown to persist and grow as children progress through the education pipeline.[2] Other convincing evidence points to the critical role of parents in determining their children's readiness for and future success in school.[3] As a result, there is a growing consensus at the federal and state levels around the need to expand public investments in early learning efforts—as well as initiatives to foster parenting skills and parent engagement in education—in hopes of closing these achievement gaps and improving U.S. educational outcomes.

Parenting skills and parent engagement in children's education are now recognized across the United States as being important to success in the early years. Programming in these areas is encouraged through home visiting, early learning, pre-K, and elementary school programs. The funding available to support these programs, however, is not sufficient to provide robust access or meet desired outcomes. Meanwhile, program accountability measures remain weak. In particular, many of the nation's low-educated and low-income immigrant[4] and refugee families face numerous challenges in accessing and benefiting from existing services. Such newcomer parents often cannot be engaged in or achieve the goals of these initiatives due to language barriers and a lack of efforts to address gaps in cultural knowledge and understanding of the U.S. education system.

The nation's low-educated and low-income immigrant and refugee families face numerous challenges in accessing and benefiting from existing services.

Early childhood programs such as Head Start have, in the past, turned to adult education programs to meet the language and literacy development needs of parents. However, demand for these services now far outstrips supply. The limited services available are moving quickly towards alignment with career pathway programs and postsecondary education attainment, making them less accessible and less relevant for high-need parents.[5] As a result, early childhood programs increasingly find themselves

1 Steven Barnett, "Long-Term Effects of Early Childhood Programs on Cognitive and School Outcomes," *The Future of Children* 5, no. 3 (1995): 25-50, www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/docs/05_03_01.pdf; Ron Haskins, "Beyond metaphor: The efficacy of early childhood education," *American Psychologist* 44, no. 2 (1989): 274-82, http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/amp/44/2/274/; Lynn A. Karoly, M. Rebecca Kilburn, and Jill S. Cannon, *Early Childhood Interventions Proven Results, Future Promises* (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 2005), www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG341.pdf.

2 Susanna Loeb and Daphna Bassok, "Early Childhood and the Achievement Gap" in *Handbook of Research in Education Finance and Policy,* eds. H.F. Ladd and E.B. Fiske (New York: Routledge Press, 2007), 517-20, http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Early%20Childhood%20and%20the%20Achievement%20Gap.pdf.

3 Holly Kreider, *Getting Parents "Ready" for Kindergarten: The Role of Early Childhood Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project, 2002), www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/getting-parents-ready-for-kindergarten-the-role-of-early-childhood-education.

4 The term "immigrants" refers to people residing in the United States who were not U.S. citizens at birth. This population includes naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents (LPRs), certain legal nonimmigrants (for example, persons on student or work visas), those admitted under refugee or asylee status, and persons illegally residing in the United States. The "native born" are persons born in the United States, U.S. outlying territories, or abroad to at least one U.S.-citizen parent. For the purposes of this report, the term "immigrant" is used interchangeably with "newcomer," "immigrant and refugee," and "foreign born."

5 Margie McHugh, *Adult Education Needs of U.S. Immigrants and Refugees and Recommendations to Improve the Federal Government's Response in Meeting Them* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, forthcoming 2014).

without partners who can address the stark gaps in English language and underlying literacy skills that hinder parents' ability to access and engage with programs in the early childhood arena, as well as their ability to more generally support their children's kindergarten readiness and academic success.

Children from immigrant families now account for one in every four young children[6] in the United States, and are less likely to be enrolled in early learning programs[7] or receive financial assistance for child care than their native counterparts.[8] Given these changes in demographics and needs in the young child population—alongside the unmet demand for adult English and literacy services—it is important to understand what steps might be taken to bridge the gaps in cultural and systems knowledge, basic literacy, and English language proficiency that hinder many immigrant and refugee parents from engaging in early childhood program initiatives.

In an effort to better understand the experiences and challenges faced by early childhood programs and immigrant and refugee parents as they seek to connect with one another, the Migration Policy Institute's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy (NCIIP) conducted a study seeking to identify the unique needs of newcomer parents. The study spans a range of parent skill,[9] engagement, and leadership programs in early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs and strategies programs employ to address the barriers to more effective parental involvement in their children's early education.

Children from immigrant families... are less likely to be enrolled in early learning programs or receive financial assistance for child care.

This report begins with snapshots of key data on the size, share, and geographic distribution of young children—and selected sociodemographic characteristics of parents—from immigrant and refugee families. Next, it presents a synthesis of research demonstrating the importance of parent engagement in the early years, particularly for children of immigrants, and a discussion of parent engagement provisions at the federal level. The report then provides findings from a series of parent focus groups, program site visits, and expert interviews with local organizations in six states with large and diverse immigrant and refugee populations. The report ends with recommendations on ways in which local and national policymakers can improve the quality of family engagement programming, better align it with other system reform efforts, and increase its relevance for diverse families.

6 For the purposes of this report, the term "young children of immigrants" has been defined as those children, ages 0 to 8, who are foreign born or native born with at least one parent being foreign born, thereby representing both first- and second-generation immigrants.

7 Lynn A. Karoly and Gabriella C. Gonzalez, *Early Care and Education for Children in Immigrant Families* (Princeton, NJ: Future of Children, 2011), www.futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/docs/21_01_04.pdf.

8 Emily Firgens and Hannah Matthews, *State Child Care Policies for Limited English Proficient Families* (Washington, DC: CLASP, 2012), www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/CCDBG-LEP-Policies.pdf.

9 We refer to "parent skill" as knowledge and skills that help parents fully support their young child's learning and healthy development, as well as the cultural and systems knowledge that would allow them to successfully navigate the U.S. early childhood and education program arenas.

II. Children of Immigrants and Their Parents: Selected Demographics

The number of young children of immigrants has grown across both new and traditional immigrant-receiving states in recent decades, and they now comprise a significant share of young children throughout the country, indicating a critical need to rethink program relevance and responsiveness. Meanwhile, the sociodemographic characteristics of immigrant parents with young children indicate that many will need to build functional and cultural literacy, language proficiency, and systems knowledge and navigation skills in order to support their children's ability to meet U.S. kindergarten readiness expectations and achieve future academic success.

A. Young Children of Immigrants: Population Overview

Table 1 shows that the share of young children ages 0 to 8 in the United States who come from newcomer families grew from roughly 3.1 million in 1980 to 9.1 million in 2012. During this period, the overall number of young children in the country grew from 29.6 million to 36.3 million, with young children born to immigrant parents accounting for nearly all of this growth. As of 2012, children of immigrants composed more than 25 percent of the total U.S. population of children ages 8 and under; most of these children (more than 90 percent) were U.S. citizens.[10]

Table 1. Growth in the Number and Share of Young Children (Ages 0 to 8) of Foreign-Born Parents in the United States, 1980-2012

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2012
All Children	29,599,000	32,557,000	35,305,500	36,364,200	36,280,700
Children of Immigrants					
Number	3,098,400	4,382,800	7,150,200	8,944,600	9,083,600
Share of All Children (%)	10.5	13.5	20.3	24.6	25.0

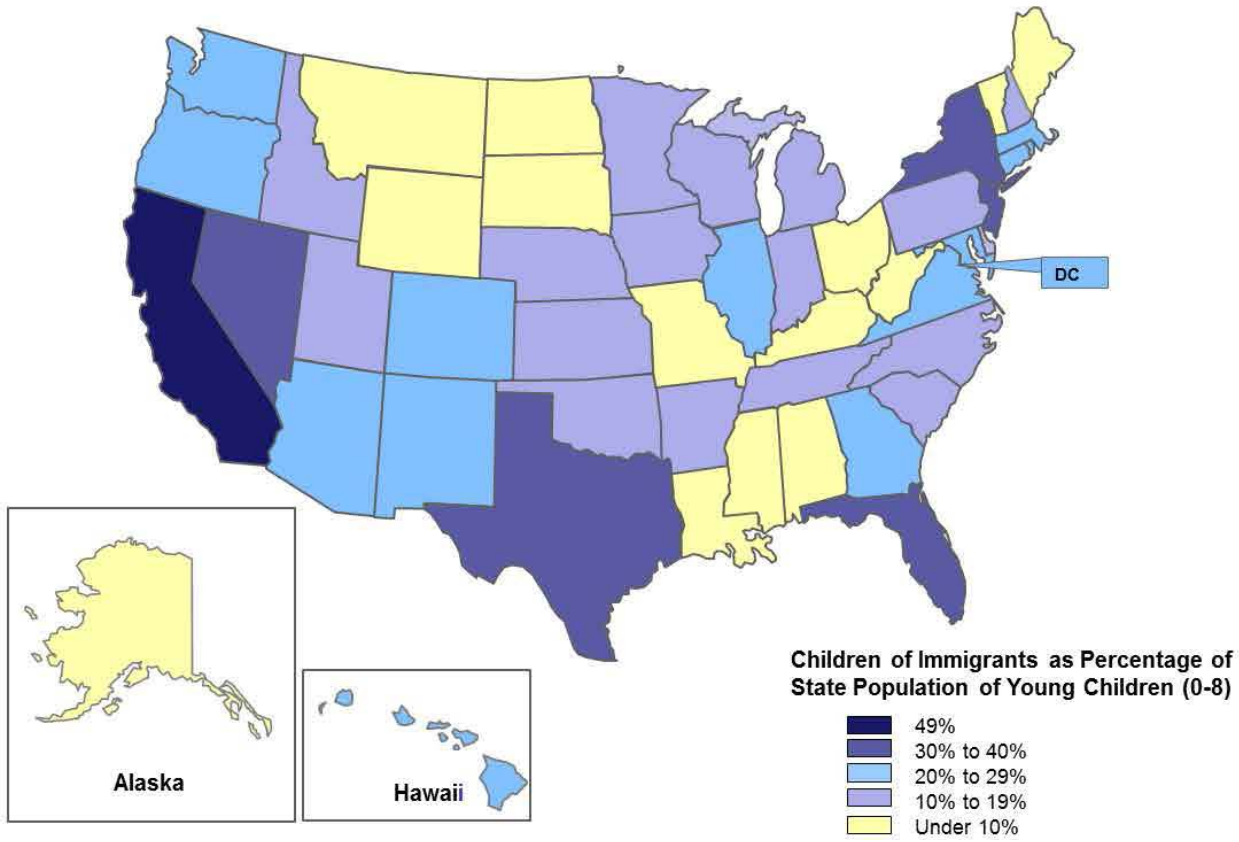
Source: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses; and 2010 and 2012 American Community Survey (ACS).

As rates of immigration rose in recent decades, so too did the dispersion of immigrants to new destinations across the United States. While traditional settlement states such as California, Texas, New York, Illinois, and Florida continued to attract significant numbers of new arrivals, many states in the Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest became popular destinations for immigrant and refugee families. Figure 1 shows that children of immigrants now comprise a significant share of the young child population in most states, indicating that many states must build capacities to address the unique needs of these children and their families. Appendix 1 provides further information on the number and share of children from immigrant families for all 50 states and Washington, DC.

Children of immigrants now comprise a significant share of the young child population in most states.

10 Karina Fortuny, Donald Hernandez, and Ajay Chaudry, *Young Children of Immigrants, The Leading Edge of America's Future* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2010), http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED511771.pdf.

Figure 1. Children of Immigrants as a Share of All Young Children (Ages 0 to 8), by State



Source: MPI tabulation of U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2010-2012 ACS and 1990 decennial Census data.

B. *Parent Characteristics: Factors Jeopardizing Meaningful Engagement*

Table 2 provides a comparison of select parent characteristics that are risk factors for children's educational success and for parents' access and meaningful participation in family engagement programs and activities. Looking first at family income, of the roughly 22.3 million parents of young children nationwide, almost 7.8 million (or 35 percent) have incomes that are less than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Among foreign-born parents, slightly more than 45 percent are low-income; foreign-born parents as a group account for 27 percent of all low-income parents with young children.

Parents' attainment of at least a high school diploma or equivalent has important correlations with family socioeconomic status and children's educational outcomes.[11] Among all parents of young children, 2.39 million (11 percent) lack a high school diploma or equivalent. While slightly less than a quarter of all foreign-born parents are low educated, they account for 45 percent of all parents nationwide who lack a high school diploma or equivalent.

11 Tom Hertz, *Understanding Mobility in America* (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2006), www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/kf/hertz_mobility_analysis.pdf.

Table 2. Income, Education, and Language Proficiency of U.S. Parents of Young Children (Ages 0 to 8), 2012

	Parents of Young Children (U.S.- and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	22,258,200	4,584,600	21
Low Income			
Total	7,769,700	2,067,400	
Share (%)	35	45	27
Low Educated			
Total	2,388,800	1,070,500	
Share (%)	11	23	45
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	2,394,600	2,146,200	
Share (%)	11	47	90

Source: MPI tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureaupooled 2010-12 ACS.
Notes: "Low income" refers to those with a family income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. "Low educated" refers to parents without a high school degree or its equivalent. Limited English Proficient refers to those who reported speaking English less than "very well."

As Table 2 shows, parents who are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP)[12] number 2.39 million (11 percent of all parents of young children nationwide); foreign-born individuals account for 90 percent of all LEP parents. In addition to barriers to parent engagement (which will be discussed later in the report), parents' LEP status is also associated with children being less likely to have health insurance and receive needed medical care.[13]

Possibly as a result of positive selection factors associated with migration, immigrant parents tend to have very high levels of commitment to educational opportunities for their children, which may act as a protective factor in their children's early learning and future school success.[14] Additionally, as compared with their native counterparts, immigrant parents have higher rates of marriage and employment as well as lower rates of maternal depression.[15]

Immigrant parents tend to have very high levels of commitment to educational opportunities for their children.

More state-level data on select characteristics of parents of young children can be found in Appendix 2.

12 The U.S. Census defines a Limited English Proficient (LEP) individual as one who primarily speaks a language other than English at home, and who speaks or understands English "not well" or "not at all."

13 Glenn Flores, Milagros Abreu, and Sandra C. Tomany-Korman, *Limited English Proficiency, Primary Language at Home, and Disparities in Children's Health Care: How Language Barriers Are Measured Matters* (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 2005), www.commonwealthfund.org/usr_doc/845_flores_limitedenglish_childhlt_itl.pdf.

14 Danielle A. Crosby and Angel S. Dunbar, *Patterns and Predictions of School Readiness and Early Childhood Success among Young Children in Black Immigrant Families* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2012), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/CBI-patterns-predictors-school-readiness-early-childhood-success.

15 Ibid.

III. The Importance of Parent Engagement

A. History, Definition, and Typology

The role that parents and families play in supporting children's educational success, particularly in the early years, is gaining increased attention and is gradually becoming better understood through devoted research. Initially, awareness of the importance of parent engagement in education grew out of a broader war on poverty in the United States in the 1960s, with the inception of the Head Start early childhood program. As part of the Head Start program, the participation of parents in planning and decision-making in public programming was encouraged for the first time. One aim was to make the services delivered to low-income populations more relevant and responsive to the needs of their communities, thus promoting stability and quieting growing unrest.[16] In the years that followed, provisions for parent engagement were also written into Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, and by 1968, language in Title I required that parents be involved in the planning and evaluation of Title I programs and encouraged the creation of parent advisory councils in school districts. In recent years, the issue of family engagement has gained new prominence in the United States. Parent engagement is no longer defined as one-way participation in select school activities, with teachers being the sole experts on child learning and development. Instead, parents are being recognized as equal partners and leaders in their children's education.

Parent engagement is now seen as an important component of program success in early learning.

Head Start continues to serve roughly half of its eligible population of low-income three- and four-year olds, and most states have instituted public prekindergarten programs. Yet parent engagement activities in the early years, as elsewhere, are largely conducted on an ad hoc and non-systemic basis under current law, with funding failing to focus on practices that are known to be the most effective.[17] Reaching parents in their children's early years, however, may be especially beneficial in promoting patterns of engagement that will continue through later years. Research suggests that early involvement can set the stage for a strong parental role in children's learning through the elementary school years and beyond.[18] Promoting engagement in these early years is also particularly important given the rapid development of cognitive, socioemotional, and physical skills that occurs in this critical period of children's lives.

Parent engagement is now seen as an important component of program success in early learning, and is defined differently by various program and policy goals. Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, for instance, defines parent involvement as "the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities."[19] Head Start, meanwhile, describes parent and family engagement as "building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and their children, and ongoing learning and development for both parents and children."[20] And in the context of home visiting programs,

16 Karen Mapp, *Title I and Parent Involvement: Lessons from the Past, Recommendations for the Future* (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2011), www.americanprogress.org/events/2011/03/av/parental_involvement.pdf.

17 U.S. Department of Education, *Supporting Families and Communities: Reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2010), www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/faq/supporting-family.pdf.

18 Holly Kreider, *Getting Parents "Ready" for Kindergarten: The Role of Early Childhood Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project, 2002), www.hfrp.org/content/download/1164/48669/file/kreider.pdf.

19 U.S. Department of Education, *No Child Left Behind: Parental Involvement: Title I, Part A: Non-Regulatory Guidance* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2004), www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc.

20 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework:*

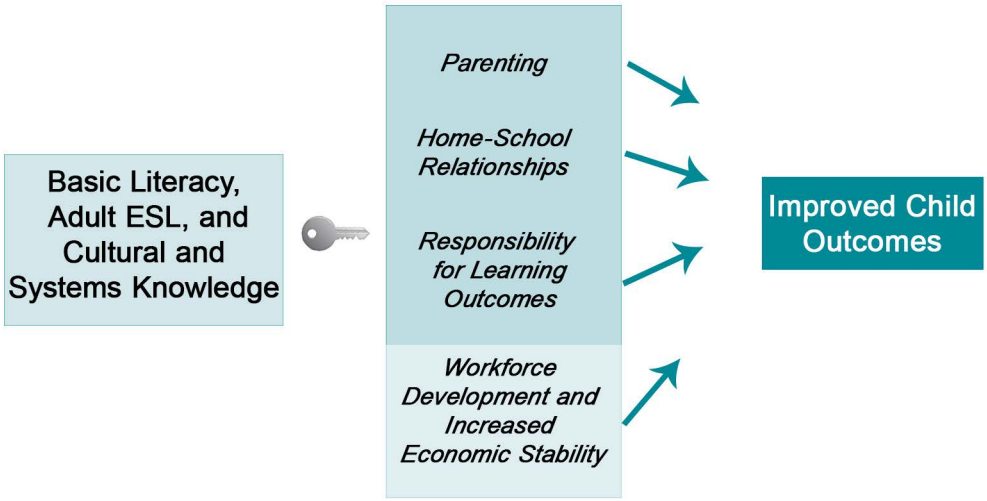
where parents are the primary target of the services offered, parent engagement and involvement might simply be defined as parents' successful connection with and effective use of the services provided by the program.[21]

For the purposes of this report, parent engagement during the years of early childhood includes all of these aspects of parent involvement and support. Heather Weiss, Margaret Caspe, and M. Elena Lopez divide parent engagement into three categories:

- ***parenting,*** or activities by which parents promote a child's learning and healthy development through parenting education and other supports;
- ***responsibility for learning outcomes,*** by which parents are actively involved in their children's education and early learning activities; and
- ***home-school relationships,*** in which parents are full partners in their children's education, including through decision-making and leadership roles at schools and early learning centers to assist in the successful education of their children.[22]

However, programs may be unable to successfully support newcomer parents in undertaking such activities without first understanding and addressing certain underlying needs. One major finding of MPI's research has been that the foundational skills provided by basic literacy, adult ESL (English as a Second Language) programs, and cultural and systems knowledge training are crucial supports for immigrant parents seeking to access parent engagement programs on an equal footing with their peers (see Figure 2). Programs addressing parent skills and parent involvement are now recognized across the United States as being important to children's success in the early years, and are often encouraged (if not always fully resourced) through home visiting, early learning and pre-K programs (discussed below). However, basic literacy, ESL, and cultural and systems training opportunities are not widely available or supported despite their importance to the success of effective engagement strategies for many low-income and immigrant families. Such opportunities, moreover, are a critical precursor to dual-generation strategies that seek to improve parent and child outcomes through workforce development and increased family economic stability.

Figure 2. Factors Affecting Improved Child Outcomes



Promoting Family Engagement and School Readiness from Prenatal to Age (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/ims/2011/pfce-framework.pdf.

21 Jon Korfmacher et al., "Parent Involvement in Early Childhood Home Visiting," Child Youth Care Forum, www.npcresearch.com/Files/Parent_involvement_in_early_childhood_home_visiting.pdf.

22 Heather Weiss, Margaret Caspe, and M. Elena Lopez, *Family Involvement in Early Childhood Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project, 2006), www.hfrp.org/content/download/1181/48685/file/earlychildhood.pdf.

B. Research Supporting Importance of Parent Engagement for Child Outcomes

A growing body of research has clarified the importance of the early years in building the foundation for children's healthy development and later academic success, and the crucial role that parents of young children play as their first and most important teachers. Moreover, socioeconomic differences lead to widely varying young child experiences that may cause large gaps in cognitive and language development at a very early stage. Studies using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), for instance, find that disparities in cognitive tests among U.S. infant groups are apparent at as early as nine months of age.[23] In addition, longitudinal data demonstrate an achievement gap between many immigrant groups and their native peers that begins even prior to kindergarten enrollment. A 2007 study demonstrated that at the start of kindergarten, 73 percent of third-generation white children demonstrated basic reading proficiency and 34 percent demonstrated an ability to understand the beginning sounds of words. Meanwhile, only 42 percent of first-generation Mexican-American children could recognize letters, and only 14 percent demonstrated an ability to understand the beginning sounds of words.[24]

Longitudinal data demonstrate an achievement gap between many immigrant groups and their native peers that begins even prior to kindergarten enrollment.

Emerging research also clearly supports the positive impact of strong partnerships between families and early childhood education programs as leading to children's future academic success and increased socioemotional skills.[25] A meta-analysis conducted by William Jeynes demonstrates that parent involvement in education is beneficial across all levels of academic achievement, including grade point average (GPA) and standardized tests, for all minority groups and particularly for Latino populations.[26] While it has also been established that participation in high-quality ECEC programming significantly improves school readiness skills among all children, preschool alone is not sufficient to narrow school readiness and later achievement gaps for children from traditionally underperforming groups.[27] Children's home environments play a critical role in determining their healthy cognitive and socioemotional development, and the educational attainment of mothers continues to be one of the most predictive indicators of a child's academic success, with those children from families with less-educated parents performing at the lowest levels in school. These children are, moreover, less likely to complete school or to secure high-paying jobs.[28] Research indicates that family involvement in school has the greatest impact for children at greatest risk, with the literacy achievement of children from low-income and low-educated families showing the highest achievement rewards from high levels of family involvement.[29]

23 Robert Crosnoe, *Two-Generation Strategies and Involving Immigrant Parents in Children's Education* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2010), www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412204-Immigrant-Parents-Childrens-Education.pdf.

24 Daniel Princiotta and Kristin Denton Flanagan, *Findings from the Fifth-Grade Follow-up of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998-99* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2006), http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/2006038.pdf.

25 Linda C. Halgunseth, Amy Peterson, Deborah R. Stark, and Shannon Moodie, *Family Engagement, Diverse Families, and Early Childhood Education Programs: An Integrated Review of the Literature* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2009), www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/research/FamEngage.pdf.

26 William Jeynes, "A Meta-Analysis: The Effects of Parental Involvement on Minority Children's Academic Achievement," *Education and Urban Society* 35, no. 2 (2003): 202.

27 Jill S. Cannon, Alison Jacknowitz, and Lynn A. Karoly, *Preschool and School Readiness, Experiences of Children with Non-English-Speaking Parents* (San Francisco, CA: Public Policy Institute of California, 2012), www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_512JCR.pdf.

28 National Center for Family Literacy, "All About Families: The Effects of Maternal Education on Child Achievement," Issue no. 1 (January 2003).

29 Eric Dearing, Holly Kreider, Sandra Simpkins, and Heather Weiss, *Family Involvement in School and Low-Income Children's Literacy Performance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project, 2007), www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/

C. Other Benefits of Parent Engagement Specific to Children of Immigrants

Definitive research demonstrates that children raised in multilingual environments where multiple languages are valued and used continuously experience cognitive and social benefits—further supporting the importance of promoting parent engagement in early learning in the home for many children of immigrants.[30] For example, several studies have shown that multilingual children have greater executive control and improved early literacy skills.[31] Riches and Genesee find in their literature review, moreover, that first-language reading ability is an even stronger predictor of second-language reading ability than second-language oral proficiency.[32] Given these findings, and in light of the shortage of bilingual early childhood professionals who are qualified to work effectively with Dual Language Learners (DLLs), parents who speak a language other than English appear to be a critical underutilized resource in helping to foster their children's language and literacy skills. In fact, parents are often sent conflicting messages about the importance of developing early literacy in a first language. Perhaps as a result, in families where at least one parent does not speak English well, parents have been found to be less likely to read to their children regularly.[33]

ECLS-B data indicate that several immigrant groups generally demonstrate lower levels of engagement and involvement in schools compared to native groups.[34] Several known barriers likely contribute to disparities in parent engagement behaviors among immigrant and native-born parents, many of which are linked to socioeconomic status, and some of which are specific to immigrant families. These include economic constraints such as transportation costs and irregular work schedules, as well as language and literacy barriers and cultural differences that may lead to little or poor communication between immigrant parents and ECEC programs or staff.[35]

Immigrant parents must gain literacy, language proficiency, and systems knowledge and navigation skills in order to meaningfully access engagement opportunities.

The following sections show how many immigrant parents must gain literacy, language proficiency, and systems knowledge and navigation skills in order to meaningfully access engagement opportunities in ECEC as well. Moreover, building these skills during a period in parents' lives when they are perhaps most likely to be seeking out services and training opportunities has the potential to put low-educated parents on a path to greater education and workforce success, and in turn improve the family's economic mobility,[36] an important factor given the known negative impacts of poverty on child development.

publications-resources/family-involvement-in-school-and-low-income-children-s-literacy-performance.

30 Keira Gebbie Ballantyne, Alicia R. Sanderman, and Nicole McLaughlin, *Dual Language Learners in the Early Years: Getting Ready to Succeed in School* (Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2008); Office of Head Start National Centers, *The Benefits of Being Bilingual* (Washington, DC: Office of Head Start National Centers, 2013), http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/docs/benefits-of-being-bilingual.pdf.

31 Stephanie M. Carlson and Andrew N. Meltzoff, "Bilingual Experience and Executive Functioning in Young Children," *Developmental Science* 11, no. 2 (2008): 282-98, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-7687.2008.00675.x/pdf.

32 Caroline Riches and Fred Genesee, "Literacy: Crosslinguistic and Crossmodal Issues," in *Educating English Language Learners: A Synthesis of Research Evidence,* eds. Fred Genesee, Kathryn Lindholm-Leary, William Saunders, and Donna Christian (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), www.psych.mcgill.ca/perpg/fac/genesee/25.pdf.

33 Kevin O'Donnell, *Parents' Reports of the School Readiness of Young Children from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2007* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 2008), http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008051.pdf.

34 Crosnoe, *Two-Generation Strategies*.

35 Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp, *A New Wave of Evidence, The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement* (Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Library, 2002), www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf.

36 Ascend at the Aspen Institute, *Two Generations, One Future, Moving Parents and Children beyond Poverty Together*

IV. Current Provisions for Parent Engagement

A. Federal Programming

At the U.S. federal level, parent engagement provisions for children ages 0 to 5 are offered primarily under the Department of Health and Human Services through the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program and Head Start. Both target low-income families and take a holistic approach to aiding parents and families in supporting their young children's health and socioemotional and cognitive development.

The MIECHV program serves at-risk families, as determined by each state, and aims to: improve maternal and newborn health, prevent child abuse and maltreatment, improve school readiness, reduce crime and domestic violence, improve economic self-sufficiency, and improve the coordination of related resources and supports for families. Voluntary home-visiting services are provided to pregnant women, mothers, fathers, caregivers, and their children from birth through five years of age, and most families participate in the program for one to three years. The federal government provides grants directly to states to administer this program, requiring that at least 75 percent of funds be spent on evidence-based home-visiting models chosen by federal government criteria. The remaining 25 percent may be spent on new, promising models that must then be evaluated. Currently, the Department of Health and Human Services has approved 13 home-visiting models as eligible evidence-based programs.[37] This funding model, however, may exclude support for smaller, specialized programs, many of which are designed specifically to serve hard-to-reach immigrant and refugee families that require specific and intensive services.

Little accountability exists to ensure that all parents are reached successfully.

The Head Start and Early Head Start programs, also funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, are early learning programs serving young children in low-income families; they include a Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework that seeks to build positive relationships with families by supporting family well-being, strong relationships between parents and children, and encouraging the learning and development of both parents and children.[38] Parent engagement guidelines for Head Start are extensive, and are carefully designed to be linguistically and culturally appropriate. Head Start's multicultural principles state that the cultural groups represented in the communities and families of each Head Start program should be the primary sources for culturally relevant programming, which in turn requires that staff both reflect and are responsive to the community and families served.[39] Head Start also legally requires that its grantees "provide to parents of limited English proficient children outreach and information, in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that the

(Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 2012), www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/pubs/Ascend-Report-022012.pdf.

37 Sarah Avellar, Diane Paulsell, Emily Sama-Miller, and Patricia Del Grosso, *Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness Review: Executive Summary* (Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, 2013), http://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/HomVEE_Executive_Summary_2013.pdf.

38 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework.*

39 Early Head Start National Resource Center, U.S. Office of Head Start, *Revisiting and Updating the Multicultural Principals for Head Start Programs Serving Children Ages Birth to Five* (Washington, DC: U.S. Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, 2008), http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/resources/ECLKC_Bookstore/PDFs/Revisiting%20Multicultural%20Principles%20for%20Head%20Start_English.pdf.

parents can understand."[40] However, program budgets are limited, funding for measures that would support the implementation of the guidelines is not readily available, and little accountability exists to ensure that all parents are reached successfully.

In addition to these principal provisions associated with early childhood programs, the Department of Education provides support for parent engagement activities through Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, meant to benefit school districts with a high share of children from low-income families through formula funding. The law currently requires that 1 percent of all Title I funds be spent on parental involvement activities. While the law is largely focused on students in primary and secondary schools, the funds can also be spent to support district-run early childhood programming. Although some nonregulatory guidance is provided in the language of the law,[41] funds can be spent on almost any activity that broadly qualifies as relating to parental involvement, and there are no measures of how many high-need parents and families are benefiting from these resources.

B. *Family Literacy and Dual-Generation Strategies*

Today's family literacy programs are based on pioneering work conducted in poor regions of Appalachia in the 1980s to engage parents and children in a dual-generation strategy to break cycles of poverty and illiteracy.[42] In recent decades, such programs have become a feature of policy and practice across the United States. They include literacy development programming for young children, parent literacy and education services, as well as interactive literacy activities that simultaneously engage parents and their children. Family literacy programs are eligible for support by several federal funding streams, most importantly the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act* (AEFLA). On a formula basis, this law provides nearly $564 million to states per year to improve the basic education and literacy skills of adults (both native and foreign born) who lack a high school diploma. Performance measures for these funds are rigorous, as is competition for them at the state and local levels: only about 3 percent of adults without a high school diploma nationwide are served by the system in a given year.[43]

Until recently, significant and targeted parent engagement and parent literacy support were also provided by the Department of Education through a program called Even Start, a family literacy program that served America's most disadvantaged families. Funded at its height at an annual level of $250 million,[44] the program was designed to develop literacy in parents with low levels of educational attainment while also encouraging them to be full partners in their young children's education. Nearly half of its beneficiaries were Hispanic parents, indicative of the program's benefits: it effectively targeted services to immigrant parents, was easier to enroll in than other formal adult education programs, and provided child care.[45] Families served by Even Start were significantly more socioeconomically disadvantaged, overall, than those served by Head Start.[46]

The program's elimination in 2011 left a significant gap in services for many of the country's poorest families, particularly for immigrant and refugee parents. Funding was stopped largely due to negative national evaluations of the model, which found that the program did not effectively meet its goals of improving child and adult learning through its four core components of adult education, parenting education, parent-child

40 National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (NCCLR), *Serving Head Start's Diverse Children and Families, What is the Law? What are the Regulations?* (Washington, DC: NCCLR), http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/docs/serving-head-starts-diverse-families-laws-regs.pdf.

41 U.S. Department of Education, *No Child Left Behind*.

42 Sharon Darling, *Family Literacy Education: Replacing the Cycle of Failure with the Legacy of Success* (Louisville, KY: Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project, 1988), http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED332794.

43 Figures based on 2013 allocations. At its peak in fiscal year 2010, more than $628 million was appropriated for the program. U.S. Department of Education, "Adult Education—Basic Grants to States," www2.ed.gov/programs/adultedbasic/funding.html.

44 U.S. Department of Education, "Funding Status: Even Start," www2.ed.gov/programs/evenstartformula/funding.html.

45 National Council of La Raza (NCLR), *William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program: Effective, Yet Misunderstood* (Washington, DC: NCLR, 2007),.

46 U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service, Elementary and Secondary Education Division, *Third National Even Start Evaluation: Program Impacts and Implications for Improvement* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

activities, and early childhood education.[47] Proponents of the program argued that these evaluations were significantly flawed,[48] and others asserted that the program benefited such a drastically underserved population that it should continue to receive funding with adaptations to address the evaluation's mixed results. Ultimately, however, the program lacked adequate political support and is not likely to be reinstated.

The Promise Neighborhoods program, administered by the U.S. Department of Education and based on the successful Harlem Children's Zone model,[49] also takes a dual generation approach to poverty reduction. The program provides a neighborhood-based system of education and "cradle-to-career" social services for children of low-income families living in concentrated areas. It emphasizes the power of family and community supports—in addition to strong schools—as being critical components to children's academic success. Promise Neighborhoods is funded through eligible nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education through a competitive grant process. While the original Harlem Children's Zone model includes significant supports for early childhood, including a full-day prekindergarten program and a parent engagement initiative called Baby College (a nine-week parenting workshop for parents of children up to 3 years of age), each Promise Neighborhoods grant recipient may put variable emphasis on the early childhood years and on parent engagement in particular.

C. *Foundational Adult Basic Education, Literacy, and English-Instruction Programming*

Adults in the United States who lack a high school diploma or are LEP rely on adult basic education (instruction up to an eighth-grade level), adult secondary education (ninth- through twelfth-grade instruction), and ESL or ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) services to advance in their basic education and English attainment. As noted earlier, a significant share of immigrant and refugee parents of young children would stand to benefit from such services; however, general system service capacity is extremely weak, and mainstream program designs and measures often do not meet parents' scheduling needs and learning goals.

Immigrant and refugee parents with young children who are low literate or LEP have historically found it difficult to succeed in traditional adult education settings.

These and other weak points of the nation's adult education system are receiving more attention of late. A study recently released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD's) Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) indicates that adults in the United States perform below the international average in all subject areas, and have remained stagnant in recent decades, falling significantly behind in international standing as a result.[50] In addition, adult English instruction services have fared particularly badly during the recession, with roughly a third of the system's instructional capacity eliminated in recent years.[51] State policymakers and local program managers face difficult choices in dividing the system's limited resources among priority populations, which include millions of adult workers displaced by the recession, disconnected youth, former prisoners seeking to reenter the workforce, and immigrants seeking to learn English or obtain a high school diploma.

47 Gail McCallion, *Even Start: Funding Controversy* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2006), http://research.policyarchive.org/18773.pdf.

48 NCLR, *William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program*.

49 For more information on the Harlem Children's Zone, see www.hcz.org/.

50 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "Time for the U.S. to Reskill? What the Survey of Adult Skills Says," 2013, http://skills.oecd.org/Survey_of_Adult_Skills_U.S.pdf.

51 Internal MPI analysis of data obtained from the U.S. Office of Vocational and Adult Education, "National Reporting System," 2007-12, http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OVAE/NRS/login.cfm.

Immigrant and refugee parents with young children who are low literate or LEP have historically found it difficult to succeed in traditional adult education settings. The elimination of Even Start and decline in adult ESOL system capacity more generally make it substantially more difficult for these parents—especially those who have less than an eighth-grade education—to find programs that can assist them in improving their English and underlying education and skills. The extreme weakness in basic adult education program access and system capacity has significant implications for early childhood programs that serve immigrant and refugee parents. Such programs cannot meet these parents' urgent needs for basic education, literacy development, and English proficiency services, yet in many cases they also cannot meaningfully engage with these parents due to language and literacy barriers.

In sum, while several major programs make provisions and provide guidelines for initiatives that might benefit the immigrant parents of young children, measures to account for their quality and relevance to the needs of immigrant and other subgroups are weak, and funding to support these parent-focused initiatives is largely lacking. Meanwhile, the lack of education and other programming opportunities for parents who have low levels of literacy, education, and English proficiency leaves early childhood programs without partners that are essential in helping parents build skills required to access existing services, achieve broader social integration, and ensure the economic mobility of their families. This issue is particularly critical for the foreign-born population, as foreign-born adults overall currently make up 39 percent of the nearly 24 million adults in the United States with less than a high school diploma (who make up only 13 percent of the adult population overall).[52] Enrollment data show, moreover, that those adults with the lowest levels of education are currently enrolled in school in the lowest numbers compared to their more highly educated counterparts.[53]

V. Research and Findings

To better understand the policy and program contexts of early childhood programs seeking to engage immigrant and refugee parents—as well as the concerns and experiences of these parents as they consider program options for their children—MPI's NCIIP utilized a mixed-methods research approach that included:

- A sociodemographic analysis of key characteristics of the newcomer parent population broadly relevant to parent engagement outcomes;
- A literature review and other background research on parent engagement programming more generally and newcomer-focused programs in particular in our six focus states; and
- Field research in California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, New York, and Washington (see Appendix 3).

We conducted field research for this report by identifying and visiting programs with effective practices for engaging immigrant and refugee parents, speaking to subject-matter experts, interviewing staff at immigrant-serving agencies, and holding focus groups with immigrant parents with young children.

The six states for field research were selected because of their significant and diverse immigrant populations, as well as the presence of expert partners. These partners are:

- California Community Foundation
- CASA de Maryland

52 MPI analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2010-12 American Community Surveys (ACS).
53 Ibid.

- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
- Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
- New York Immigration Coalition
- OneAmerica (in Washington State).

These organizations' expertise and resources include newcomer policy and program knowledge as well as connections to local immigrant and refugee leaders and programs that have high levels of trust with immigrant families. See Table A-3 in the Appendices for more information.

Guided by the extensive on-site knowledge and expertise of these partners, the authors chose programs working effectively with immigrant parents for site visits and interviews. These included a mix of federal, state and privately funded initiatives, the majority of which were early childhood education and care (ECEC)-focused programs with a strong parent engagement component. We also conducted site visits and interviews with programs that were explicitly designed to serve the parents of young children as their primary mission, and others that offered a continuum of services that included adult education and workforce skills development.

> *"I don't go to [parent engagement] programs like this because one time I went, and the school had me waiting for an hour, standing around and waiting for an interpreter. I was so tired of waiting, I have no idea what they told me in the end and they didn't help me at all . . . I don't want to waste my time if they're not going to tell me what they're saying. If I show up to a program, they're just going to make me wait."*
> – Focus group participant in Maryland

In collaboration with state partners, the authors organized focus groups with immigrant parents of young children, and targeted a mix of immigrant communities based on country of origin, and mode and recency of arrival in order to ensure a variety of perspectives and experiences. Primarily low-income parents joined in these conversations, and participants included those who were not currently accessing any ECEC programs, as well as those who could speak about their level of satisfaction and engagement with existing programming. The focus groups aimed to draw upon the insight and experiences of parents to learn what strategies work in parent engagement and leadership programs and what critical gaps remain in the services. Overall, the authors completed 19 site visits or site interviews, and seven focus groups involving a total of approximately 70 immigrant parents.

The field research was organized along three major lines of inquiry:

- What is the nature and extent of the needs of parents of young immigrant children? What kinds of tailored approaches would help parent skill, engagement, and leadership programs achieve success in serving this population?
- What existing practices and policies intentionally address barriers of language, literacy, and cultural and systems knowledge? How do existing programs supporting newcomer parents in developing the skills they may need to guide their children's early socioemotional and cognitive development, preparation for kindergarten, and ultimately, their future academic careers?
- What are the salient features of the policy and funding environments in which these programs for parents operate? How do programs identify sources of support for their models, and how do they compete for support for serving high- or multi-need newcomer populations under government requests for proposals?

The NCIIP's synthesis of background research, demographic analysis, and information gathered from site visits, expert interviews, and parent focus groups led to the following findings regarding gaps in services for immigrant and refugee parents of young children, as well as the most significant challenges faced by those who are committed to successfully serving these populations.

Parents need English proficiency and basic levels of functional literacy to meaningfully engage with their children's early education; these present almost insurmountable barriers to many immigrant and refugee parents' participation in ECEC programs and their overall engagement efforts. Community leaders, program directors, and newcomer parents themselves widely cite gaps in English proficiency and functional literacy—which are also evident in sociodemographic analyses—as critical and persistent barriers to effective parent engagement efforts. For example, according to focus group participants, many ECEC programs, including Head Start and state pre-K programs, are providing only minimal translation and interpretation services at best, limited to translation of some program handouts in the most commonly spoken second languages among their enrolled families. In many cases, this lack of a comprehensive strategy to reach LEP families was due either to resource and funding constraints or to a false assumption that these basic provisions were sufficient to reach all parents. Even when translated documents were provided, the level of literacy and cultural and systems knowledge required to decipher their meaning made them incomprehensible to many parents.

With regard to ECEC, kindergarten, and elementary school programming more generally, the majority of parents said that they were unable to communicate their questions and needs effectively to untrained, monolingual, and often unresponsive and hostile staff. Meanwhile, though several programs provide adult English classes or basic education support on-site or refer people to adult education programming, long waiting lists, inconvenient hours, and a lack of child care make these opportunities inaccessible to the majority of parents, despite a strong and nearly universal desire to enroll in such programs.

The majority of parents said that they were unable to communicate their questions and needs effectively.

When programs are known to provide appropriate language support and resources, parents in the community are eager to enroll in order to access not only high-quality, relevant care for their children, but also parent-focused opportunities. Several Chinese parents in Boston stated that they had been on the waiting list for a child care program geared toward Chinese families for one to two years, but had not considered applying to other programs because language was their most critical priority, and they had heard of superior parent support being provided at the program in the Chinese language. A Somali mother in Washington State likewise indicated that language was a first priority for her; she preferred to enroll her child in an in-home daycare even though she was eligible for a local Head Start program. She spoke of feeling alienated and vulnerable on a visit to the Head Start center; no one there spoke her language, and she felt the same general feeling of hostility toward Somalis that she experienced throughout her community.

While these parents at least knew they were eligible for funded programs, language barriers leave many others in the dark. A 2006 Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that a significant number of LEP mothers were unaware of the federal child-care and early-learning programs that were available to them and faced significant challenges in applying for programs and financial assistance due to a lack of linguistic responsiveness.[54]

No public funding is currently offered to explicitly support language or cultural access or other needs specific to immigrant families in parent engagement programming. Programs, including exemplary Head Start programs and privately funded community-based organizations, that are effectively engaging diverse immigrant, low-literate, and LEP parents do so using significant program and administrative staff time, support for which must be patched together from private funding sources.

54 Government Accountability Office (GAO), *More Information Sharing and Program Review by HHS Could Enhance Access for Families with Limited English Proficiency* (Washington, DC: GAO, 2006), www.gao.gov/assets/260/251540.pdf.

Several of the program directors interviewed spoke of promising immigrant-focused initiatives that had yielded excellent results, only to be eliminated within one to two years due to discontinued funding. Many also expressed that their ability to scale up effective practices was constrained by a lack of resources, space, and staff capacity.

Head Start does provide training and technical assistance its programs to support effective parent engagement strategies for diverse families. However, in spite of the legal requirements listed in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 as well as the Head Start Program Performance Standards, the additional resources that are often necessary in order to provide culturally and linguistically responsive services to parents and families through multilingual and sufficiently trained staff are not available. In these and other programs, a recognition of the real cost of providing services that meet the needs of diverse families is lacking, even as the importance of adapting services for children of immigrants and DLLs is increasingly understood.

Meanwhile, several interviewees cited recent sequestration cuts as a major stressor that had required many program design elements that specifically benefited immigrant families, such as free transportation for parents to attend workshops, to be eliminated. For instance, the staff of a program in California discussed working with refugee parents who were struggling with major socialization and employment issues as well as post-traumatic stress disorder. Program staff needed to provide case management services before beginning to focus discussions around early learning. However, these services, which were essential to meeting immediate critical needs of these high-need parents to early learning and parent engagement opportunities, were not covered by the funding available to the agency.

[Parents] cited significant difficulties even at the outset of their K-12 experience in trying to obtain basic information about kindergarten enrollment for their children.

Similarly, a perinatal service provider in Washington explained that since federally funded home visiting models must be evidence based, models that may be as or more effective in serving minority communities but that have not been able to invest resources in conducting rigorous evaluations (and may also have ethical objections to asking their clients to participate in such studies) cannot access funding. In sum, programs that are well tailored to the high-need communities they serve may have extremely restricted access to funding.

In the adult education arena, accountability measures were reported to be driven by standardized tests and outcomes that are nearly impossible for low-literate immigrant and refugee parents to attain. Of those interviewed in programs providing ESL, literacy, and parent skills training, several stated that if they depended on available state and federal funding streams, nearly half of their current students would need to be refused services as they would be unable to attain the required benchmarks. Meanwhile, every program interviewed that was serving immigrant parents indicated that they maintained a long waiting list of eligible applicants for their services, underscoring the mismatch between available funding and the needs identified by local organizations.

A lack of alignment between early childhood parent engagement programming and the K-12 system leaves parents—particularly those who are low literate and/or LEP—alienated from their children's schools. Many parents in focus groups who felt welcomed in their ECEC programs indicated that once their children transitioned to the K-12 system, they no longer felt included or engaged in their children's educational experience. They cited significant difficulties even at the outset of their K-12 experience in trying to obtain basic information about kindergarten enrollment for their children. Yet several of the programs interviewed indicated that pre-K to third-grade parent engagement was a critical aim, rooted in the idea that better equipping parents to help with academic work may address the "third-grade fade"

found in the national evaluation of Head Start. Successful parent engagement efforts in school districts appeared to be largely dependent on whether school leadership actively embraced and supported these efforts. While Head Start has a mandate to collaborate with school districts to aid in the transition to kindergarten, and often organizes activities accordingly, many school districts were seen as uncooperative and dismissive of the need for collaboration with ECEC staff.

Several ECEC administrators also emphasized that this lack of alignment and continued engagement was a particularly critical issue for immigrant parents. They cited major changes in the K-12 system that are not being effectively communicated, such as the rollout of Common Core standards in many districts, or the implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula in California. In Illinois, for instance, interviews revealed that although state core standards have been translated into Spanish, many parents are unable to decode and decipher the significance of the documents that they are receiving due to a lack of contextual knowledge. The staff of a local program explained that their district's schools failed to include bilingual parents in the translation and distribution of information, leading to these disconnects—in spite of the fact that the district is more than 75 percent Latino.

To address gaps in cultural and systems knowledge, one program in New York pointed to a pre-K transition committee organized in partnership with local settlement houses. The committee brings together classroom teachers, principals, family workers, and parents monthly to discuss transition issues and ways to provide support to families. As part of this initiative, information sessions are held for all families, covering topics ranging from registration and enrollment, factors to consider in school choice, and experiences to be expected as they enter the K-12 system.

Programs such as the National Council of La Raza's Padres Comprometidos similarly aim to improve Hispanic immigrant parents' comfort with and understanding of the U.S. education system through a bilingual curriculum designed specifically for Latino parents. The curriculum includes, for instance, sessions about what parents of young children should know about kindergarten expectations, and how parents can effectively reach out to teachers and have productive conversations with school leaders using the particular "language" of schools. The success of such programs demonstrates that complex and disjointed systems are substantial barriers to engagement for parents who are not disinterested, but rather are often misinformed.

Smaller minority groups and speakers of less common languages are particularly underserved and struggle with basic access both to high-quality ECEC opportunities and to parent engagement opportunities. Among focus group participants, speakers of less common languages reported being left out of even the most basic language access and outreach efforts. Often these parents had more limited social networks, further reducing their ability to engage with ECEC opportunities. While many parents indicated that they had at least heard about program opportunities through their social networks, those without these networks were more isolated and disconnected, either lacking knowledge about opportunities to enroll their children in ECEC services or feeling alienated and unwelcome in the programs in which they were participating. In several of the focus groups, for instance, speakers of the Mixteco and Trique languages indicated that while it seemed as though Spanish speakers had an array of supports offered to them through translated documents and bilingual staff, they did not see their own needs addressed or reflected in programs' diversity strategies.

In addition to being a violation of federal civil-rights provisions, the lack of capacity to ensure access for speakers of less prevalent languages affects a significant number of people across many states. Spanish is the most commonly spoken language among LEP individuals nationally (spoken by 66 percent of all LEP individuals in 2010), yet at the state level Spanish speakers account for only 38 percent of LEP individuals in Massachusetts, 48 percent in Washington, and 50 percent in New York.[55] Across those states with the largest LEP populations, the most-spoken languages—as ranked behind English and Spanish—vary significantly. For instance, they are Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and French Creole in Massachusetts,

55 Chhandasi Pandya, Margie McHugh, and Jeanne Batalova, *Limited English Proficient Individuals in the United States: Number, Share, Growth, and Linguistic Diversity* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2011), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/limited-english-proficient-individuals-united-states-number-share-growth-and-linguistic.

as compared with Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Russian in Washington.[56] These levels of diversity mean that early childhood systems must build language access capacity at all levels if immigrant and refugee parents are to have meaningful and equal access to program services.

Community support and attitudes play a critical role in creating a comfortable and welcoming environment for immigrant parents; pockets of good practice are often surrounded by communities and school districts that are more hostile toward diverse groups. Both focus group conversations and site interviews revealed that immigrant and refugee families may face radically different host-community attitudes, sometimes across neighboring school districts and communities. Such attitudes are expressed in the widely differing approaches seen across schools and other institutions. Some incorporate ECEC and parent programming; others offer referrals. Some don't provide even basic language-access services.

The successful programs interviewed for this report were most often found in communities known to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for newcomer families. And even in this context, a strong team effort is needed to connect diverse families with the resources they require. One Head Start center in Massachusetts, for instance, cited a community network of hospitals and CBOs as the primary source of referrals among immigrant families. Strong partnerships with community institutions create a continuum of support for families—a cornerstone of successful engagement. Meanwhile, a focus group held at the same Massachusetts center included a participant from a neighboring town, where the public school offered no free ESL and General Educational Development (GED) classes or immigrant outreach from the public school system. "It's a whole other story in [my town]," she explained, "everyone knows that if you need help, you have to look somewhere else."

Another focus group participant in Washington State spoke of her frustration in meeting with school staff over a concern about bullying. She said, "even when translators are provided at schools in [my town], they usually take the school's side on every issue and don't tell me what's really going on with my children, or get across to the school staff what I really want to say." Focus group conversations revealed time and again that issues of access, communication, and empowerment run far deeper than translation alone.

A strong team effort is needed to connect diverse families with the resources they require.

It is worth noting research that indicates a link between the experience of racial discrimination and a number of negative results for youth, including poor physical and mental health as well as academic outcomes.[57] The "reception context" that a family experiences has been shown to shape "adaptation and parenting" and parent-child communication in, for example, Latino immigrant communities, pointing to a particular need for programming and policies that address parenting issues in communities where acculturation stress and a discriminatory climate may be particularly high.[58]

Those programs that work successfully with diverse parents and families have an explicit parent engagement and outreach strategy that all staff understand and support. All of the sites and programs that were identified for this study based on their successful work with immigrant parents—and low-literate and LEP parents in particular—had staff who could speak explicitly about their institution's work with parents, citing a comprehensive approach rather than an ad hoc list of disparate services. A shared understanding of what effective parent and family engagement means for a specific program, embraced by all program staff, appears to be a critical starting point as programs seek to meet both family

56 Ibid.

57 Krista Perreira and J. India, "The Physical and Psychological Well-Being of Immigrant Children," *Future of Children: Immigrant Children* 21, no. 1 (2011): 195–218, http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/docs/21_01_09.pdf.

58 Krista Perreira, Mimi V. Chapman, and Gabriela L. Stein, "Becoming an American Parent: Overcoming Challenges and Finding Strength in a New Immigrant Latino Community," *Journal of Family* 27, no. 10 (2006): 1383-1414.

and individual needs.

Given the limited resources available, not all programs are able to consistently provide the spectrum of services that would ideally accommodate immigrant and refugee parents, such as bilingual staff, high-quality child care provided during training opportunities, flexible scheduling, or reliable transportation to and from programming. Yet in the absence of some of these components, those organizations that had a meaningful strategy to incorporate the needs of diverse families—and set program standards accordingly—received highly positive reviews for their efforts from participating parents.

Efforts to take the needs of newcomer families into account when planning early childhood system and program development efforts are hindered by a lack of pertinent data collected at the federal, state, and school-district levels on immigrant parent and young child characteristics. Most state or local early childhood systems do not collect centralized data on parents' levels of education and language proficiency or children's DLL status until entry to kindergarten—if at all—rendering these needs invisible during children's critical first five years of development. This lack of information makes it impossible to determine what policies or resources may be necessary to ensure that immigrant families' needs are being appropriately served in programming—and to incentivize programs, in turn, to effectively reach out to and serve immigrant populations, which are often the most underserved and hardest to reach. The Mixteco-speaking participants of a focus group held in Washington State, for instance, had not been reached by any of the early childhood services available in their community. Their Spanish-speaking peers, meanwhile, had all become aware of Head Start services via word of mouth. These Mixteco-speaking families and their characteristics are likely unknown to program administrators, who have no incentive to ensure that they are included in outreach strategies.

The 2008 Early Childhood Education Assessment State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards Survey of the States, conducted by the Council of Chief State School Officers, found that only 13 states disaggregate their early childhood assessment results by ELL status, with only five of these then disaggregating for ELLs enrolled in state-sponsored prekindergarten, and seven states disaggregating results for kindergarten.[59] Yet, according to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA), given the current status of state-level data collection and reporting, gathering information on the number of DLLs in the early years of elementary school "would not be unduly burdensome and would significantly benefit these young children in that it would allow for sound policy regarding their educational needs."[60]

Not only is sufficient data collection important to inform policymaking, but sharing data with parents can also contribute to improving parent-school collaboration and empowering parents to hold schools accountable. Such opportunities are currently unavailable to parents of young children. Tools such as the ARIS Parent Link data system used in New York City, available to parents in nine languages, compiles student performance data to give parents a continuing record of their children's performance alongside other resources and tools.[61] An extension of systems such as these through the pre-K years would promote parents' participation in learning outcomes while improving K-12 alignment with early learning systems and creating a more data-informed learning environment.

59 Keira Gebbie Ballantyne, Alicia R. Sanderman, and Nicole McLaughlin, *Dual Language Learners in the Early Years: Getting Ready to Succeed in School* (Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2008), www.ncela.us/files/uploads/3/DLLs_in_the_Early_Years.pdf.

60 Ibid.

61 Shael Polakow-Suransky, "ARIS Parent Link: Five Lessons in Linking Families to Student Data Systems, Family Involvement Network of Educators Newsletter," *Family Involvement Network of Educators Newsletter* 2, no. 3 (2010), www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/aris-parent-link-five-lessons-in-linking-families-to-student-data-systems.

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

Given extensive system-building efforts under way in the early childhood field, national calls for adult education reform and capacity-building efforts in light of the PIAAC survey findings, and ongoing efforts seeking immigration reform legislation, opportunities to expand effective programming exist at all levels of government and across several significant service-delivery systems. Following are recommendations for policy actions, budgetary investments and innovations in program design that—in a holistic approach—promise to engage immigrant and refugee parents to be full partners in programs seeking to support their young children's healthy cognitive and socioemotional development, kindergarten readiness, and future school success.

Expand parent education, literacy, and English language programs. Expanded and innovative programs are urgently needed to address disparities affecting low-literate and LEP parents of young children; in order to address the range of needs of these parents, they could offer a combination of basic language and literacy training as well as child development, cultural, and systems knowledge that prepares them for engagement in their children's early learning and later education. Opportunities to create or expand such programs include:

- The capacity of the adult education system is extremely limited and is increasingly focused on those who seek to progress along career pathways and transition to postsecondary education. The evolution of the system's program and accountability frameworks in this direction and loss of enrollment capacity has left those in the early childhood arena without a partner to address the language and literacy development needs of parents who need these skills in order to navigate information and programs on their children's behalf, and be full partners in developing their children's early language and literacy skills. To serve low-literate and LEP parents of young children—and thus address these unique needs at the convergence of the early childhood and adult education fields—a large-scale pilot program should be created, jointly funded, and administered by the departments of health and human services and education. The program could allow a variety of promising approaches at the state and local levels to expand and be studied, and thereby build knowledge and momentum in the field for effective, scalable approaches. Measures and outcomes might include increases in parent skill, support for young children's healthy cognitive and socioemotional development (with a particular focus on language and literacy development), information on how to navigate the U.S. education system, cultural knowledge, digital and English-language literacy, and creation of a personal education/training plan.

Expanded and innovative programs are urgently needed to address disparities affecting low-literate and LEP parents of young children.

- The Preschool for All initiative being advanced by President Obama and congressional leaders can be leveraged to include comprehensive and purposeful parent engagement strategies for low-literate and LEP parents—both native-born and foreign-born—as part of state expansion of universal pre-K programs. Such strategies would provide a bridge between ECEC parent-focused programs and those of K-12 schools.
- The Senate immigration bill passed in June 2013 (S. 744) includes provisions for a pilot grant program to support immigrant integration at the state and local levels, and specifically included

the needs of LEP parents with young children as a target for such programming.[62] Similar provisions could be included in House bills and any final immigration reform law, along with authorization of funds for such purposes.

- Increased support for "traditional" family literacy programs or a slightly evolved version of such programs could be proposed and enacted as part of potential federal legislation to reauthorize the *Workforce Investment Act*. Such an investment would support programming for all low-literate parents, not only those who are immigrants or refugees. However, the design of accountability measures under the new law could thwart the intended purpose of these funds if it rewards only the attainment of academic degrees and workforce certificates.

Strengthen incentives and accountability for existing program funds. Adapting the regulations that govern relevant programs and funding streams which touch on parent skill, literacy and engagement issues to ensure that they more effectively serve parents of at-risk children could also be a focus of system reform and capacity-building efforts. For example:

- *The Family Engagement Act of 2013*—federal legislation that addresses the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*'s Title I family engagement provisions—seeks to expand capacity-building and technical assistance at the state and local levels in order to strengthen the overall quality and effectiveness of family engagement programs. Incentives and/or accountability for funds could be further strengthened by requiring schools and districts to take into account key demographic characteristics of parents and use strategies that address parents' cultural and functional literacy knowledge needs.
- Head Start eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance criteria could give priority to young children of parents with low levels of education and those who are LEP, with the highest priority afforded to those whose parents have less than a fifth-grade education, followed by those with less than an eighth-grade education and those with less than a high school diploma; categorical eligibility could also be provided for children whose parents have less than an eighth-grade education.
- Given the wider availability of census and other public-use data sets, community needs assessments for federal and state-funded early childhood programs could require rigorous analysis of parent and family characteristics associated with poor child outcomes. Agency funding decisions could in turn be guided by a comprehensive framework for measuring risk factors that might affect children's success, and ensure that funds are equitably distributed to serve the most at-risk children and families.
- Revision of Head Start performance standards could incorporate accountability measures for parent engagement and skill outcomes, and reflect the additional resources necessary to effectively serve low-literate and LEP parents.

Leverage state policy-making and capacity-building efforts. As states build and continue to develop their ECEC infrastructure—including the expansion of pre-K programs and implementation of Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS)—system stakeholders can ensure that the support of parents' skills, education, and engagement, especially in underserved communities, is included as a critical priority by seeking:

- The creation of data systems that collect and share pertinent parent information—e.g., family home language and parents' English proficiency (speaking, writing, and reading)—for all programs serving children ages 0 to 8, available in a centralized location, disaggregated by subgroup.

62 U.S. Senate, *Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act*, S. 744, 113th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 159, no. 84 (June 13, 2013): S 4435.

- Designated leadership and responsibility for these issues at the state level, including senior specialists accountable for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of parent engagement efforts, particularly for minorities and other subgroups.
- Inclusion of metrics for effectiveness in meeting parent skill, education, and engagement needs in program rating systems. Massachusetts' QRIS, for instance, includes provisions that encourage families to share their language and cultural traditions in their programs,[63] and Washington has incorporated standards that ask child-care programs to provide information regarding community-based programs in families' native languages.[64] As of 2012, however, only 11 states reported including standards related to DLLs in their QRIS, and most are lacking a comprehensive language access plan to ensure successful communication with LEP and immigrant families across early-learning and child-care programs and offices.[65]
- State departments of education could offer a competitive grant program open to ECEC providers who wish to deliver comprehensive support to low-literate and LEP parents in partnership with community colleges and other adult education providers, such as the College Access and Success Program being offered through the Educational Alliance Head Start Program, the City University of New York, and New York University. Alternatively, in order to improve equitable access for low-literate and LEP parents, the federal Head Start program could offer grants to state departments of education for this purpose, which would in turn re-grant these funds to providers and oversee programs.

Build evidence and awareness of gaps. Policy and capacity-building efforts in the ECEC field are still at an early stage in their evolution. At the same time, public awareness of the intersection of immigrant integration needs with key policy issues—such as those in the ECEC field—is just emerging. In order to make apparent and reinforce the urgency of addressing these intersections, several efforts can be taken to underscore the inadequate linguistic and cultural competences of many ECEC and K-3 systems, and the barriers they present to immigrant, refugee, and/or LEP parents. These efforts might include:

- A federal GAO study, commissioned to determine language and cultural barriers that impede access to federally supported early childhood and K-3 services.
- A compliance review, to be initiated by the Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights, aimed at strengthening language and cultural access provisions across ECEC services to ensure that LEP parents can effectively participate in and benefit from parent-facing services.

Weaknesses in our country's education pipeline are a hot topic in the halls of Congress, statehouses, and media across the United States. The enormous costs to society of current rates of student failure provide fuel for reform initiatives at all levels of the education system.

However, nowhere is research and political will better aligned than in the early childhood arena, where research has illuminated processes of early brain development and motivated policymakers and the public to undertake a range of historic new investments to put all children on an even footing before kindergarten begins. Parents are a central focus of these strategies since they play the most important role in their child's cognitive and socioemotional development and also because they control their child's access to program supports.

The era of early childhood system-building is coinciding, in some senses colliding, with the impacts of an

63 Massachusetts Executive Office of Education, "Massachusetts QRIS Standards," Department of Early Education and Care, Boston, Massachusetts, www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/qris/massachusetts-qris-standards.html.

64 Washington State Department of Early Learning, *Washington Quality Rating and Improvement System Standards: A Framework to Support Positive Child Outcomes* (Olympia, Washington: Washington State Department of Early Learning, 2011), www.del.wa.gov/publications/elac-qris/docs/WAQRIS_Standards2011.pdf.

65 Firgens and Matthews, *State Child Care Policies for Limited English Proficient Families*.

equally historic chapter in U.S. immigration policy. Decades of high rates of immigration have transformed the demographics of the country's young families, placing the early childhood field on the front line of efforts that are essential to meet the integration needs of foreign-born parents.

The era of early childhood system-building is coinciding, in some senses colliding, with the impacts of an equally historic chapter in U.S. immigration policy.

The additional efforts needed to help these parents fill gaps in cultural and systems knowledge and build language and literacy skills require recognition and action at all levels of government. With the changing demography of the country's young families already a well-established fact, the need for concerted action to address the challenges outlined in this report is immediate.

For more on MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, visit:
www.migrationpolicy.org/integration

Appendices

Appendix 1: Data on Young Children of Immigrants

Table A-1. Children of Immigrants Ages 0 to 8, by State, 2010-12

	All Children (Ages 0 to 8)	Children of Immigrants	Children of Immigrants as a Share of All Children (%)
United States	36,312,700	9,004,500	25
Alabama	547,300	45,600	8
Alaska	93,700	7,800	8
Arizona	808,300	228,100	28
Arkansas	351,300	38,100	11
California	4,555,000	2,224,000	49
Colorado	623,100	136,900	22
Connecticut	369,800	92,700	25
Delaware	99,500	18,300	18
District of Columbia	57,700	13,800	24
Florida	1,941,800	610,800	31
Georgia	1,232,500	252,600	20
Hawaii	154,500	44,100	29
Idaho	214,500	29,600	14
Illinois	1,506,300	417,600	28
Indiana	786,000	80,100	10
Iowa	360,400	37,700	10
Kansas	366,200	57,700	16
Kentucky	506,000	39,400	8
Louisiana	556,600	33,100	6
Maine	128,500	8,600	7
Maryland	658,900	179,100	27
Massachusetts	669,700	190,400	28
Michigan	1,071,500	135,100	13
Minnesota	638,000	116,600	18
Mississippi	366,600	15,000	4
Missouri	695,100	54,600	8
Montana	110,500	3,600	3
Nebraska	232,400	36,200	16
Nevada	334,600	122,500	37
New Hampshire	129,700	14,300	11
New Jersey	978,700	364,800	37
New Mexico	257,000	51,100	20
New York	2,076,300	737,100	36
North Carolina	1,137,100	210,800	19

	All Children (Ages 0 to 8)	Children of Immigrants	Children of Immigrants as a Share of All Children (%)
North Dakota	80,000	3,100	4
Ohio	1,290,800	100,100	8
Oklahoma	475,300	62,300	13
Oregon	428,400	102,400	24
Pennsylvania	1,314,400	148,300	11
Rhode Island	103,900	25,100	24
South Carolina	540,500	54,300	10
South Dakota	103,300	5,600	5
Tennessee	728,600	86,100	12
Texas	3,512,900	1,184,500	34
Utah	461,100	73,500	16
Vermont	57,300	3,300	6
Virginia	916,100	208,300	23
Washington	783,400	220,900	28
West Virginia	187,300	4,300	2
Wisconsin	644,000	69,200	11
Wyoming	70,200	5,200	7

Source: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2010-2012 American Community Survey (ACS).

Appendix 2: Data on Parents of Young Children

The following tables, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), compare foreign-born parents of young children (ages 0-8) to the overall population of parents of young children. *Low income* refers to those with a family income below 200% of the federal poverty level. *Low Educated* refers to parents without a high school degree or its equivalent. *Limited English Proficient* refers to those who reported speaking English less than "very well."

Table A-2. Parents of Young Children in Each State, by Nativity, Income, Education, and English Proficiency, 2010-12

United States	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	22,258,200	4,584,600	21
Low Income			
Total	7,769,700	2,067,400	
Share (%)	35	45	27
Low Educated			
Total	2,388,800	1,070,500	
Share (%)	11	23	45
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	2,394,600	2,146,200	
Share (%)	11	47	90

Alabama	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	338,800	25,600	8
Low Income			
Total	142,600	14,900	
Share (%)	42	58	10
Low Educated			
Total	42,800	8,800	
Share (%)	13	34	21
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	16,900	15,100	
Share (%)	5	59	89

Alaska	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	55,700	3,400	6
Low Income			
Total	16,300	1,300	
Share (%)	29	37	8
Low Educated			
Total	2,800	*	
Share (%)	5	13	18
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	1,600	*	
Share (%)	3	26	56

Arizona	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	438,100	92,900	21
Low Income			
Total	179,600	52,500	
Share (%)	41	56	29
Low Educated			
Total	57,700	25,900	
Share (%)	13	28	45
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	50,000	44,100	
Share (%)	11	47	88

Arkansas	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	213,700	18,100	8
Low Income			
Total	100,900	12,000	
Share (%)	47	66	12
Low Educated			
Total	27,000	6,400	
Share (%)	13	36	24
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	11,800	9,700	
Share (%)	6	53	82

California	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	2,689,600	1,050,200	39
Low Income			
Total	914,400	453,400	
Share (%)	34	43	50
Low Educated			
Total	400,200	272,600	
Share (%)	15	26	68
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	563,900	521,900	
Share (%)	21	50	93

Colorado	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	409,800	62,800	15
Low Income			
Total	125,300	35,000	
Share (%)	31	56	28
Low Educated			
Total	39,100	18,300	
Share (%)	10	29	47
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	35,600	32,100	
Share (%)	9	51	90

Connecticut	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	251,900	58,200	23
Low Income			
Total	58,500	17,300	
Share (%)	23	30	29
Low Educated			
Total	17,200	7,500	
Share (%)	7	13	44
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	26,800	21,900	
Share (%)	11	38	82

Delaware	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	61,200	10,300	17
Low Income			
Total	18,900	4,300	
Share (%)	31	41	23
Low Educated			
Total	7,100	3,000	
Share (%)	12	29	42
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	5,000	4,200	
Share (%)	8	40	84

District of Columbia	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	35,600	8,200	23
Low Income			
Total	8,500	2,600	
Share (%)	24	32	31
Low Educated			
Total	3,400	1,800	
Share (%)	10	22	53
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	2,600	2,300	
Share (%)	7	28	88

Florida	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	1,162,400	320,700	28
Low Income			
Total	459,500	155,900	
Share (%)	40	49	34
Low Educated			
Total	124,100	53,500	
Share (%)	11	17	43
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	162,400	143,000	
Share (%)	14	45	88

Georgia	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	723,600	129,300	18
Low Income			
Total	293,300	68,300	
Share (%)	41	53	23
Low Educated			
Total	89,300	36,200	
Share (%)	12	28	41
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	66,500	61,700	
Share (%)	9	48	93

Hawaii	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	96,600	21,600	22
Low Income			
Total	25,200	6,900	
Share (%)	26	32	27
Low Educated			
Total	5,500	2,900	
Share (%)	6	13	53
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	10,000	8,100	
Share (%)	10	38	81

Idaho	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	124,000	13,800	11
Low Income			
Total	59,800	8,900	
Share (%)	48	64	15
Low Educated			
Total	12,000	5,000	
Share (%)	10	36	42
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	7,800	7,200	
Share (%)	6	52	92

Illinois	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	914,100	214,100	23
Low Income			
Total	285,000	91,300	
Share (%)	31	43	32
Low Educated			
Total	86,400	44,600	
Share (%)	9	21	52
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	114,800	105,800	
Share (%)	13	49	92

Indiana	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	466,100	40,100	9
Low Income			
Total	179,400	21,700	
Share (%)	38	54	12
Low Educated			
Total	52,800	10,800	
Share (%)	11	27	20
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	24,000	20,500	
Share (%)	5	51	85

Iowa	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	232,200	23,200	10
Low Income			
Total	72,100	11,000	
Share (%)	31	47	15
Low Educated			
Total	16,200	6,100	
Share (%)	7	26	38
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	12,100	10,900	
Share (%)	5	47	90

Kansas	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	219,700	28,000	13
Low Income			
Total	81,500	14,800	
Share (%)	37	53	18
Low Educated			
Total	23,000	8,600	
Share (%)	10	31	37
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	15,600	14,000	
Share (%)	7	50	90

Kentucky	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	315,700	21,200	7
Low Income			
Total	130,100	11,000	
Share (%)	41	52	8
Low Educated			
Total	33,800	5,000	
Share (%)	11	23	15
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	10,300	9,100	
Share (%)	3	43	88

Louisiana	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	312,300	18,300	6
Low Income			
Total	125,000	9,000	
Share (%)	40	49	7
Low Educated			
Total	40,600	3,800	
Share (%)	13	21	9
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	11,100	9,400	
Share (%)	4	51	85

Maine	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	89,300	3,700	4
Low Income			
Total	32,700	1,600	
Share (%)	37	43	5
Low Educated			
Total	5,000	*	
Share (%)	6	14	10
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	1,700	1,200	
Share (%)	2	31	71

Maryland	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	425,300	109,700	26
Low Income			
Total	95,800	34,800	
Share (%)	23	32	36
Low Educated			
Total	36,700	21,200	
Share (%)	9	19	58
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	39,900	37,800	
Share (%)	9	35	95

Massachusetts	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	475,000	118,800	25
Low Income			
Total	102,100	37,300	
Share (%)	21	31	37
Low Educated			
Total	26,200	12,900	
Share (%)	6	11	49
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	51,400	44,900	
Share (%)	11	38	87

Michigan	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	649,200	72,900	11
Low Income			
Total	242,400	29,700	
Share (%)	37	41	12
Low Educated			
Total	53,500	11,200	
Share (%)	8	15	21
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	33,300	30,200	
Share (%)	5	41	91

Minnesota	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	422,600	65,400	15
Low Income			
Total	107,800	28,200	
Share (%)	26	43	26
Low Educated			
Total	26,900	14,200	
Share (%)	6	22	53
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	28,700	26,700	
Share (%)	7	41	93

Mississippi	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	197,900	8,500	4
Low Income			
Total	92,200	4,300	
Share (%)	47	50	5
Low Educated			
Total	25,600	2,800	
Share (%)	13	33	11
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	4,000	3,600	
Share (%)	2	42	90

Missouri	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	436,600	34,500	8
Low Income			
Total	164,800	14,900	
Share (%)	38	43	9
Low Educated			
Total	39,700	6,000	
Share (%)	9	17	15
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	17,900	15,300	
Share (%)	4	44	85

Montana	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	70,600	1,500	2
Low Income			
Total	28,100	*	
Share (%)	40	33	2
Low Educated			
Total	4,500	*	
Share (%)	6	0	0
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	*	*	
Share (%)	1	19	*

Nebraska	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	143,100	16,000	11
Low Income			
Total	46,500	8,000	
Share (%)	32	50	17
Low Educated			
Total	13,200	7,700	
Share (%)	9	48	58
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	9,600	8,500	
Share (%)	7	53	89

Nevada	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	194,100	56,300	29
Low Income			
Total	77,300	27,800	
Share (%)	40	49	36
Low Educated			
Total	28,900	16,000	
Share (%)	15	28	55
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	31,800	28,400	
Share (%)	16	50	89

New Hampshire	Parents of Young Children (U.S.- and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	94,200	9,000	10
Low Income			
Total	20,700	2,600	
Share (%)	22	29	12
Low Educated			
Total	5,500	*	
Share (%)	6	8	13
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	3,200	2,700	
Share (%)	3	31	84

New Jersey	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	662,700	228,900	35
Low Income			
Total	156,400	72,900	
Share (%)	24	32	47
Low Educated			
Total	43,900	26,900	
Share (%)	7	12	61
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	101,000	93,200	
Share (%)	15	41	92

New Mexico	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	138,700	21,100	15
Low Income			
Total	62,700	13,200	
Share (%)	45	62	21
Low Educated			
Total	21,000	8,100	
Share (%)	15	38	39
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	13,700	11,100	
Share (%)	10	53	81

New York	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	1,318,300	410,100	31
Low Income			
Total	417,100	174,800	
Share (%)	32	43	42
Low Educated			
Total	143,000	78,200	
Share (%)	11	19	55
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	200,300	180,900	
Share (%)	15	44	90

North Carolina	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	715,300	105,700	15
Low Income			
Total	285,600	63,200	
Share (%)	40	60	22
Low Educated			
Total	82,800	34,100	
Share (%)	12	32	41
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	59,500	55,100	
Share (%)	8	52	93

North Dakota	Parents of Young Children (U.S.- and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	56,800	1,300	2
Low Income			
Total	17,000	*	
Share (%)	30	36	3
Low Educated			
Total	2,200	*	
Share (%)	4	5	5
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	*	*	
Share (%)	1	25	*

Ohio	Parents of Young Children (U.S.- and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	790,400	59,400	8
Low Income			
Total	289,500	24,800	
Share (%)	37	42	9
Low Educated			
Total	64,600	9,300	
Share (%)	8	16	14
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	28,100	22,600	
Share (%)	4	38	80

Oklahoma	Parents of Young Children (U.S.- and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	291,900	31,100	11
Low Income			
Total	127,700	18,000	
Share (%)	44	58	14
Low Educated			
Total	35,800	11,000	
Share (%)	12	35	31
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	18,800	17,300	
Share (%)	6	56	92

Oregon	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	278,700	49,500	18
Low Income			
Total	106,400	26,300	
Share (%)	38	53	25
Low Educated			
Total	28,500	12,800	
Share (%)	10	26	45
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	25,400	24,200	
Share (%)	9	49	95

Pennsylvania	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	832,700	90,100	11
Low Income			
Total	245,300	31,900	
Share (%)	29	35	13
Low Educated			
Total	65,600	12,500	
Share (%)	8	14	19
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	46,300	34,800	
Share (%)	6	39	75

Rhode Island	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	66,800	13,000	19
Low Income			
Total	18,700	5,400	
Share (%)	28	42	29
Low Educated			
Total	6,600	3,400	
Share (%)	10	26	52
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	6,400	5,800	
Share (%)	10	44	91

South Carolina	Parents of Young Children (U.S.- and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	316,600	29,100	9
Low Income			
Total	133,100	16,900	
Share (%)	42	58	13
Low Educated			
Total	37,500	9,200	
Share (%)	12	32	25
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	16,100	14,700	
Share (%)	5	51	91

South Dakota	Parents of Young Children (U.S.- and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	58,200	2,600	4
Low Income			
Total	18,500	1,700	
Share (%)	32	66	9
Low Educated			
Total	4,300	*	
Share (%)	7	36	21
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	1,400	1,300	
Share (%)	2	49	93

Tennessee	Parents of Young Children (U.S.- and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	449,400	44,700	10
Low Income			
Total	190,000	25,600	
Share (%)	42	57	13
Low Educated			
Total	42,700	12,800	
Share (%)	10	29	30
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	24,700	22,800	
Share (%)	5	51	92

Texas	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	2,006,100	519,000	26
Low Income			
Total	801,300	290,800	
Share (%)	40	56	36
Low Educated			
Total	309,200	174,900	
Share (%)	15	34	57
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	334,300	287,800	
Share (%)	17	55	86

Utah	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	258,400	30,000	12
Low Income			
Total	94,900	18,400	
Share (%)	37	61	19
Low Educated			
Total	20,400	8,600	
Share (%)	8	29	42
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	16,200	14,600	
Share (%)	6	48	90

Vermont	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	41,300	2,400	6
Low Income			
Total	12,500	*	
Share (%)	30	18	3
Low Educated			
Total	2,000	*	
Share (%)	5	0	0
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	*	*	
Share (%)	2	17	*

Virginia	Parents of Young Children (U.S.- and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	618,600	133,900	22
Low Income			
Total	156,300	39,100	
Share (%)	25	29	25
Low Educated			
Total	46,100	21,900	
Share (%)	7	16	48
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	52,200	49,600	
Share (%)	8	37	95

Washington	Parents of Young Children (U.S.- and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	520,600	116,100	22
Low Income			
Total	163,100	44,300	
Share (%)	31	38	27
Low Educated			
Total	44,900	22,300	
Share (%)	9	19	50
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	55,800	50,500	
Share (%)	11	44	91

West Virginia	Parents of Young Children (U.S.- and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	120,800	2,300	2
Low Income			
Total	47,000	1,100	
Share (%)	39	47	2
Low Educated			
Total	12,200	*	
Share (%)	10	19	3
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	1,300	1,000	
Share (%)	1	43	77

Wisconsin	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	413,500	35,700	9
Low Income			
Total	126,000	15,200	
Share (%)	30	43	12
Low Educated			
Total	25,600	7,500	
Share (%)	6	21	29
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	19,600	16,100	
Share (%)	5	45	82

Wyoming	Parents of Young Children (U.S.-and Foreign-Born)	Foreign-Born Parents of Young Children	Share of Foreign-Born Parents in Category (%)
Total Number of Parents	43,000	2,400	6
Low Income			
Total	14,100	1,500	
Share (%)	33	63	11
Low Educated			
Total	3,400	*	
Share (%)	8	35	24
Limited English Proficient (LEP)			
Total	1,400	*	
Share (%)	3	34	57

Note: * Sample size too small to be reliable.
Source: MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's pooled 2010-2012 American Community Surveys.

Appendix 3: Field Research and Partner Organizations

The National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy (NCIIP) at the Migration Policy Institute partnered with the following organizations for carrying out the field research for this report (see Table A-3). These organizations' expertise includes newcomer policy and program knowledge. They all operate in states with significant populations of young children of immigrants, and have important connections to local immigrant and refugee leaders and programs that have high levels of trust with immigrant families.

Table A-3. Partner Organizations

Partner Organization and Description	Young Children of Immigrants (0-8) in Home State, as Share of all Children (%)
California Community Foundation (CCF) www.calfund.org CCF unites the power of philanthropy with innovative strategies to create greater equity, opportunity, and prosperity in Los Angeles County.	49
CASA de Maryland http://casademaryland.org/ CASA de Maryland is Maryland's largest Latino and immigrant-based service and advocacy organization, and provides a range of activities that address the multiple conditions of poverty affecting many Latinos and other immigrants in the metropolitan Washington area and throughout the state of Maryland.	27
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) http://icirr.org/ ICIRR is dedicated to promoting the rights of immigrants and refugees to full and equal participation in the civic, cultural, social, and political life of our diverse society.	28
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) http://miracoalition.org/ MIRA is the largest organization in New England promoting the rights and integration of immigrants and refugees, providing policy analysis and advocacy, institutional organizing, training and leadership development, and strategic communications.	28
The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) http://thenyic.org/ The NYIC promotes immigrants' full civic participation, fosters their leadership, and provides a unified voice and a vehicle for collective action for New York's diverse immigrant communities.	36
OneAmerica http://weareoneamerica.org/ OneAmerica is the largest immigrant advocacy organization in Washington State, organizing in and advocating for and with a diversity of immigrant communities including Latino, African, and Asian. OneAmerica plays a leading role in national coalitions within the immigrant rights and due process arenas.	28

Additionally, Table A-4 lists the individuals who lent their time, expertise, and experience to informing this project. The authors thank them for their contributions to this work.

Table A-4. Interviewees and Contributors

Yvette Rodriguez *Vice President, Head Start & Children Services* **Action for Boston Community Development**	Lynn Appelbaum and Karenne Berry *Chief Program Officer and VP of Education* **Educational Alliance**
Diane Ujiye *Executive Director* **Asian and Pacific Islanders California Action Network**	Hanna Gebretensae *Director* **Eliot-Pearson Children's School, Tufts University**
Ofelia Medina *Policy Director* **Alliance for a Better Community**	Silvana Vasconcelos *Director of Parent Education* **Literacy Partners**
Karen Marshall *Program Director* **ASPIRE institute, Wheelock College**	Adam Sonenshein *Director of Public Affairs* **Los Angeles Universal Preschool**
Glendelia Zavala *Chief Program Officer* **AVANCE**	Carolina Duque *Executive Director* **Mano a Mano Family Resource Center**
Bernadette Davidson *Director of Child Care and Enrichment Programs* **Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center**	Jeanette Gutierrez *Parent Educator* **Metropolitan Family Services**
Kathy Cheng *Director of Acorn Early Education and Care Program* **Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center**	Delia Pompa *Senior Vice President, Programs* **National Council of La Raza**
Joanne Stone-Libon *Director* **CAPIC Head Start**	Michelle Sarju *Director of Programs* **Open Arms Perinatal Services**
Eliza Leighton *Director of Promise Neighborhood Langley Park Program* **CASA de Maryland**	Melissa Travis *Senior Director of Programs* **People's Resource Center**
Paula Steinke *Manager, Community Engagement* **Child Care Resources**	Maryanna Milton *Adult Learning and Literacy Program Director* **People's Resource Center**
John Hunt *Acting Executive Director for Adult Community Learning* **City University of New York**	Pam Knight *Literacy Coordinator* **People's Resource Center**
Alicia Luna *Parent Leader* **Community Café Collaborative**	Luz Casio *Director, Southwest Early Learning/Refugee and Immigrant Family Center* **Sound Child Care Solutions**
Alicia Luna *Parent Leader* **Community Café Collaborative**	Michael Hunter *Director of Adult Literacy Programs* **University Settlement**

Table A-5. Dates, Locations, and Participants of Focus Groups

Place	Date	Origin Countries of Participants
Chelsea, MA	May 29, 2013	Honduras, Mexico, Taiwan, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic
Mount Vernon, WA	June 13, 2013	Mexico
White Center, WA	June 13, 2013	Somalia
Lynn, MA	August 2, 2013	Iraq, Nepal, Jordan, Burma
Marlborough, MA	August 18, 2013	Brazil
Boston, MA	August 19, 2013	China
Langley Park, MD	October 3, 2013	Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras

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Prior to joining NYIC, Ms. McHugh served as Deputy Director of New York City's 1990 Census Project and as Executive Assistant to New York Mayor Ed Koch's chief of staff. She is the recipient of dozens of awards recognizing her efforts to bring diverse constituencies together and tackle tough problems, including the prestigious Leadership for a Changing World award. She has served as a member and officer on the boards of directors for both the National Immigration Forum and Working Today; on the editorial board of *Migration World* magazine; and has held appointive positions in a variety of New York city and state commissions, most notably the Commission on the Future of the City University of New York and the New York Workers' Rights Board.

Ms. McHugh is a graduate of Harvard and Radcliffe Colleges.

The Migration Policy Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide. MPI provides analysis, development, and evaluation of migration and refugee policies at the local, national, and international levels. It aims to meet the rising demand for pragmatic and thoughtful responses to the challenges and opportunities that large-scale migration, whether voluntary or forced, presents to communities and institutions in an increasingly integrated world.

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