



CLASP

Policy solutions that work for low-income people

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Our Children's Fear: Immigration Policy's Effects on Young Children Webinar

March 2018

Overview

- Immigration context
- Overview of CLASP's "Compromising Our Nation's Future" project
- Findings from CLASP research
- Recommendations
- Q&A

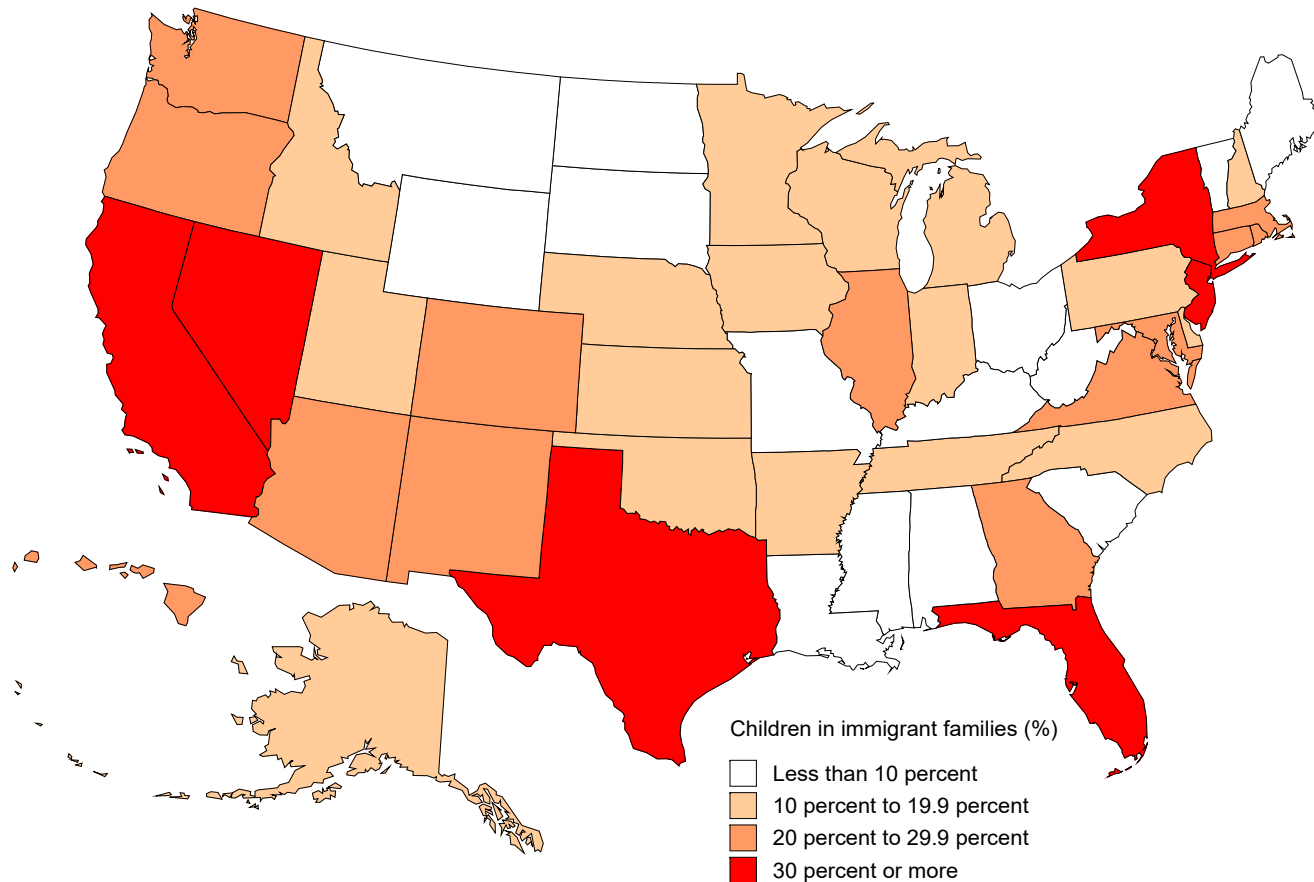
Immigration Context in the U.S.

Young Children in Immigrant Families

- 1 in 4 young children (ages 8 and younger) live in an immigrant family.
 - The vast majority (94%) of these children are U.S. citizens.
- Most children in immigrant families live with parents who have some form of lawful immigration status.
 - An estimated 1.6 million children under age 5 have at least one undocumented parent.

Children of Immigrants Are Geographically Dispersed

Share of Children in Immigrant Families, by State, 2015



Source: KIDS COUNT Data Center.

The Current Immigration Policy Context

- Three key themes:
 - Executive orders increasing enforcement and making all undocumented immigrants priorities for deportation
 - Removing protections for groups previously granted discretion
 - Restricting immigrant families' access to public benefit programs

Increased Enforcement

- January 2017 executive orders focused on expanding enforcement capacity at the border and in the interior.
 - ICE enforcement in communities has increased by 146%.
- Also eliminated priorities for deportation, effectively making all undocumented immigrants a priority for removal.
 - Undocumented parents of U.S. citizen-children, including those previously granted discretion, are now at greater risk of deportation.

Removing Protections

- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was rescinded on September 5th, 2017.
 - More than 800,000 beneficiaries are impacted.
 - One survey of DACA recipients found that 25% are parents to U.S. citizen children.
 - An estimated 40,000 DACA recipients work in the education, health, and social services industries.
- Loss of status means loss of employment, employer-sponsored health insurance, and other benefits (drivers licenses, in-state tuition, etc.).

Restricting Access to Public Benefits

- Administrative efforts to change “public charge” definition and other proposals that seek to restrict immigrants’ and their families’ access to critical benefits and income supports



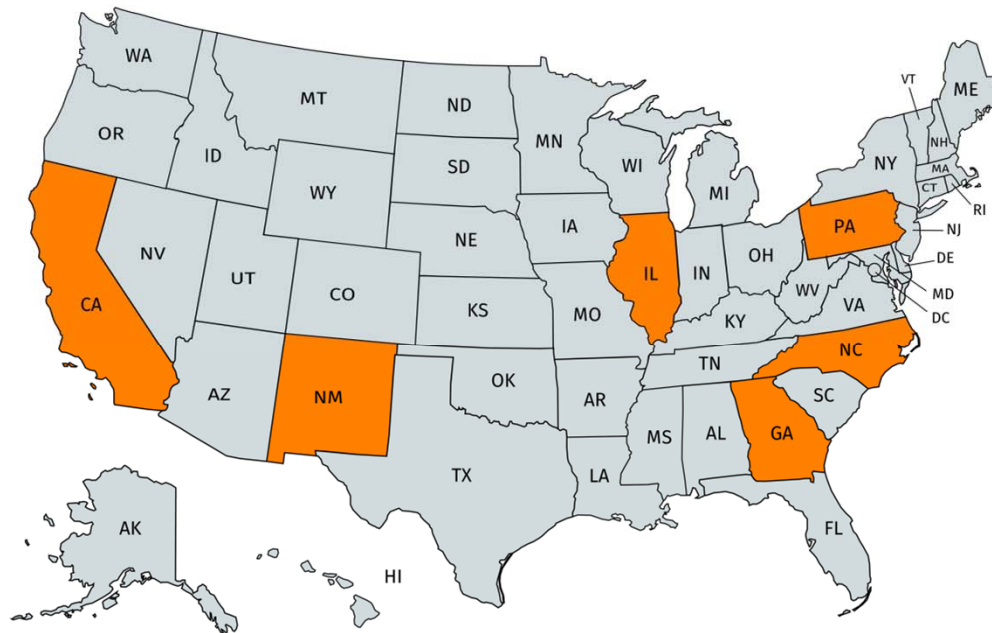
What is “Public Charge”

- Under immigration law, a “public charge” determination is based on whether an individual is, or is likely to become, dependent on the government for basic subsistence.
 - Determination is made when a person applies to enter the U.S. or when applying to adjust status to become a lawful permanent resident
- The Trump Administration is developing a proposed rule to expand the services and programs that are considered in the “public charge” determination.
 - This will likely include use by an applicant’s citizen children

CLASP's *Compromising* *Our Nation's Future* Project

Overview of CLASP's Research

- Between May and November of 2017, we conducted site visits in 6 states.



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Key Findings: Impacts on Young Children and Their Caregivers



Our Children's Fear

Immigration Policy's Effects on Young Children



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Compromising Our Nation's Future



Immigration Policy's Harmful Impacts on Early Care and Education



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Compromising Our Nation's Future

Young Children Fear Their Parents Will Be Taken Away

- Children as young as three are aware of the possibility of losing a parent.
- Fear is evident in children's behavior.
 - Providers described disturbing new behaviors that were distinct from past years.
- Children who had lost a parent to deportation and/or witnessed arrest experienced the most significant behavioral changes.



Children's Daily Routines are Interrupted, In Turmoil

- Families are withdrawing from “ordinary life” — limiting how much time they spend out of their homes.
 - Largely due to perceived increases in immigration enforcement in their communities
- Children have less access to community resources.
 - Staying home from child care or school
 - Limiting time spent playing outside, running errands, etc.

Children are Not Attending ECE Programs

- ECE programs are experiencing decreased attendance at key moments.
- Some are also experiencing lower enrollment and more limited family engagement.



Children Are Losing Access to Nutrition, Health Care Services

- Families are declining or withdrawing from services due to fears of how participation will affect their immigration status, how data is shared, and ultimately immigration enforcement consequences.
- Children are no longer receiving therapy and health care services due to limited mobility.

Children are Experiencing Increased Instability

- Young children are facing greater economic and housing instability:
 - More frequent moving, living in overcrowded housing
 - Increased job loss and more difficulty finding work among immigrant parents
 - Exploitation of immigrant parents by landlords and employers

Parents are Under Immense Stress, Need Resources

- Immigrant parents are struggling with difficult decisions.
- Parents are looking to ECE providers for support and information:
 - Stress management and parental mental health
 - Assistance with legal services
 - Immigration policy and immigrants' rights
 - Family safety planning
- Community resources are limited.

Many Providers Feel Unprepared to Meet Families' Changing Needs

- For many ECE programs, parents' needs in the current immigration context fall outside their areas of expertise.
 - Feel like they lack the resources that families want and need
- Providers are experiencing great emotional strain and stress.

ECE Staff Are Directly Affected by Immigration Policy Changes

- Many providers are immigrants themselves, and are experiencing increased stress both professionally and personally.
- Providers reported experiencing increased racism and xenophobia.
- Providers in several states employed teachers or assistants with DACA status.

Organizational Responses to Policy Changes Vary

- Programs differ in capacity to respond to current immigration context.
 - Some are offering new resources and leveraging partnerships to provide trainings and workshops.
 - However, many lack resources and information to adequately support families and the workforce.
 - Program leadership is key.

DHS Sensitive Locations Policy

- Few programs had formalized policies or procedures related to potential immigration enforcement activity.
- DHS guidance states that immigration enforcement actions should generally be avoided in certain locations, including:
 - Known and licensed child care programs
 - Pre-kindergarten programs
 - Head Start programs
 - Preschools
 - Other ECE programs



Dire Consequences for Young Children



- Children’s day-to-day lives are characterized by increased fear, stress, and instability.
 - Emotional and economic hardships experienced during the early formative years can have serious and lasting consequences for development.
- Millions of children are being denied their rights as U.S. citizens simply because of their parents’ immigration status.

A Better Path Forward: Recommendations for Policymakers, Practitioners, and Philanthropy

A Better Path Forward

- Our nation's collective success is tied to the individual success of *all* of our children.
- Policymakers and advocates should ensure that:
 - The best interests of children are held paramount in immigration policy decisions
 - Immigrant families have access to the programs and services they need to promote their children's healthy development



A Better Path Forward

- Policymakers, advocates, practitioners and philanthropy should:
 - Speak out about the wellbeing of young children of immigrants and the developmental consequences of the current crisis
 - Safeguard the wellbeing of young children in immigrant families in federal, state and local legislation, laws, and policies

Federal Policy Recommendations

- Congress should take legislative action to:
 - Provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, including parents and Dreamers
 - Safeguard the wellbeing of children in immigration policies and enforcement actions
 - Expand the sensitive locations policy
- DHS should create new protocols and strengthen existing protocols to minimize harm to children in immigrant families impacted by enforcement.

State Policy Recommendations

- Policymakers, advocates, and philanthropy should ensure that:
 - Immigrant families are not deterred from enrolling in critical basic needs programs
 - Immigrants and their families are represented in key coalitions, councils, and activities
 - Adequate resources are available to support:
 - Free or low-cost legal services in communities;
 - Collaboration between ECE and immigrant-serving organizations; and
 - Training and resources for the ECE workforce, including trauma-informed care.

Recommendations for ECE Programs

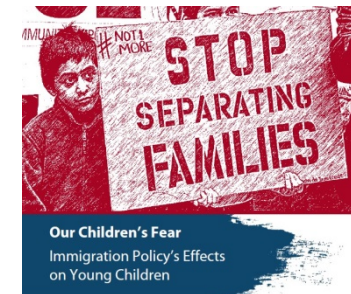
- Early childhood programs should:
 - Ensure that the needs of children in immigrant families are reflected in program practices and operations
 - Adopt or strengthen policies that promote children’s and families’ safety, security and privacy; and share these policies with staff and parents

Recommendations for ECE Programs (continued)

- Programs should:
 - Partner with community-based organizations to ensure that parents and staff are connected to immigration-related resources and to support parents in developing family safety plans
 - Talk to parents, social service providers, and immigrant-serving organizations to identify community-specific solutions to program participation

Additional Information

- Reports available at clasp.org include:
 - Appendix in *Immigration Policy's Harmful Impacts on Early Care and Education* includes resources for providers and immigrant parents.



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Q&A

Please submit your questions in the chat box.



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