A Child is a Child

SNAPSHOT: California Children’s Health

We know that when children are healthy, they are more likely to succeed in school and in life. That’s why The Children’s Partnership works to level the playing field so that children from historically marginalized communities have the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential. This infographic provides an overview of key Latinx child health facts in California to inform our collective work ahead. Now more than ever, we must work together to make California the best state to raise healthy, thriving children. All data is specific to Latinx children in California unless noted explicitly as national data.

MASKED HEALTH INEQUITIES

Latinx children and families are ethnically and racially diverse. Without data that is specific to Latinx subgroups, variations and hidden health disparities within Latinx communities can be masked. For example, the experiences and outcomes of indigenous Latinx people, like Mixtecos, are often overlooked because of a lack of data that highlights their unique experiences. More granular-level data could both illuminate inequities and inform the development of interventions that better support Latinx communities. Where publicly available, this fact sheet includes data on Latinx subgroups.

POPULATION

Of California’s nearly 9 million children and youth under 18, approximately 4.6 million, or more than half (52%), identify as Latinx. Of these children, at least -

- 42,675 identify as Native American
- 36,540 identify as Black or African American
- 26,983 identify as Asian American
- 3,660 identify as Pacific Islander
- 2,345,019 identify as white
- 634,692 identify as mixed race (two or more races)
- 1,526,887 identify as some other race not listed in the Census

50% of CA’s children ages 0-3 are Latinx, the highest of any racial or ethnic group.

OVER HALF (56%) of California’s Latinx children have at least one parent who was born outside of the United States.

The vast majority of Latinx children are U.S. citizens (97%) and 50% are fully bilingual.

About 17% (~604,500) Latinx children and youth have special health care needs (SHCNs), making up nearly half of all of California’s children with SHCNs.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective factors – conditions or attributes in children that help mitigate or eliminate risks to their health and well-being – can help prevent and address health inequities impacting children of color and their families. Knowledge of community-defined protective factors can guide the development of interventions that acknowledge the power of communities and directly address the unique needs of children from historically marginalized backgrounds. Children from Latinx communities are resilient and come from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Further research is needed to understand the protective factors that are unique to and support the healthy development of Latinx children from every racial, ethnic, and linguistic subgroup. Protective factors that have been considered unique to Latinx communities include:

- **Familismo**
  Emphasizes dedication, commitment and loyalty to family, including a life-long commitment to provide economic and emotional support for family members.

- **Personalismo**
  Prioritizes people and relationships over disagreements, personal benefit, or other competing priorities.

- **Respeto**
  The belief that every person deserves to be treated with respect and courtesy. Exposure to role models and mentors can promote resilience among Latinx youth.

- **Biculturalism/Bilingualism**
  Highlights the strength of having the experience of maintaining one’s heritage, culture and language while also becoming part of and learning another distinct language and culture.
Latinx children and youth are over three times more likely to experience HOMELESSNESS than white students. 73% of students experiencing homelessness are Latinx (149,115). Over 1 in 2 (52%) households with Latinx children are burdened by HOUSING AND UTILITY COSTS. 57% of Latinx children live in families that do not own their homes compared to 48% of all children in our state.

Latinx children in California are significantly more likely to have a history of TOOTH DECAY (72%) and untreated tooth decay (25%) than non-Latinx white children (40% and 14%, respectively). 19% of Latinx children have never had a DENTAL VISIT compared to 14% of white children.

About 1 in 5 (18%) of Latinx children live in families whose income falls below the FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL, higher than the state average (15%). Over 1 in 2 (52%) households with Latinx children are burdened by HOUSING AND UTILITY COSTS. 57% of Latinx children live in families that do not own their homes compared to 48% of all children in our state.

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DIGITAL ACCESS

37% Latinx households with children still DO NOT have FULL DIGITAL ACCESS to both the internet and a device.

28% of Latinx teens live in households that do not have high speed internet or connection.

COVID-19

Latinx children face COVID-19 CASES and deaths at rates higher than their share of the population: they currently make up 53% (798,931) of COVID-19 CASES and 53% of DEATHS.

1% of Latinx children under 5, 24% of Latinx children ages 5-11 and 52% of Latinx children ages 12-17 have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, lower than the state averages for these age groups (3%, 37%, and 67%, respectively).
MENTAL HEALTH

Latinx children and youth experience higher rates of DEPRESSION AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR compared to their peers, and they are also less likely than their peers to receive mental health treatment.

OVER 1 in 2 (52%) Latinx teens FEEL SADNESS OR HOPELESSNESS, compared to 42% of white children. Nearly 1 in 3 (31%) have seriously considered attempting suicide compared to 23% of white children. Yet, 88% of Latinx teens (1.1 million) did not receive psychological or emotional counseling. And, only 17% of Latinx youth enrolled in Medi-Cal have been screened for depression.

Latinas, in particular, are facing the greatest disparities when it comes to their MENTAL HEALTH. 62% of Latina teens felt chronic sadness or hopelessness in the last year. 34% of Latina teens have considered suicide and 13% have attempted suicide, compared to 27% and 9% of all high school youth, respectively. For lesbian, bisexual and queer Latina youth, the reality is even worse: NEARLY HALF (48%) have considered suicide, and 1 in 3 (33%) lesbian, bisexual and queer Latina youth have attempted suicide. Yet, alarmingly, 79% of Latina teens did not receive psychological or emotional counseling in the last year.

Latinx families face barriers in accessing mental health support, including lack of translation/interpretation, cultural stigma, distrust of the health care system, and lack of resources and information.

SCHOOL SUCCESS & SAFETY

California has the largest Latinx student population in the U.S.: 56% (3,291,260) of CA's 5.8 million public K-12 students are Latinx.

NEARLY 1 in 3 (31%) Latinx students are ENGLISH LEARNERS. Spanish is the most common language spoken by ENGLISH LEARNERS in California (82%). 98% of CA's migrant students are Latinx (47,663).

57% of Latinx students attend schools in neighborhoods that have less ACCESS TO RESOURCES including the most experienced teachers, modern facilities, and libraries.

17% (572,947) of Latinx public school students MISSED MORE THAN 10% of the 2020-21 school year compared to 10% of white children.

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

20% of Latinx children DO NOT HAVE A PARK OR A PLAYGROUND in their neighborhood and 25% do not have a library – the highest rates compared to any racial and ethnic group.

41% of Latinx children have experienced one or more ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES compared to 30% of white children. Nationally, Latinx children in immigrant families are significantly less likely to experience a high number of ACEs (16%) than Latinx children in nonimmigrant families (30%).

Of CA's 50,150 youth who are part of the FOSTER CARE SYSTEM, 55% are Latinx (27,618).

Nationally, nearly 4 in 10 Latinxs (39%) are worried that they, a family member or someone close to them could be DEPORTED.

Nearly 1 in 4 (23% or 521,000) of Latinx households with children AVOIDED GOVERNMENT BENEFITS due to concerns over self or family member's disqualification from receiving a green card – 3x the rate of all other racial and ethnic groups (7%).

Data Note: All data is from California unless otherwise noted. We collected data on this fact sheet from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2021 American Community Survey 1-year estimates and 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Urban Institute’s Children of Immigrants Data tool, the 2020 California Health Interview Survey, the 2019-2020 National Survey of Children’s Health, the CA Department of Education, the CA Department of Public Health, and a few other discrete sources. Full citations can be found at: bit.ly/AChildIsAChild.

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