California Report Card 2004: Focus on Children in Immigrant Families
Explanation of Methodology

Data Sources for Original Data Analysis

This report utilizes data from the 2001 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) and the 1% Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) from the 2000 Census. All estimates were calculated using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 11.5.

The child and adolescent CHIS data sets were obtained from the University of California, Los Angeles Center for Health Policy Research (UCLA CHPR). They contain information from interviews with 12,592 children ages 0-11 and 5,801 adolescents ages 12-17. The data sets were concatenated to create one data set for children and youth ages 0-17. In order to produce population estimates, the CHIS sample data was weighted with a basic weight variable. For more information on weighting, please see Methodology Report #5 – Weighting and Variance estimation, available on the CHIS Web site at http://www.chis.ucla.edu/pdf/CHIS2001_method5.pdf.

The IPUMS data set, created by the University of Minnesota, contains information on 338,725 children and adults in California. The IPUMS data was weighted with a person weight. For more information on sample weights, please visit the IPUMS Web site at http://www.ipums.umn.edu/usa/intro.html#weights.

Estimating the Percentage of California Children in Immigrant Families

Many of the statistics in this report compare the well-being of children living in immigrant families to that of children living in non-immigrant families. For the purpose of this report, a child living in an immigrant family is defined as a child with at least one parent who is not a U.S.-born citizen. This includes parents who are both naturalized citizens and non-citizens. Children living in non-immigrant families are those whose parents are U.S.-born citizens.[i]

Variables were created to separate children in immigrant and non-immigrant families. In the CHIS data set, a variable already exists that links the parents' citizenship status to their child. The immigrant families variable was created by selecting children who are themselves naturalized citizens or non-citizens, whose mother is a naturalized citizen or a non-citizen, or whose father is a naturalized citizen or a non-citizen (citizen2 >= 2 | citizen2_m>=2 | citizen2_f>=2). Using the newly created variable for immigration status of a child's family we found that 51.8% of children were in non-immigrant families and 48.2% of children were in immigrant families. This estimate most closely matches the one used by UCLA CHPR in the fact sheet entitled *Demographics, Health and Access to Care of Immigrant Children in California*.[ii] Note that this definition includes children who are themselves non-citizens or naturalized citizens but whose parents are U.S.-born citizens.[iii] For example, children adopted from abroad and children born abroad of U.S.-born parents are included in the CHIS estimate of immigrant families.

A similar variable was created in the IPUMS data set. Because there is no variable that links the child with his or her parents' citizenship status, two new variables for mother or stepmother's citizenship (momcit) and father or stepfather's citizenship (popcit) were created (See Appendix A). The citizenship variable was then re-coded into a new variable for the immigration status of the family. This new variable grouped together people under the age of 18 whose mother was not U.S.-born or whose father was not U.S.-born [age>18 & (momcit>0 | popcit>0)]. The 2000 census finds that 44% of California children ages 0-17 lived in an immigrant family, while 56% lived in a non-immigrant family. Note that this estimate differs from the CHIS estimate. We used the 2001 CHIS estimate for the percentage of children in immigrant families because it was likely more successful in reaching immigrant families. The CHIS was conducted in six languages, with a conscious effort to make the survey understandable and appropriate to people from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

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[i] CHIS does not distinguish between the living situations of parents. If parents are separated or divorced, and the child is living with the non-immigrant parent, the child is still considered part of an immigrant household. Written communication with Wei Yen, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, March 12, 2004.

[ii] Nadereh Pourat *et al.*, *Demographics, Health, and Access to Care of Immigrant Children in California: Identifying Barriers to Staying Healthy* (Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, March 2003), p. 1. This fact sheet reported that 48.1% of children live in immigrant families.

[iii] Written communication with Wei Yen, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, March 12, 2004.