

The Unique Challenges to the Well-Being of California's Border Kids



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There are 800,000 children living along the California-Mexico border. These “border kids” reflect the region’s diversity and offer a glimpse into the state’s dynamic cultural future. They represent over 100 countries of origin and 80 races. Some live in cosmopolitan city centers while others inhabit small farming communities. Few other segments of California’s population are more linguistically, ethnically or economically diverse.¹

California’s border communities span two counties, San Diego and Imperial, which have contrasting characteristics:

Imperial County	San Diego County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily rural with fewer than 200,000 residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily urban and suburban with close to three million residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominantly Latino and white, reflecting the shared border with Mexicali, Mexico 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A gateway for immigrants from all over the world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher poverty rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant income disparities among communities

The California-Mexico border is one of the fastest growing regions in the country. This growth has had a negative impact on the air and water quality in both Imperial and San Diego counties. These problems stem from steep increases in traffic, unplanned housing developments and lightly-regulated manufacturing plants along the border.²

Half of all children living along the border are in an immigrant family—households with at least one parent born abroad. Of the border kids in immigrant families, 81% are U.S. citizens. Children in immigrant families often face similar challenges as those faced by low-income children, including below-average health outcomes and academic performance. These risk factors persist despite higher rates of employment and marriage in most immigrant communities.³ Moreover, children living in the border’s immigrant families are subject to higher rates of asthma and childhood obesity, experience linguistic isolation, and have limited use of supports such as food stamps and Medi-Cal. Immigrant parents often have to deal with the added challenges of limited English proficiency and different cultural norms as they work to provide their children with the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

1. 2005 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

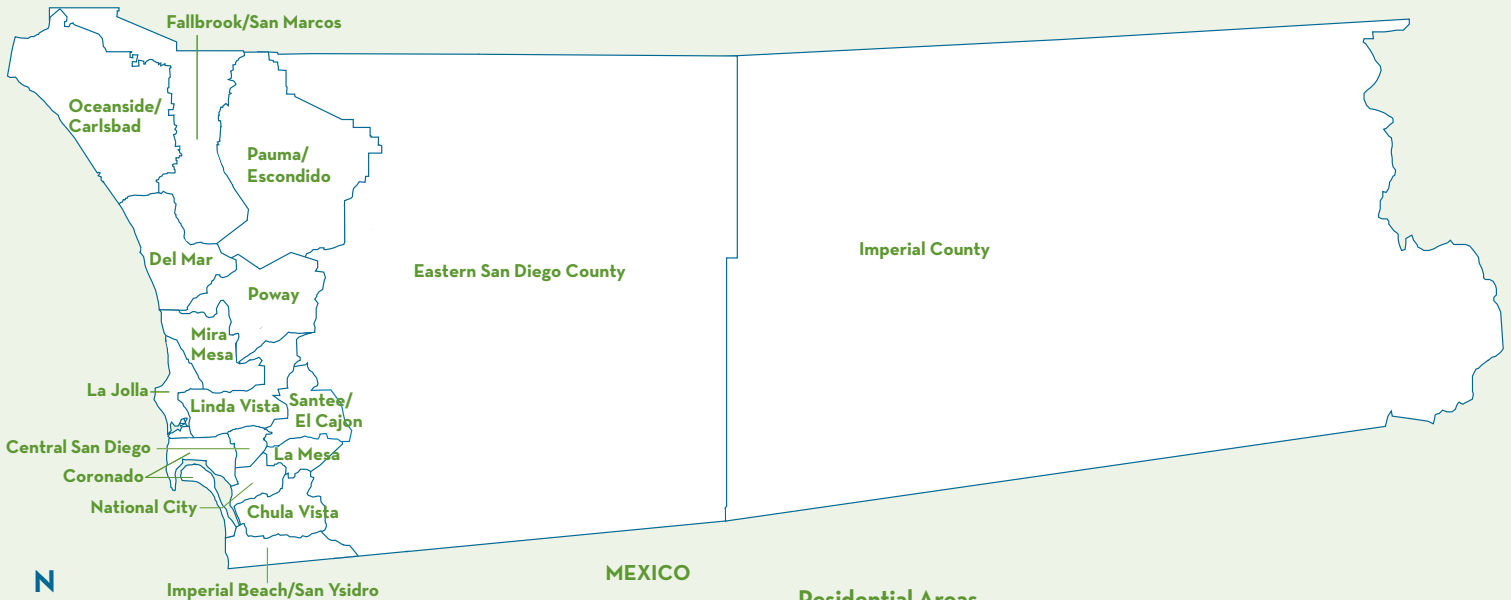
2. U.S. Department of Environmental Protection and Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, *State of the Border Region* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Environmental Protection, 2006).

3. National Center for Children in Poverty, *Young Children in Immigrant Families—The Role of Philanthropy* (2006).

The California-Mexico border shares many characteristics with the entire southwest border, which is distinct from non-border communities. For example, children living along the southwest border are more likely to be Latino, speak more than one language and live with married parents than their peers in non-border states. Unfortunately, children living along the southwest border are also about twice as likely to be poor as those in non-border states.⁴

This report presents indicators of children's health, education, and economic well-being for communities on the California side of the California-Mexico border. Where possible, data is presented by residential area. Since Imperial County only has 155,000 residents, the entire county is combined into one residential area.

San Diego and Imperial Counties



Residential Areas

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Coronado | Linda Vista |
| Imperial Beach-San Ysidro | La Jolla |
| Eastern San Diego County | Mira Mesa |
| Chula Vista | Poway |
| National City | Del Mar |
| La Mesa | Pauma/Escondido |
| Central San Diego | Fallbrook/San Marcos |
| Santee/El Cajon | Oceanside/Carlsbad |
| Imperial County | |

4. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Border Kids Count Pocket Guide: A Snapshot of Children Living on the Southwest Border* (Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005).

Who Are California's Border Children?

Please keep in mind the following statistics on California's border kids as you read the rest of this report:

Border Kids Are Racially and Ethnically Diverse

Children living along the border are primarily white and Latino, though large communities of Asians and Pacific Islanders also live in certain residential areas. The percentages of foreign-born children range from 17% in National City to just 2% in Eastern San Diego County.

Border Kids' Demographics

Residential Area	Total Child Population	White	Latino	Asian and Pacific Islander	African American	Other	Percentage Foreign-Born
Coronado	34,251	67%	22%	5%	4%	2%	7%
Imperial Beach/San Ysidro	32,692	10%	76%	9%	2%	4%	5%
Eastern San Diego County	41,895	68%	27%	1%	0%	4%	2%
Chula Vista	71,662	16%	61%	16%	3%	4%	6%
National City	68,183	4%	63%	15%	13%	4%	17%
La Mesa	30,727	40%	41%	8%	8%	3%	4%
Central San Diego	40,197	17%	51%	12%	17%	3%	14%
Santee/El Cajon	62,161	54%	33%	4%	5%	4%	8%
Linda Vista	58,674	40%	34%	8%	12%	7%	5%
La Jolla	14,313	74%	7%	13%	0%	7%	5%
Mira Mesa	39,986	50%	10%	31%	1%	8%	11%
Poway	56,639	63%	11%	17%	3%	6%	10%
Del Mar	43,478	68%	21%	5%	1%	5%	5%
Pauma/Escondido	44,798	34%	54%	4%	3%	5%	12%
Fallbrook/San Marcos	62,444	34%	57%	1%	3%	5%	7%
Oceanside/Carlsbad	50,147	44%	41%	3%	6%	7%	3%
Imperial County	48,291	13%	83%	2%	1%	1%	10%
California	9,675,036	32%	47%	10%	7%	4%	7%

Source: Children Now analysis of 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata.

Nearly Every Child in the Border Region Lives with a Working Parent, but Many Families Struggle to Make Ends Meet

Despite high rates of employment along much of the border, as many as 37% of border kids live in poor families.⁵ Children living in low-income families often lack access to health care and quality educational opportunities, which can lead to poor health and academic outcomes.⁶ In San Diego County, child poverty is particularly concentrated in residential areas closest to the California-Mexico border, such as in Imperial Beach/San Ysidro, National City and Central San Diego.

5. Gregory Acs and Austin Nichols, *Working to Make Ends Meet: Understanding the Income and Expenses of America's Low Income Families* (Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute, September 2005).

6. Michelle Beadle, *Children in Low-Income Families: Summary of the Urban Institute and Child Trends Roundtable on Children in Low-Income Families* (Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute, January 2006).

Border Families' Economic Security⁷

Residential Area	Per Capita Median Family Income	Children Living in Poverty ⁸	Families Where at least One Parent Works
Coronado	\$22,920	18%	89%
Imperial Beach/San Ysidro	\$14,295	30%	91%
Eastern San Diego County	\$23,429	10%	98%
Chula Vista	\$18,106	11%	97%
National City	\$10,187	34%	96%
La Mesa	\$18,336	9%	100%
Central San Diego	\$11,205	37%	77%
Santee/El Cajon	\$20,068	20%	92%
Linda Vista	\$20,984	12%	97%
La Jolla	\$32,088	5%	100%
Mira Mesa	\$27,164	8%	100%
Poway	\$31,602	8%	98%
Del Mar	\$29,847	7%	95%
Pauma/Escondido	\$16,451	14%	86%
Fallbrook/San Marcos	\$19,864	15%	89%
Oceanside/Carlsbad	\$16,977	6%	95%
Imperial County	\$9,820	31%	79%
California	\$11,884	20%	92%

Source: Children Now analysis of 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata.

The number of children in foster care is one indicator of the number of families in severe distress.

About 6,000 Border Kids Are in Foster Care

The number of children in foster care is one indicator of the number of families in severe distress. About 6,000 children living along the border are in foster care, although the region's overall placement rate is somewhat lower than the statewide average. Native American children are substantially more likely to be in foster care than their peers statewide, while the border's African American placement rate is lower than the statewide average.

Foster Care Placement Rates*

County	All Children	White	Latino	Asian and Pacific Islander	African American	Native American
Imperial	6.4	10	5.7	0	12.8	16.1
San Diego	7.7	5.5	8.5	2.8	25	20.3
California	7.6	6.4	6.7	1.7	29.4	12.6

*Children in foster care per 1,000 children.

Source: University of California, Berkeley Center for Social Services Research.

7. Hard work is not a guarantee of financial stability along the border, since many parents work in low-wage jobs that do not offer essential health and retirement benefits.

8. The Federal Poverty Level was \$19,350 for a family of four in 2005.

Portrait of Immigrant Families on the Border

About Half of the Border's Children Are Part of an Immigrant Family

Immigrant families tend to be concentrated in communities where there are others from their country of origin. This type of community make-up helps immigrant families acculturate easier into U.S. society. However, these close-knit immigrant communities can also delay newcomers' mastery of English, which is key to their success, since exposure to English-speaking populations is limited.⁹

Immigrant Families on the Border

Residential Area	Immigrant Families		Children in Immigrant Families	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Coronado	19,437	19%	14,016	41%
Imperial Beach/San Ysidro	18,927	53%	20,286	62%
Eastern San Diego County	8,996	16%	11,476	27%
Chula Vista	35,138	47%	42,053	59%
National City	31,651	58%	49,429	73%
La Mesa	10,850	29%	11,711	38%
Central San Diego	18,536	34%	23,186	58%
Santee/El Cajon	14,191	17%	19,782	32%
Linda Vista	21,834	23%	18,460	32%
La Jolla	13,431	23%	5,063	35%
Mira Mesa	20,742	38%	20,869	52%
Poway	19,460	28%	21,236	38%
Del Mar	13,982	19%	12,739	29%
Pauma/Escondido	18,127	31%	24,484	55%
Fallbrook/San Marcos	22,053	30%	35,109	56%
Oceanside/Carlsbad	16,447	27%	19,260	38%
Imperial County	24,617	55%	31,066	64%
California	4,074,261	34%	4,873,635	50%

Source: Children Now analysis of 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata.



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9. Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: A Portrait* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006).

In California, parents in immigrant families have lived in the U.S. an average of 21 years.

Nearly All Children in Immigrant Families Are Citizens

Most immigrant families have been in the United States for many years. In California, parents in immigrant families have lived in the U.S. an average of 21 years, and just 15% of children in immigrant families were born abroad. In the border region, immigrant families vary substantially by children's citizenship, countries of origin and length of time in the U.S. Families with U.S.-born children and at least one immigrant parent are considered "mixed-status" families.¹⁰ These families face unique challenges in accessing support services such as health coverage, food assistance, and welfare, for which only U.S. citizens are eligible.

Children and Parents in Immigrant Families

Residential Area	Common Countries of Origin* as a Percentage of All Children	U.S.-Born Children in Immigrant Families	Median Number of Years Parents Have Been in the U.S.
Coronado	Mexico (6%), Canada (1%), Philippines (.5%)	83%	18
Imperial Beach/San Ysidro	Mexico (4%), Philippines (3%), Colombia (.5%)	93%	24
Eastern San Diego County	Mexico (1%), Brazil (.3%), former USSR (.3%)	94%	21
Chula Vista	Mexico (5%), Philippines (1%), Chile (1%)	90%	26
National City	Mexico (12%), Philippines (4%), Australia (.4%)	77%	20
La Mesa	Mexico (2%), Turkey (1%), China (.3%)	91%	26
Central San Diego	Mexico (9%), Vietnam (3%), Kenya (1%)	75%	17
Santee/El Cajon	Mexico (6%), Asia (1%), Brazil (.5%)	74%	21
Linda Vista	Mexico (3%), Vietnam (1%), Philippines (.5%)	84%	21
La Jolla	Japan (1%), China (1%), Korea (1%)	87%	21
Mira Mesa	Philippines (3%), Vietnam (2%), Canada (1%)	79%	20
Poway	Korea (2%), Germany (2%), Philippines (1%)	73%	21
Del Mar	Mexico (3%), Lithuania (.4%), United Kingdom (.3%)	85%	22
Pauma/Escondido	Mexico (10%), Japan (1%), Morocco (.4%)	79%	19
Fallbrook/San Marcos	Mexico (5%), Philippines (.3%) Guatemala (.3%)	88%	20
Oceanside/Carlsbad	Mexico (3%), Philippines (1%), India (.2%)	92%	22
Imperial County	Mexico (9%), Kuwait (1%), Hong Kong (.4%)	85%	23
California	Mexico (4%), Philippines (1%), Korea (.3%)	85%	21

*Some Asian countries of origin are not provided by the U.S. Census.

Source: Children Now analysis of 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata.

Mothers in Immigrant Families Are Less Likely to Have Completed High School

Maternal education is one of the most significant predictors of a child's health, economic well-being and success in school.¹¹ Less-educated mothers face greater difficulty helping their children learn, acquiring services to ensure the optimal development of their children, and navigating bureaucratic institutions like schools. In every residential area along the border region, mothers in immigrant families are

10. Michael Fix and Wendy Zimmerman, *All Under One Roof: Mixed-Status Families in an Era of Reform* (Washington D.C.: Urban Institute, 1999).

11. Kristin Anderson Moore et al., *Sociodemographic Risk and Child Well-Being* (Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute, June 2000).

less likely than mothers in non-immigrant families to have completed 12 years of school. This can pose challenges for immigrant parents as they try to assist their children in reaching their full potential.

Mothers with at Least a 12th Grade Education

Residential Area	Immigrant Family	Non-Immigrant Family
Coronado	60%	94%
Imperial Beach/San Ysidro	62%	85%
Eastern San Diego County	81%	96%
Chula Vista	77%	85%
National City	55%	78%
La Mesa	81%	91%
Central San Diego	56%	87%
Santee/El Cajon	69%	59%
Linda Vista	74%	98%
La Jolla	93%	100%
Mira Mesa	87%	99%
Poway	81%	99%
Del Mar	81%	97%
Pauma/Escondido	58%	90%
Fallbrook/San Marcos	40%	93%
Oceanside/Carlsbad	65%	95%
Imperial County	61%	82%
California	65%	92%

Source: Children Now analysis of 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata.

Many Students along the Border Are Learning English

In 2005-06, 132,000 children, or 23% of all students along the border, were English Learners. While the ratio of English Learners to Fluent English Proficient speakers in San Diego County roughly mirrors the rest of California, Imperial County schools have a much higher percentage of English Learners than the statewide average. This is due in part to the high percentage of children living in linguistic isolation in this residential area (see next section).

English Learners on the Border

County	Enrollment	English Learners	Fluent English Proficient ¹²
Imperial County	36,057	45%	25%
San Diego County	495,228	23%	18%
California	6,312,436	25%	18%

Source: Children Now analysis of California Department of Education data, 2005-06.



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12. As they build their English language competency, English Learners are ultimately redesignated as Fluent English Proficient.

Children in linguistically-isolated homes may face increased difficulty learning English, in turn affecting their academic achievement.

Relatively Few Children in Immigrant Families Live with Adults Who Don't Yet Speak English¹³

The border region is linguistically diverse, and many of its children speak more than one language well. However, some children in immigrant families live with adults who are not yet proficient English speakers. Demanding work schedules and limited adult education opportunities have slowed many parents' efforts to master English. Children in linguistically-isolated homes may face increased difficulty learning English, in turn affecting their academic achievement. Further, non-fluent parents may have a harder time finding a well-paying job, understanding their child's teacher, and accessing health and other social services.¹⁴

Children in Linguistically-Isolated Families

Residential Area	Percentage of All Children in Immigrant Families
Coronado	13%
Imperial Beach/San Ysidro	14%
Eastern San Diego County	3%
Chula Vista	8%
National City	26%
La Mesa	2%
Central San Diego	26%
Santee/El Cajon	10%
Linda Vista	5%
La Jolla	9%
Mira Mesa	10%
Poway	7%
Del Mar	8%
Pauma/Escondido	21%
Fallbrook/San Marcos	13%
Oceanside/Carlsbad	9%
Imperial County	19%
California	14%

Source: Children Now analysis of 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata.

13. The Census Bureau classifies a household as linguistically-isolated if no household members age 14 years or over speak English very well.

14. Margie Shields and Richard Behrman, Children of Immigrant Families: Analysis and Recommendations," *Future of Children* 14:2 (Summer 2004).

Health

Too Many Children along the Border Are Hungry

Chronic food insecurity can harm children’s physical and mental health.¹⁵ These risk factors disproportionately affect poor children and can lead to malnutrition and hunger, as well as obesity when families cannot afford healthy foods. Many more children than those receiving food stamps face chronic hunger.

Border Teens Are More Likely to be Overweight Than Their Peers

Teens in Imperial County are twice as likely to be obese as their peers. Researchers attribute this disparity to the affordability of unhealthy fast food and too few healthy meals.¹⁶ Teens living in poverty are particularly susceptible to becoming obese, as food insecurity limits their regular access to healthy, nutritious meals.

Teenagers Who Are Overweight or Obese¹⁷

County	Teens Living Below the Poverty Line	Teens Living Above the Poverty Line
San Diego	21%	11%
Imperial	40%*	33%*
California	23%	15%

*Values are not statistically significant for Imperial County due to small sample size.

Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2005.

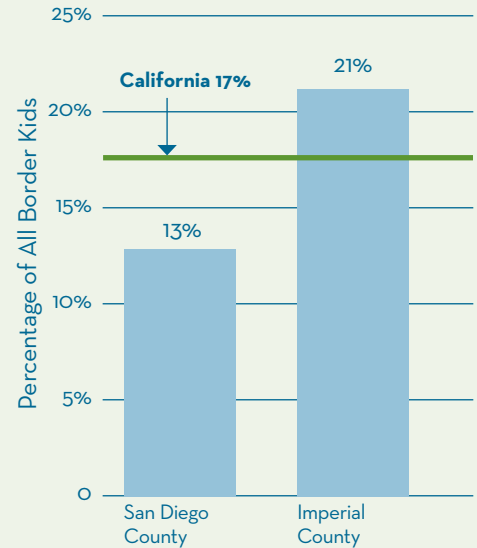
Tens of Thousands of Border Children Have Asthma

While border kids’ asthma diagnosis rates are about the same as the state average, Imperial County has the highest asthma hospitalization rates in the state.¹⁸ Environmental factors, including diesel truck traffic, pollution from factories and incorrectly applied fertilizers exacerbate health problems like asthma.

Too Few Children in Border Immigrant Families Have Health Insurance

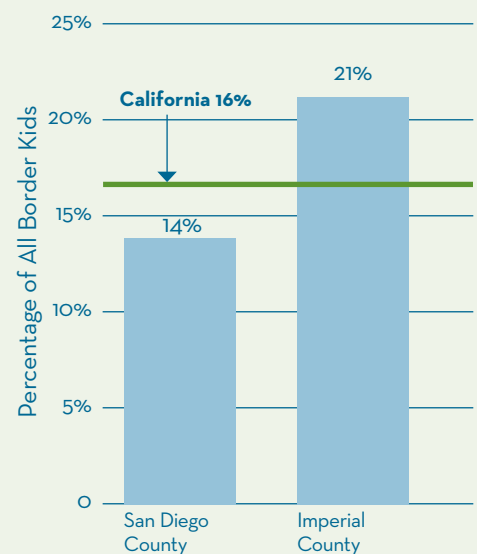
Children in the border region are less likely to be insured than their peers statewide, and children living in immigrant families have the lowest insurance rates among border kids. Research suggests that the vast majority of uninsured children are citizens and therefore can enroll in Medi-Cal or Healthy Families.¹⁹ Unfortunately, many mixed-status families do not enroll their eligible children for fear of jeopardizing their immigration status.²⁰

Children Currently Receiving Food Stamps



Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2005.

Children Diagnosed with Asthma



Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2005.

15. Mark Nord, et al., *Household Food Security in the United States*, 2002, FANRR Report 355. (Washington, D.C.: USDA/ERS, 2002).

16. Gail Woodward-Lopez and George Flores, *Obesity in Latino Communities: Prevention, Principles, Action* (Latino Coalition for a Healthy California, December 2006).

17. For adolescents, “Overweight or obese” includes the respondents who have a Body Mass Index in the highest 95th percentile with respect to their age and gender.

18. El Centro Regional Medical Center, Imperial Valley Asthma Coalition <www.ecrmc.org/prog_serv.php?prog=54>.

19. E. Richard Brown et al., *Undocumented Residents Make Up Small Share of California’s Uninsured Population*, (Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, March 2007).

20. Ann Morse, *SCHIP and Access for Children in Immigrant Families* (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of State Legislatures, 2000).

78,000 children along the border have no usual source of health care.

Children without Health Insurance

County	Children in Immigrant Families	Children in Non-Immigrant Families
San Diego	15%	4%
Imperial	22%	8%
California	12%	4%

Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2005.

Many Border Kids Lack Regular Access to Health Care

Seventy-eight thousand children along the border have no usual source of health care; half live in immigrant families. Border families have developed unique coping mechanisms to deal with these challenges: in 2005, 4% of children in immigrant families in San Diego County and 11% in Imperial County went to Mexico for medical care.

Children without Regular Access to Health Care

County	Children in Immigrant Families	Children in Non-Immigrant Families
San Diego	14%	7%
Imperial	12%	6%
California	12%	7%

Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2005.

Education

African American and Latino Students Living along the Border Are Less Likely to Meet Rigorous State Achievement Goals

The California Standards Test (CST) measures students' mastery of California's challenging academic standards, which outline learning achievement expectations. San Diego and Imperial counties' students perform roughly on par with state averages. Significant variation in test score performance exists among ethnic groups, however, both along the border and statewide.

Proficient or Advanced on the CST Math (Grades 2-6)

County	All Students	White	Latino	Asian and Pacific Islander	African American
Imperial	45%	65%	42%	81%	42%
San Diego	57%	73%	43%	77%	42%
California	52%	67%	40%	76%	35%

Source: Children Now analysis of California Department of Education STAR data, 2005-06.

Proficient or Advanced on the CST English Language Arts (Grades 2-6)

County	All Students	White	Latino	Asian and Pacific Islander	African American
Imperial	33%	58%	30%	68%	34%
San Diego	49%	68%	31%	67%	38%
California	43%	63%	29%	66%	32%

Source: Children Now analysis of California Department of Education STAR data, 2005-06.

English Learners Struggle to Pass the High School Exit Exam

Students must demonstrate mastery of essential academic skills by passing the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) before receiving their high school diploma. English Learner (EL) students lag behind the statewide average for all students, while non-native speakers who have since mastered English (i.e. redesignated students) score much higher than the average. EL students in the border have slightly better pass rates than their peers statewide.

Redesignated Fluent English Proficient students outperform their peers on the High School Exit Exam.

Percentage of Students Who Passed the Math CAHSEE (Grade 10)

County	All Students	English Learner Students	Redesignated Fluent English Proficient Students
San Diego	57%	45%	84%
Imperial	65%	36%	76%
California	59%	35%	75%

Source: Children Now analysis of California Department of Education data, 2005-06.

Percentage of Students Who Passed the English Language Arts CAHSEE (Grade 10)

County	All Students	English Learner Students	Redesignated Fluent English Proficient Students
San Diego	65%	27%	84%
Imperial	50%	31%	90%
California	61%	28%	82%

Source: Children Now analysis of California Department of Education data, 2005-06.

Family Well-Being and Economic Security

Immigrant Parents Are Less Likely to Hold White Collar Jobs

Along the Mexican border, immigrant California families tend to have higher rates of employment than non-immigrant families, particularly first generation immigrants.²¹ Compared to non-immigrant families, however, immigrants overwhelmingly hold lower-paying jobs that often do not offer essential employee benefits. Immigrants are somewhat more likely to be in manual labor occupations like buildings and grounds, janitorial, sales, construction, transportation and material moving. However, immigrants in this region are *far* less likely to work in professional occupations such as management, education and training, and administrative support.²²

Occupations for Immigrant and Non-Immigrant Parents

Residential Area	Professional Occupations		Manual Labor Occupations	
	Immigrant Parent	Non-Immigrant Parent	Immigrant Parent	Non-Immigrant Parent
Coronado	7%	34%	48%	20%
Imperial Beach/San Ysidro	8%	27%	31%	19%
Eastern San Diego County	29%	21%	25%	23%
Chula Vista	14%	24%	21%	19%
National City	5%	22%	26%	24%
La Mesa	11%	24%	28%	22%
Central San Diego	6%	26%	30%	18%
Santee/El Cajon	10%	16%	22%	17%
Linda Vista	13%	31%	23%	17%
La Jolla	24%	37%	19%	13%
Mira Mesa	18%	20%	8%	11%
Poway	17%	26%	15%	17%
Del Mar	16%	34%	24%	22%
Pauma/Escondido	8%	34%	36%	20%
Fallbrook/San Marcos	8%	37%	33%	16%
Oceanside/Carlsbad	7%	27%	29%	21%
Imperial County	12%	18%	16%	16%
California	10%	20%	26%	20%

Source: Children Now analysis of 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata.

21. Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, *Newcomers in the American Workplace: Improving Outcomes for Low-Wage Immigrants and Refugees* (2002).

22. In certain residential areas, other occupations are common, such as farming in Imperial County or food preparation and service in Central San Diego, Del Mar and Linda Vista.

Immigrant Families Are Connected to Communities through Home Ownership

Owning a home is a key indicator of financial stability and represents a long-term commitment to a neighborhood and community. One study found that children of homeowners have better home environments, higher academic achievement and fewer behavior problems than children of renters.²³ In most border communities, immigrant families own their homes at an equal or sometimes greater rate than their non-immigrant neighbors.

Home Ownership Rates

Residential Area	Immigrant Families	Non-Immigrant Families
Coronado	26%	47%
Imperial Beach/San Ysidro	51%	51%
Eastern San Diego County	76%	71%
Chula Vista	61%	56%
National City	46%	45%
La Mesa	53%	65%
Central San Diego	24%	34%
Santee/El Cajon	52%	53%
Linda Vista	41%	49%
La Jolla	53%	66%
Mira Mesa	71%	74%
Poway	69%	79%
Del Mar	60%	80%
Pauma/Escondido	61%	64%
Fallbrook/San Marcos	44%	71%
Oceanside/Carlsbad	64%	59%
Imperial County	54%	58%
California	54%	62%

Source: Children Now analysis of 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata.

Owning a home is a key indicator of financial stability and represents a long-term commitment to a neighborhood and community.

See page 16 for Children Now's recommendations.

23. Donald R. Haurin et al., *The Impact of Homeownership on Child Outcomes* (Low-Income Homeownership Working Paper Series, Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, October 2001).

Definitions and Sources

Due to limitations of the data, our means of identifying immigrant families varies. We use English Learner student data for many education measures, since test scores for children in immigrant families are not available. Similarly, some children's health status indicators are based on a parent's birthplace or citizenship status. More geographically-detailed data, particularly about children's health, would enable researchers to create a better picture of the region.

Race/Ethnicity: Race/Ethnicity is a composite indicator derived from the U.S. Census detailed race category and Latino ethnicity category. If an individual is considered Latino, he/she is not included in any other racial group. Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), as accessed through IPUMS, a project of the Minnesota Population Center, <www.ipums.org/acs/index.shtml> (January 26, 2007).

Children Living in Poverty: Number of children living in households with earnings at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level, expressed as a percent of all children. Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample.

Per Capita Median Household Income:

Per capita median income is calculated using the total household income variable, which includes all reported sources of income, divided by the number of people in the household. Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample.

Households with at Least One Working Parent:

Households with at least one parent in the labor force. Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample.

Foster Care Placement Rates:

Number of children per 1,000 in foster care placement in the third quarter of 2006. U.C. Berkeley Center for Social Services Research, *Supervised Foster Care: Point in Time Estimates, 2006*.

Immigrant Families: Households with one or more immigrant members in the immediate family (i.e., adult caregivers and dependent children), expressed as a percent of all households. Immigrant families were identified by the citizenship status of the household head or spouse for primary households, and by the citizenship status of adults in non-primary households. "Immigrant" is defined as any foreign-born person, except individuals born abroad of American parents. Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample.

Children in Immigrant Families:

Individuals, ages 0-17, who live in a household with at least one immigrant parent, expressed as a percentage of all children. Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample.

Children's Country of Origin: Birth country among foreign-born children in immigrant families. Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample.

U.S.-born Children in Immigrant Families:

Children, ages 0-17, who live in an immigrant family, but who were born in the United States. U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample.

Parents' Median Years in the U.S.:

Median years of residence in the United States among immigrant parents. U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample.

Mother's Educational Attainment:

Mothers who have earned a high school diploma or more, expressed as a percentage of all mothers. U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample.

English Learners in Public Schools:

California's public school districts determine whether a student is an English Learner, relying on standardized test scores and teacher evaluations. California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit, "English Learners: Number and percent of Enrollment, 2005-06," 2006.

Children Living With Adults Who Do Not Speak English: Percentage of children in immigrant families who live in a linguistically-isolated household. Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample.

Children Receiving Food Stamps: Survey results for children, aged 0-18. Asked of all people in a household with total annual household income less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Level. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2005 California Health Interview Survey, "Currently Receiving Food Stamps."

Overweight and Obese Teens: Survey results for children, ages 12-18, whose Body Mass Index (BMI) is in the highest 95th percentile with respect to their age and gender, expressed as a percentage of all adolescents at given household income categories. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2005 California Health Interview Survey, "Body Mass Index."

Children with Asthma: Survey results for children, ages 1-18, who have ever been diagnosed with asthma, expressed as a percentage of all children, ages 1-18. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2005 California Health Interview Survey, "Ever Diagnosed with Asthma."

Children with Health Insurance: Survey results for children, ages 0-18, of non-citizen fathers, the closest proxy for an immigrant household available. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2005 California Health Interview Survey, "Currently Insured."

Source of Health Care: Survey results for children, ages 0-18, of non-citizen fathers, the closest proxy for an immigrant household available. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2005 California Health Interview Survey, "Type of Usual Source of Care."

Students at State Targets in Math and English Language Arts: Students who score at Proficient or Advanced levels on the California Standards Test (CST) are meeting state targets. Children Now analysis of data from the California Department of Education, Testing and Accountability Department, "2005-06 STAR Testing Research Files," September 22, 2006, <<http://star.cde.ca.gov/star2006/viewreport.asp?rf=True&ps=True>> (February 21, 2007).

High School Exit Exam Passage Rates: Students who passed either the English Language Arts or Math sections of the CAHSEE in 10th grade, as a percentage of all 10th graders who took the test. Children Now analysis of data from the California Department of Education, Testing and Accountability Department, "2005-06 CAHSEE Testing Research Files," August 22, 2006, <<http://cahsee.cde.ca.gov/datafiles.asp>> (February 26, 2007).

Redesignated English Language Proficient Students: California's public school districts determine whether a student has mastered English, relying on standardized test scores and teacher evaluations.

Parents' Occupation: Based on detailed occupation data from the Census. "Professional Occupations" include occupations in the fields of Management, Education and Training and Administration. "Manual Labor Occupations" include occupations in the fields of Buildings & Grounds, Janitorial, Sales, Construction, Transportation and Material Moving. Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample.

Home Ownership: Families with children that own their primary dwelling, expressed as a percentage of all households with children. Children Now analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey 1% Public Use Microdata Sample.

Recommendations

Health

- Provide access to affordable health coverage for all children, including the 4% of children without insurance in San Diego County and the 8% of uninsured children in Imperial County.
- Address the staggering rates of asthma in Imperial County by focusing pollution reforms and prevention efforts on health risks unique to the border.
- Improve access to health care, dental care, nutrition, and mental health programs for the 7% of children in the border region who do not have regular access to care.

Education

- Support educational programs such as pre-kindergarten and effective practices in K-12 to accelerate the time it takes for English Learners to master English and be redesignated as Fluent English Proficient.
- Provide targeted supports for students who have not yet passed the High School Exit Exam—including English Learners—to ensure students graduate with the abilities, competence and skills they need to thrive in higher education and the workforce.
- Assure that all parents can support their children's education by enhancing adult education programs that improve academic skills and language proficiency of immigrant families.

Family Well-Being

- Address the border's high childhood poverty rates by improving families' ability to support their children through wealth-building initiatives like tax credits, and by increasing children's use of supports including health insurance, preschool and nutrition programs.
- Improve families' ability to support their children through well-paid work by expanding job training for parents to enter more lucrative occupations with benefits.
- Keep children in fragile families safe by improving child maltreatment prevention and counseling services. Focus family-strengthening services on communities with the highest rates of foster care placement.

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