

A Report by The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc.

THE STATE OF LATINO FAMILIES IN NEW YORK 2011

An Overview of Health,
Education, Juvenile Justice
and Child Welfare Issues



The Committee for
Hispanic Children
and Families, Inc.

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The State of Latino Families in New York 2011: An Overview of Health, Education, Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Issues

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Acknowledgements

The completion of this report was made possible through the contributions of many individuals. The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc. (CHCF) is grateful to present and former staff members and interns who contributed their time and energy into the content of this report. We express our appreciation to Ursulina Ramirez, MSW, former Policy Analyst at CHCF and Vanessa Portillo, MSW, MPA, former intern at CHCF, for researching and contributing to writing in earlier stages of this project. In addition, we are grateful to our current interns: Karine Castro, Ana Defillo, Rachel Landers and Mynor Godoy. We also thank former staff and interns Gabriel Rodriguez, Mariel Frank, Danielle Sherman, and Mariely Sanchez-Moronta. Special thanks to other CHCF staff: Brook Padilla, Grants Manager, and Erica Acosta, Director of Marketing and Communications.

In addition, CHCF would like to thank New York State Office of Children and Families Services (OCFS), especially Commissioner Gladys Carrion, Esq. CHCF is grateful for the help from Nancy Martinez, Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development, as well as the staff from the statistics and research office. CHCF gives special thanks to Council Member Melissa Mark Viverito, who has unwavering support for CHCF and her Latino constituency. In addition, CHCF thanks Assembly Member José Rivera and Council Member Maria del Carmen Arroyo for supporting this project. Also, CHCF would like to recognize the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) for providing funding for the project.

CHCF would also like to thank Elsa Rios, MSW, JD, for her guidance in working through the early stages of this report. Also, we thank Mark Lewis, Director of Immigrant Services, New York City's Administration for Children Services for providing updated data. CHCF also thanks James D. Colliver, PhD, and Statistician of the Division of Population Surveys, Office of Applied Studies Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Finally, CHCF thanks all panelists and presenters at the June 25, 2009 forum titled, "The State of Latino Families in New York." Each panelist and presenter brought a wealth of expertise and provided insight to our policy recommendations.



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Foreword



In 1982, a group of Latino human service professionals created The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc. (CHCF) in order to serve the unmet needs of New York's growing Latino community. The organization's goals were to be a voice for the Latino community at the local, state and national level and to develop programs that answer the needs of Latino children and their families.

Since then, CHCF has achieved many milestones in line with its goals. But some serious problems continue to plague the Latino community and this report, *The State of Latino Families in New York 2011*, is an important advancement in drawing attention to critical issues for Latinos in New York. It points to some troubling disparities for the rapidly growing and diverse Latino population in comparison to non-Latino Whites. Latinos have much worse health conditions; significantly lower educational achievement; higher levels of youth placed in juvenile facilities; and are removed at disturbingly high rates from their families.

We understand the challenge of dealing with these problems amid the current economic crisis. These are, indeed, tough times for everyone, for New York State's finances, for the New York City's finances. As a result, the government is proposing cuts that will further diminish the social safety net for Latino communities. But these cuts will severely hurt the Latino community, which makes up at least one-fifth of the population of New York State and one-third of New York City. Supporting and investing in this community is critical for many Latinos' continued progress as well as for New York's economic future.

As state and city leaders confront today's budget situation and plan for the issues of tomorrow, it is crucial that they recognize and consider the social service needs of the growing Latino population. This report uses data on the current social status of Latinos to develop strategies for investment in government programs in four of the most important support systems: health, education, child welfare and juvenile justice. Furthermore, for any of these strategies to be effective in Latino communities, it is critical to recognize that Latinos today in New York are not monolithic and instead come from 21 different Spanish-speaking countries.

With the same dedication as the day we began our work, we are eager today to improve the lives of Latinos in New York. And so, we intend to do more than just release a report. We aim to work with elected officials and advocates to champion the strategies that we have outlined here. Our hope is to ensure that Latino children achieve academic success in New York schools, that Latino families participate in New York's civic life, and that Latino workers continue to help the New York economy to prosper and grow. We believe that such efforts will benefit not just Latinos but all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elba Montalvo'.

Elba Montalvo

Executive Director, The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc.



Executive Summary

AN OVERVIEW OF
THE NEEDS OF
LATINO FAMILIES
IN THE AREAS OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
CHILD WELFARE AND
JUVENILE JUSTICE

The goal of this report, *The State of Latino Families in New York 2011*, is to present an overview of the needs of Latino families in the areas of health, education, child welfare and juvenile justice. The report identifies crosscutting issues, provides data and analysis about how Latinos are faring in the aforementioned areas, and makes recommendations to meet the needs of Latino families. The aim is to transform today's challenges into future opportunities for Latino communities in the city and the state.

Latinos are growing fast, but many are still in poverty

New York is rapidly becoming more Latino, through both immigration and Latinos' higher birthrates. Although Latinos are the fastest growing population in New York, more Latinos find themselves impoverished. Latino poverty is rooted in their low levels of education attainment and recent immigration.

Latinos are experiencing a myriad of hardships

Government programs are failing to adapt in providing culturally and linguistically sensitive services for Latinos; Latino families have limited access to comprehensive health care coverage and very often face a host of preventable health problems or illnesses; many first generation Latino children enter school without the language support they so critically need to succeed and go on to score far below other students in exams in K-12; Latino youth overwhelmingly end up in custody in the juvenile justice system; and an increasing percentage of Latino children are victims of abuse and neglect.

Latinos could be better served with improved programs and initiatives

Attention needs to be focused on the socioeconomic conditions that marginalizes and excludes the Latino community. Investments need to be focused on education and after school programs to engage Latino youth and build human capita. Similarly, access to preventative health services is necessary in conjunction with culturally and linguistically sensitive interventions in human services. Preventive services should be strengthened for at risk youth and unstable families.

This report provides a summary of vast amounts of collected data and policy analysis. We use the most recent data available to compare Latinos with non-Latinos living in New York State as well as New York City. On the next page, we have provided a selection of key findings and recommendations.

Selected Findings

Health

- **Health Insurance Coverage:** In New York City, 22.2% of Latinos were uninsured in 2008, more than double the rate of 9% for Whites.¹ In New York State, nearly 27% of Latino residents between 18 and 64 years of age were uninsured in 2009, while only 10% of Whites were in the same situation.²
- **Teen Pregnancy Rates:** Approximately 70.4 Latina teens became pregnant out of every 1,000 teenagers between ages of 15 and 17 from 1995-2004, compared to only 14.5 White teens.³ In New York City, 55.9% of all teen births were Latinos in 2007, more than seven times the number among White teens (7.4%).⁴
- **Obesity:** In 2010, 26.5% of Latino children were obese and 19.9% were overweight in New York City public schools, compared to the 23.5% obesity rate and the 16.1% overweight rate of White children.⁵ In 2008, 18.1% of Latino children in the Women Infants and Children (WIC) supplemental food program were obese in New York State, compared to 12.3% of White children.⁶
- **Prevalence of Asthma:** In New York City, the prevalence of asthma in children was 12% Latino and 4% White in 2007.⁷ Across New York State, 20.1% of Latino students in middle schools had asthma in 2008 compared to 16.1% of White students.⁸
- **New Cases of HIV/ AIDS:** In New York City, Latinos were 31.8% of persons living with HIV/AIDS in 2009, in contrast to the 20.9% that were Whites.⁹ In New York State, 30.5% (approx. 1,393) of all newly reported cases of HIV/AIDS in 2009 were Latinos, while White represented 19% of the total of new cases.¹⁰
- **History of Mental Health Problems:** 24.5% of Latinos had a history of depression in New York City in 2008, while 16.2% of Whites had a similar history.¹¹ Additionally, 30% of the children who received mental health services were Latinos in 2007 in New York State, in contrast to 42% of Whites.¹²

Education

- **Availability of Early Education:** An estimated 88,668 Latino children in New York City in 2010 were without subsidized pre-K or early education and care options for which they are eligible.¹³

- **Achievement Gap:** Only 49% of Latino students in the eighth grade in New York City were at level 3 or 4 on the English Language Acquisition (ELA) exam in 2009, while 76% of White students were at that level.¹⁴ Similarly, in New York State, only 37% of Latino students in the eighth grade were at level 3 or 4 on the ELA exam in 2009, while 68% of White scored that high.¹⁵
- **English Language Learners (ELLs):** Only 44.4% of ELLs graduated on time in 2010, compared to the graduation rate of the rest of the student population at 59%.¹⁶ In New York State, 38.6% of ELLs graduated on time in 2009, while the rate for White students was 82.7%.¹⁷
- **Graduation Rates:** Only 55.9% of Latino students graduated in the New York City public school system in 2009, compared to 76.5% of White students.¹⁸ In New York State public schools, 54.8% of Latino students graduated in 2009, while 82.7% of White students graduated in the same year.¹⁹

Juvenile Justice

- **Admissions to Juvenile Facilities:** 28% of youth admitted to New York City juvenile facilities in 2010 were Latinos, while Whites constituted only 4%.²⁰ In New York State, 26.2% of the 1,632 youth admitted were Latino (428) in 2008, while only 9.6% were White (157).²¹

Child Welfare

- **Child Abuse Reports:** 39.8% of substantiated abuse reports in New York City were Latino children in 2008, while 6.4% were White children.²² In 2008, Latino children comprised 24.2% of these reports in New York State.²³
- **Foster Care Placements:** 28.7% of the children in foster care were Latino in New York City in 2008 compared to 4.1% White.²⁴ In New York State, 20.5% children placed in foster care in 2008 were Latino compared to 18.5% White.²⁵
- **Mandated for Foster Care Prevention Services:** Latinos were 39.9% (6,913) of the 17,326 of children who received mandated services to prevent placement in foster care in New York City in 2008.²⁶ In New York State, Latino children who received mandated services constituted 28.9% (13,205) of 45,691 in 2009.²⁷



In undertaking an extensive analysis on racial and ethnic disparities in New York State and New York City, it was necessary to gather information using a range of sources about health, education, juvenile justice and child welfare.

Selected Recommendations

- Increase the proportion of Latino employees in all agencies in compliance with all applicable laws.
- Ensure that all data is disaggregated by age, race/ethnicity and gender.
- Promote quality and affordable health care coverage and insurance.
- Provide more community-based programs targeted to preventable health-risk behaviors.
- Professionalize and strengthen the informal, familial daycare programs.
- Ensure the hiring of an adequate pool of bilingual education teachers in K-12 and offer incentives and training so that they are encouraged to teach academic Spanish.
- Develop a better monitoring system for addressing chronic absenteeism outside the child welfare system to assist struggling Latino students to improve educational outcomes.
- Develop alternatives to detention and increase the number of cost-effective, rehabilitative, community-based alternative programs that emphasize family participation and reentry into society.
- Create a comprehensive mapping system to assess and track the disproportionate representation in all case processing decisions along every point in the juvenile justice system: arrest, referral to court, detention, court processing, and dispositional decisions (dismissal, conditional discharge, probation supervision, out of home placement with custody, and other social services).

Demographics of New York's Latino Community

The following statistics come from the 2010 Census:

Total state population	19,378,102
Total Latino state population	3,274,177 or 16.8%
Total Latino city population	2,287,905 or 27.5%
Percentage of Latino Men and Women	50.2% - 49.8%
Median Age of the Latino population	30
Latinos born in the U.S	1,984,601
Foreign Born Latinos	1,289,576
Foreign Born Latinos with U.S citizenship	480,328
Spanish is the primary language in the home	81.5%
English as primary language in the home	18.5%
Median Household Income	\$37,781
Percentage of Latinos without Health Insurance	21.9%
Percentage of Latinos living in poverty	23.2%

Source: U.S Census Bureau. 2009 American Community Survey. Retrieved from: <http://www.imprecenso.com/census-2010/index.php>

Report Framework

This report starts with a description of the demographics of Latinos, the diversity of its population and its current poverty levels. In the section on crosscutting issues, an overview is presented of discrepancies that have been found across all government service sectors. The health section discusses teen pregnancy, prenatal care, birth rates, infant mortality, obesity, asthma, HIV/AIDS and mental health. In the Education section, the report emphasizes the importance of early education and highlight academic disparities throughout the K-12 system, including diminished likelihood of completing a college degree. The Juvenile Justice section describes the numbers of youth admitted into juvenile detention facilities. Lastly, in the Child Welfare section, the report provides insights on child abuse and neglect cases; foster care placements; and mandated preventive services.

Methodology

In undertaking an extensive analysis on racial and ethnic disparities in New York State and New York City, it was necessary to gather information using a range of sources about health, education, juvenile justice and child welfare. Several methods of research were utilized to conduct this analysis. First, a literature review of policy reports, journals, and newspaper articles was conducted. To highlight specific arguments from this review, the research was organized to show what the disparities were and why they exist. Next, data was gathered from statistics disaggregated by race and ethnicity in databases, reports and other online postings for city, state and federal agencies. Afterwards, the data was then interpreted and processed determine the level of disparities.

8 The Latino community has been one of the hardest hit by the economic downturn.³⁹

Rising Numbers of Latino Children

According to US Census the year estimates (2006-2008), 20.8% of the under eighteen population in New York State is Latino. In New York City that rate increases, with 33.6% of people under eighteen years of age being Latino.²⁸ Moreover, while Latino adults represent 16.7% of the 18 and over population in New York State, Latino children ages 0 to 5 constitute 23.8% of the total under 6 population.²⁹ The same pattern is observed in New York City, where Latino adults represent 27% of the adult population, and Latino children ages 0 to 5 constitute 33.9% of the New York City under 6 population.³⁰

The New York Latino Community: Diversity and Immigration

Historically, New York City has been a doorway for families who come to the United States in search of better opportunities. Recent data reveals that almost one fourth of New York State's population is foreign-born, representing a significant population in the state.³¹ Latinos are the majority of foreign-born residents in New York State. Of the foreign born population, 40.5% are Latinos in New York State. Similarly, 41.5% of Latinos in New York City are foreign born.³²

The Latino population in New York is very diverse. The top ten Latino nationalities represented in New York's (both state and city) Latino population are: Puerto Rican [33.8%], Dominican [25.8%], Mexican [12.4%], Ecuadorian [8.6%], Colombian [4.9%], Cuban, Honduran, Peruvian, Salvadoran and Guatemalan.³³

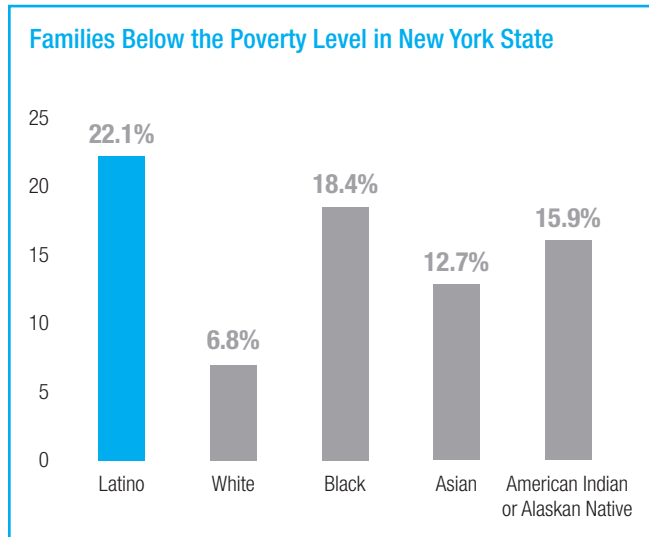
Educational attainment varies significantly within Latinos groups. In New York City, 53% of Mexican adults did not graduate high school in 2008. Similarly, 44% Dominicans did not graduate high school in 2008. In light of this information, it's no coincidence that Dominicans and Mexicans have the highest poverty rates, close to or greater than 30% in 2008. Conversely, Ecuadorians (20%) and Colombians (15%) had the lowest poverty rates among New York City's largest Latino nationalities, since they had both higher educational attainment indexes and median household incomes.³⁴

The racial identity of Latinos is very complex as they may consider themselves White, Black, Amerindian, or a mixture of all, or some, or none of the above. The Latino population also varies by English language proficiency. A quarter (24.4%) of all Latinos in New York State and 26.4% of all Latinos in New York City report that they speak English less than well. Of these, the majority is foreign born (70.4% in NYS; 72.5% in NYC), but a significant segment of those who are native born (born in the United States) also report limited English proficiency (16.8% in NYS; 18.5% in NYC).³⁵

Along with diversity of origin, Latinos are now living in more locations across New York State. For decades, New York City has had the highest concentration of Latinos in New York State. However, in recent years, the Latino population rates in upstate New York have been increasing notably.

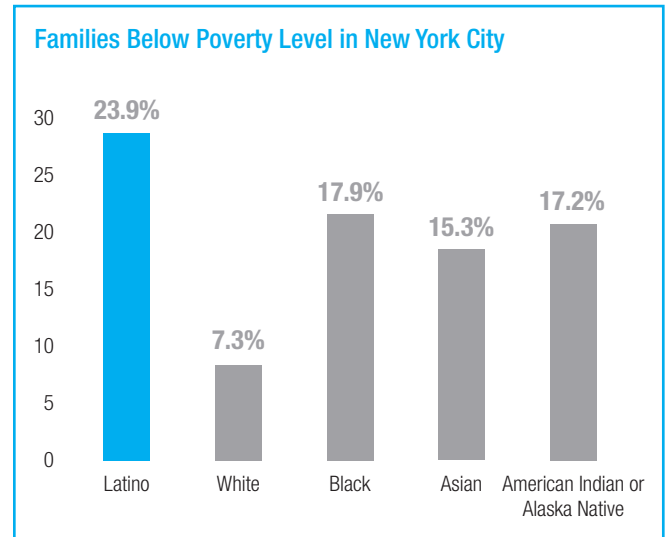
In 2008, New York State counties with emerging Latino populations include Westchester (19% of the population is Latino), Putman (10.1%) and Rockland (13.1%), Nassau County (12.4%), Suffolk County (13.3%), Dutchess (8.8%), Monroe (6%), Orange (15.9%) and Ulster (7.4%).^{36, 37}

Figure 1



Source: United States Census. 2006-2008 US Census American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Detailed Tables.

Figure 2



Source: United States Census. 2006-2008 US Census American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Detailed Tables .

Poverty in New York's Latino Community

Many Latino children and families in New York are affected by poverty and its many side effects. In New York State, families are disproportionately affected by poverty with 22.1% of Latino families living under the poverty level, while only 10.3% of Whites meet the same criteria as shown in Figure 1. In New York City, there is an even larger gap in which 23.9% of Latino families live below the poverty level, while 7.3% of all White families live in poverty, as displayed in Figure 2.

It is worth noting that these numbers are probably even greater in reality, as some have argued that the Census underestimates poverty and how many people experience hardship.³⁸

Furthermore, the Latino community has been one of the hardest hit by the economic downturn.³⁹ Unemployment rates for Latinos increased dramatically and surpassed the unemployment rate of Whites.

Among Latinos, unemployment rates in the last quarter of calendar year 2009 were estimated at 12.3% for the state and 12% citywide.⁴⁰ In contrast, the overall unemployment rates (as of February 2010) reached 8.8% in New York State and 10.2% in New York City.⁴¹

The consequences of poverty are seen in the most basic areas of human needs, such as housing insecurity. In New York City, Latinos were 41% of 26,353 individuals living in the city's family services facilities in December 2008 (intake centers and overnight facilities, commonly referred to as "shelters").⁴²

Poverty is also associated with lack of food and hunger, which can be illustrated by looking at food stamp case-loads and the number of people using food banks. In New York State, Latinos were 24% of the total number of persons participating in the food stamp program in 2009⁴³ and in New York City they accounted for 34%. Even more alarming, Latinos represented 46%—almost half—of all residents having difficulty affording food in New York City in 2009.⁴⁴ In 2010, Latinos represented 27% of the 2.3 million residents receiving charitable food assistance in New York State, including soup kitchens and food pantries.^{45, 46}

Description of Key Agencies

In the list below, we have included descriptions of the state and city agencies that are responsible for programs and services in health, education, juvenile justice and child welfare that impact the Latino community:

New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)

is the governmental body responsible for public health in the State of New York, serving more than 500,000 individuals each year.

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH) is the city agency responsible for public health along with issuing birth certificates.

New York State Department of Education (NYSED)

is the state department responsible for the supervision of all public schools in the state, the production and administration of standardized testing and supervision of higher education.

New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE)

is the branch of municipal government that manages the city's public school system. It consists of over 1,700 schools in the city's five boroughs that serve about 1.1 million students each year, providing primary and secondary education and preparing them to pass Regents exams and to meet graduation requirements.

New York State Office of Children and Family

Services (OCFS) is the government agency responsible for integrating services for New York's children, youth, families and vulnerable populations. It provides a system of family support, oversight, monitoring, and regulation of child care and child welfare. It is also responsible for all juvenile justice programs, administration and management of residential facilities, community-based group homes, day-placement centers and reception center programs for youth under the age of 18 adjudicated to be Juvenile Delinquents (JDs) or Juvenile Offenders (JOs) in the State of New York.

New York City Administration for Children Services

(ACS) is the city's child welfare agency, dedicated to protect children from abuse and neglect. Along with community partners, it provides neighborhood-based services to help ensure children grow up in safe, permanent homes with strong families.

Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth (DJJOY)

- Within OCFS, this agency is responsible for residential and community treatment of court-placed youth, including intake, facility programming and community services and supports in the State of New York.

New York City Department of Juvenile Justice

(NYCDJJ), which was integrated into the Administration for Children Services (ACS) in January 2010, is mandated to provide custody and care of youth in detention facilities and have services to prevent youth from returning to the system in the New York City.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Before discussing the major Latino problem areas in New York, there are several crosscutting issues that affect ability of government programs to most effectively improve services for this community. Specifically, these crosscutting issues are: representation in the workforce; uniform data collection and reporting; diversity of Latino communities; cultural and linguistic sensitivity; funding of non-profit organizations; and interagency coordination.

Representation in the Workforce

Although Latinos are the fastest growing population in the state and city, they are underrepresented in the government workforce.

Latinos only represent 4.44% of 168,000 civil service state employees as of January 2010, in comparison to 75.8% of Whites. Data also indicates that only 5.1% or about 350 out of the 7,000 Hispanics are employed in state government above the SG-23 (senior or managerial salary grade) level.⁴⁷ While Blacks, Latinos and Asians made up 37%, 16% and 4%, respectively, of the New York City's government workforce in 2008, they only collectively accounted for 19% of the total senior and executive staff of city agencies.⁴⁸ In addition, according to 31 job group categories in the city's government, Latinos were calculated to be only 10% of 157,682 employees in 2008, compared to 31% that were Whites.⁴⁹

Uniform Data Collection and Reporting

One of the challenges in analyzing race disparities for Latinos in New York is the lack of uniform data disaggregated by race and ethnicity. Unfortunately, many state and city agencies publish performance and service data by race and ethnicity in a non-systematic, scattered or less frequent approach. For example, in researching obesity for Latinos, we found that the New York State Department of Health website had "Obesity Statistics by County 2006-2008", which used information that had no indicators showing race or ethnicity.⁵⁰ In contrast, New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene used a different set of data on obesity that indicated race and ethnicity.⁵¹

Diversity of Latino Communities

Another problem is ethnic lumping in which policymakers deal with Latinos from vastly different backgrounds and experiences as if they were a monolithic group. The diversity among Latino communities needs to be considered when designing and implementing effective programs. When government agencies provide blanket services to all Latino families, it can lead to ineffective and counterproductive programs. Each Latino nationality has its own set of obstacles and issues, which should be taken to account when working with these populations. For example, Puerto Rican and Mexican populations face very different challenges. Puerto Ricans in New York do not struggle as much as Mexicans with English language abilities or immigration issues. Puerto Rico is territory of the United States and many Puerto Ricans have lived in New York for generations. In contrast, many recent Mexican immigrants are undocumented, lack citizenship in the United States and have limited knowledge of English.

Cultural and Linguistic Sensitivity

Due to culture and language barriers, many limited English proficient Latinos are denied, excluded or delayed in receiving government services, which may violate their civil rights.

Under Civil Rights law, New York is federally mandated to ensure that limited English speakers have meaningful access to federally funded services throughout the State.⁵² Despite the movement for language access in New York City that resulted in the passage of Local Law 73 and Executive Order 120 in 2008, many city agencies have failed to provide language assistance services to those who need them. A study by the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) found that in the New York Police Department (NYPD) alone, 67% of Limited English Proficient individuals surveyed were not provided with language assistance.⁵³

12 In Latino communities, the need for services ranging from housing to child care and domestic violence prevention to assistance for the disabled is considerably high. As budget cutbacks at the state and city level force smaller organizations into the margins of funding, the Latino community misses out on services that comprehend and strive to meet their cultural and linguistic needs.

Funding for Non-Profit Organizations

In Latino communities, the need for services ranging from housing to childcare and domestic violence prevention to assistance for the disabled is considerably high. As budget cutbacks at the state and city level force smaller organizations into the margins of funding, the Latino community misses out on services that comprehend and strive to meet their cultural and linguistic needs. This lack of funding is evident, for example, in New York City's ACS family foster care contracts, where Latino-led organizations account for only 3% of grants awarded by the city in 2010.⁵⁴

Interagency Coordination

Behind all of these crosscutting issues, there is a lack of coordination among the state, city and county agencies that regulate funding and services to the Latino community. Interagency communication has been done effectively on other issues and should be used as models for improvement in relation to the Latino community. For example, the Advisory Council of the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence has facilitated dialogue among 14 New York State agencies and other organizations, strengthening public awareness on the issue and incorporating domestic violence into the work of these agencies. Some of the state agencies participating include the Departments of Correctional Services, Education, Health, Labor, Aging and OCFS.⁵⁵

Analysis and Recommendations

Analysis of Data and Implications

As a result of their small representation in government, Latinos rarely play a role in the decision-making around health, education, child welfare and juvenile justice issues. Considering this disparity in Latino employment, the Governor of the State of New York and the Mayor of the City of New York must create and appoint an independent Latino Commission that would be charged with advising policies, actions and initiatives that would increase opportunities and programs for Latinos in all levels of government. City and state government agencies often do not consistently provide race and ethnicity indicators with their statistics and reports. In order to identify problems in Latino communities, we must also insist on consistent data collection and reporting. It is clear that improved data collection and annual reporting would be instrumental in analyzing disparities and distributing public resources equitably.

Furthermore, we must recognize that Latino populations are not monolithic. Rather, each has its own set of obstacles and issues, which significantly impacts their experience and success in New York and should be taken to account when providing services to these specific populations. Additionally, in consideration of the fact that the Latino population will continue to grow at a fast pace in the coming years, it is also imperative that the city and state governments invest now in developing linguistically and culturally competent services. Furthermore, an interagency approach would help in sharing critical resources and training programs to provide better services that are more targeted to the Latino population.

Cross-cutting Recommendations

- Establish Latino Commissions on the city and state level.
- Increase the proportion of Latino employees in all agencies in compliance with all applicable laws.
- Increase the proportion of contracts to Latino-led organizations.
- Ensure that all data is disaggregated by age, race/ethnicity, and gender.
- Expand cultural and linguistic competence within service agencies to improve access for the Latino population.
- Increase interagency coordination on policies and services affecting the Latino community.

In consideration of the fact that the Latino population will continue to grow at a fast pace in the coming years, it is also imperative that the city and state governments invest now in developing linguistically and culturally competent services.



HEALTH INSURANCE
TEEN PREGNANCY
PRENATAL CARE
INFANT MORTALITY
OBESITY
ASTHMA
HIV/AIDS
MENTAL HEALTH

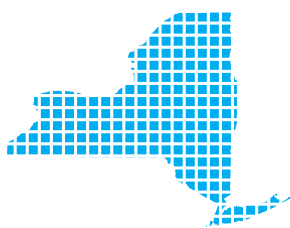
Health Disparities

Impacting the Latino Community

This section presents an overview on the health challenges that are faced by Latino children and families living in the city and state. These challenges are exacerbated by the inequalities found in the quality of and access to health care services. In this context, we will discuss recommendations for how to improve the health outcomes of the Latino community in New York.

22.2

percent of NY Latinos were uninsured in 2008



New Cases of HIV/AIDS

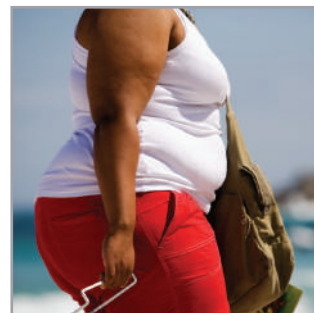
In New York State, 30.5% (approx. 1,393) of all newly reported cases of HIV/AIDS in 2009 were Latinos, while White represented 19% of the total of new cases .

55.9

percent of NYC teen births that were Latinos in 2007

Access to Healthcare

Based on data for U.S.-born versus foreign-born Latinos, Latinos are much less likely to have health insurance coverage if they were born in another country.



24.5% of Latinos had a history of **depression** in New York City in 2008.

Obesity

Obesity is one of the most serious health issues facing the Latino community today. Obesity leads to other health risks, such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and depression. For Latinos in New York State, obesity starts early in life.

26.5

percent of obese Latino children in NYC in 2010



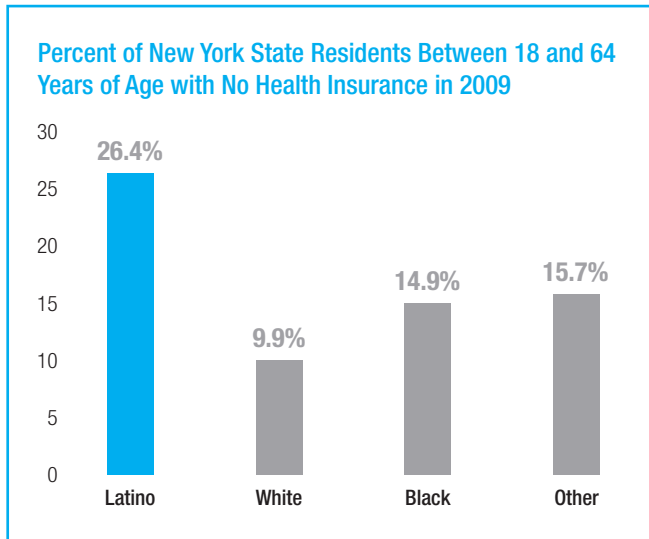
12

percent of Latino children with asthma in NYC in 2007



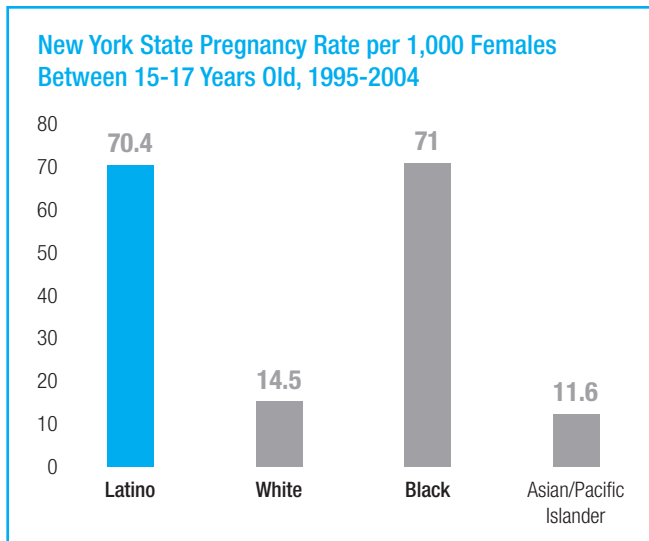
Latino adults have highest adult asthma rate in NYC

16 Figure 3



Source: National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2009.

Figure 4



Source: New York State Department of Health (2007). New York State Minority Health Surveillance Report

For many Latino families, access to health insurance and quality services is limited or unattainable.

Health Insurance: Access For All

For many Latino families, access to health insurance and quality services is limited or unattainable.

Figure 3 shows that in 2009 nearly 27% of Latino residents in New York State between 18 and 64 years of age were uninsured.⁵⁶ This was almost three times the percentage of White residents and twice the percentage of Black residents in the same age group without health insurance.⁵⁷ In New York City, the percentage of the uninsured is high for Latinos (22.2%), more than doubling the rate of Whites.⁵⁸ Based on data for U.S.-born versus foreign-born Latinos, Latinos are much less likely to have health insurance coverage if they were born in another country. While only 12.4% of Latinos born in the US were uninsured in New York City in 2008, the rate more than doubles to 31.1% for foreign-born Latinos.⁵⁹

Teen Pregnancy Rates

Teen pregnancy has many adverse health, economic, and social outcomes for the teen parents and for their children. The consequences of teen pregnancy include late or no prenatal care, low birth weight and family and economic stress, all of which have been linked to future child abuse and/or neglect.⁶⁰ This situation is very severe in the Latino community. In New York State, as Figure 4 displays, the rate of teen pregnancy is much higher among Latinos than among White adolescents. In 2004, out of every 1,000 teenagers between ages of 15 and 17, approximately 70.4 Latina teens become pregnant compared to only 14.5 White teens.⁶¹ In New York City, data shows 55.9% of all teen births occurring in the Latino population, totaling almost 5,000 births in 2007, more than seven times the number of births among White teens (7.4% of all teen births).⁶²

Prenatal Care

Prenatal care plays a very important role in maternal and infant related health outcomes. In 2004, only 64.4% of Latinas in New York State were receiving 1st trimester prenatal care. However, the percentage of Latinas receiving late or no prenatal care is still three times higher (6.6%) than White women (2.6%).⁶³ These statistics should be noted in considering the importance of prenatal care in getting a healthy start for young infants.

Infant Mortality

Given the lack of prenatal care, it is therefore not surprising that Latinos have high infant mortality rates in New York City. The infant mortality rate for Latinos is higher (5.2%) than that of other ethnic group in New York City, except African Americans who have the highest rate at 10.2%. However, in New York State, Latinos had an infant mortality rate of 5.41 per 1,000 births, while Whites had a rate of 5.58 and Blacks a rate of 13.35 in 2006.⁶⁴

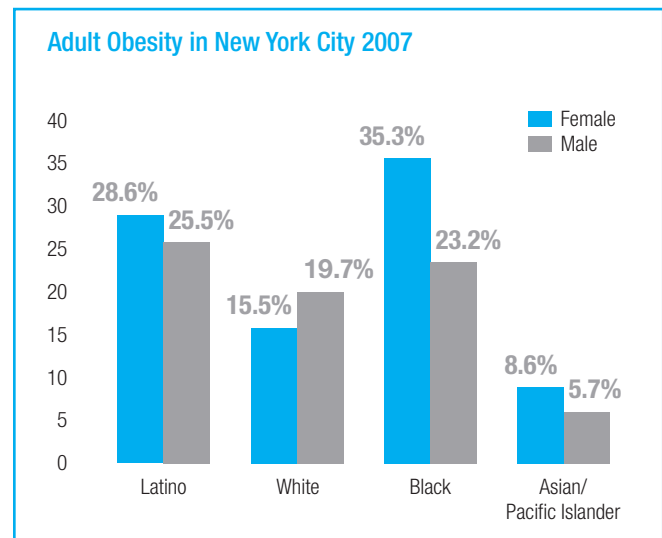
Obesity

Obesity is one of the most serious health issues facing the Latino community today.⁶⁵ Obesity leads to other health risks, such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and depression. For Latinos in New York State, obesity starts early in life.

In 2008, 18.1% of Latino children from ages 2 to 4 years old in the New York State's Women Infants and Children (WIC) supplemental food program were obese compared to 12.3% of White children.⁶⁶ In 2010, the rate of Latino children aged 6 to 12 in New York City public schools who were obese was at a staggering 26.5% and those who were overweight at 19.9%, compared to the 23.5% obesity rate and the 16.1% overweight rate of White children in the school system.⁶⁷

In New York State, Latino adults had an obesity rate of 27.7% in 2009 compared to the 23.6% for Whites.⁶⁸ However, in New York City the disparity widens, where obesity rates are even higher for Latinos. From Figure 5, 29% of Latina women (almost twice the rate of White women at 15.5%), and 25.5% of Latino men compared to 19.7% of White men were obese in New York City in 2007.⁶⁹

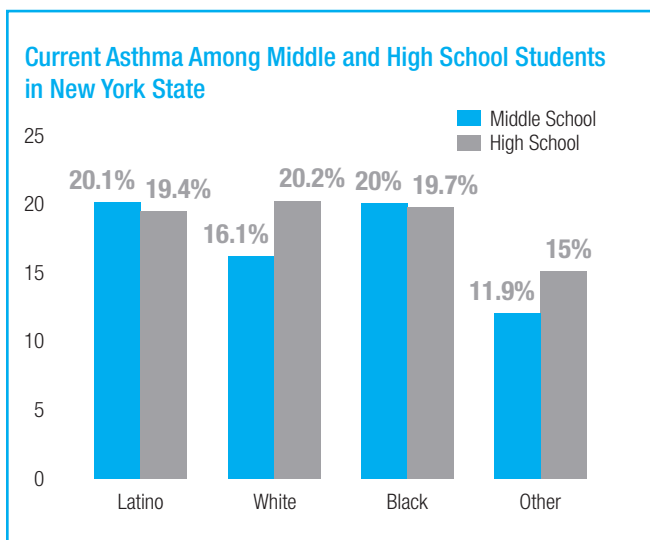
Figure 5



Source: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Community Health Survey 2007: Overweight and Obesity 2007 (Age-Adjusted).

For Latinos in New York State, obesity starts early in life.

18 Figure 6



Source: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. (2008). Summary of Vital Statistics 2007: The City of New York.

In New York City, Latinos have the highest rates of depression and mental distress when compared to other ethnic groups.⁷⁶

Asthma

Latino children have the highest rates of asthma when compared with other ethnic groups in New York City.⁸⁴ 12% of Latino children suffered from Asthma in New York City in 2008, compared to just 4% of Whites. Across New York State, we can also see from Figure 6 that the asthma rates were 20.1% Latino compared to 16.1% White in middle schools in 2008. In high schools across New York State, the asthma rates in 2008 were 19.4% Latino; 20.2% White; 19.7% Black; and 15% other.⁷⁰ These statistics give great cause for concern, since research shows that asthma has serious implications for school attendance and hospitalization costs.⁷¹

In middle schools across New York State, the asthma rates in 2008 were 20.1% Latino; 16.1% White; 20% Black; and 15% other. In high schools across New York State, the asthma rates in 2008 were 19.4% Latino; 20.2% White; 19.7% Black; and 15% other.⁷²

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS touches many communities in New York State and City, not the least of which is the Latino community. In 2008, Blacks and Latinos in New York had the highest incidence among the 3,466 newly reported cases of HIV/AIDS, 47.9% and 28.7%, respectively.⁷³ In New York City, those living with HIV/AIDS were identified as 45.6% Black, 32.7% Latino and 18.9% White.⁷⁴

Mental Health

For some time, Latinos have been identified as a group at high risk for being diagnosed with depression and anxiety.⁷⁵ In New York City, Latinos have the highest rates of depression and mental distress when compared to other ethnic groups.⁷⁶

24.5% of Latinos had a history of depression in New York City in 2008. In contrast, 17% of Blacks and 16.2% of Whites had a history of depression in New York City in 2008.⁷⁷ Additionally, Latinos represent a third of the children, 30%, in New York State who received mental health services in 2007.⁷⁸

Analysis and Recommendations

Analysis of Data and Implications

In both New York State and New York City, Latinos have the highest prevalence of health risks such as teen pregnancy, late or no prenatal care, infant mortality, asthma, obesity, HIV/AIDS and mental health disorders. As the data shows, Latino families in New York face many health risks that can prevent them from reaching their fullest potential. Lack of insurance combined with language barriers impedes access to health care that could easily prevent or treat serious illnesses. Language barriers contribute to the reluctance of Latino families to seek the care and advice of healthcare professionals, leaving them unable to communicate the most basic of their health concerns.

Furthermore, Latino families may not be aware of certain services. They may also have stigmas or cultural beliefs that may lead them to seek help from someone other than a health professional. Thus, even though they are at high risk, Latinos do not utilize health services as much as their White counterparts. Providers that are not trained in the health needs and cultural patterns of the Latino culture may misdiagnose mental health symptoms or may be unable to communicate with their patients about preventative measures.

Life in urban, low-income neighborhoods contributes to the physical stresses already placed on poor families, as they are exposed to higher levels of environmental pollutants, crime and overcrowded living spaces. Additionally, studies have found an association between poverty and risk of mental disorders for Latinos. Factors such as insecurity, hopelessness, social changes, and unemployment cause anxiety and fear, making poor Latinos more vulnerable to health illnesses.

It is worth underlining here the importance that health plays as the base upon which success is built. Improvements in education, economic status, juvenile justice and a plethora of other sectors are worthless if applied to an unhealthy, suffering population.

Health Recommendations

- Promote quality and affordable health care coverage and insurance.
- Increase access to prenatal care and improve the adequacy of prenatal care services.
- Provide more community-based programs targeted to preventable health-risk behaviors in childhood and adolescence.
- Increase the numbers of linguistically and culturally competent physicians and other health service providers to improve access and utilization of health services.

Latino families in New York face many health risks that can prevent them from living a healthy life. Lack of insurance combined with language barriers impedes access to health care that could easily prevent or treat serious illnesses.



EARLY CHILDHOOD
K-12
TESTING
GRADUATION
HIGHER EDUCATION

Education Crisis

for Latino Students

Adding to an already troublesome picture of Latino life in New York is the continued disparity between White and Latino students. Educational disparities between White and Latino students in the state and city are well documented. This marked disparity begins early on with barriers in access to high-quality early education programs; continues with the limited availability of services for English Language Learners, lower testing performances in the k-12 system and lower graduation rates; and decreased potential of completing a college degree.

55.9

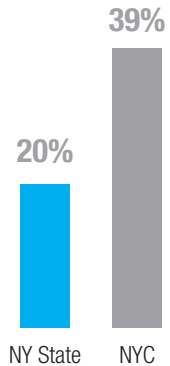
percent of Latinos who graduated in NYC public schools in 2009



44.4

percent of ELLs who graduated on time in 2010

Latino Students



percent of Latino students in public school system

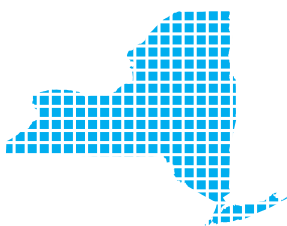


88,688

estimated number of Latino children in New York City in 2010 who were without subsidized pre-K or early education and care options for which they are eligible.



Looking at testing performance of fourth and eighth graders in Math and ELA as well as high school graduation rates, it is clear that Latinos' educational attainment is well below average compared to their White peers.



Achievement Gap

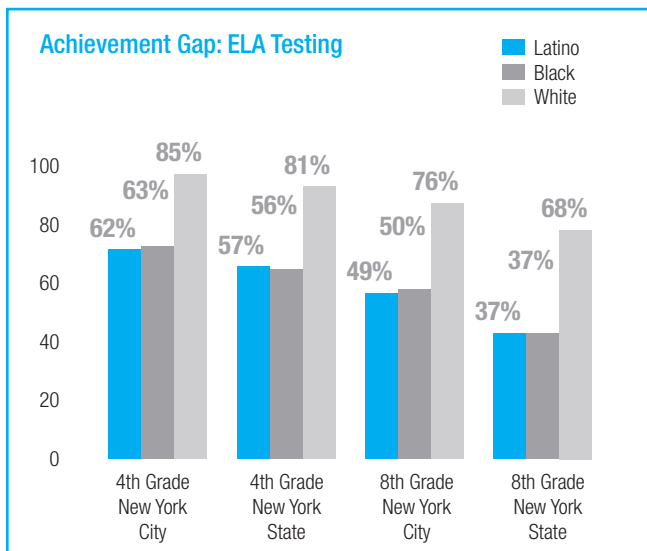
In New York State, only 37% of Latino students in the eighth grade were at level 3 or 4 on the ELA exam in 2009, while 68% of White scored that high.

the **low enrollment** of Latino children in pre-K programs is often **mistaken for reluctance** on the part of Latino families to seek center-based programs

15.2

percent of Latinos with Bachelors degrees in NY State





Source: New York City Department of Education. (2009). 2008 Test results math and English language arts: grades 3-8.

Latinos represented 20% of students in New York State's public education system in 2007.

Early Childhood Education

According to American Community Survey's 3-year estimates,⁷⁹ approximately 197,000 Latino children in New York City are under age 5, the age at which most children will enroll in early education programs. Recent trends point to a surge in Latino births in New York due to an influx of immigrants and the large proportion of Latinas who are reaching childbearing age.⁸⁰ Latino children, a group projected to triple its population by 2050 and whose growth greatly outpaces that of its Black and White counterparts,⁸¹ make up 49% of the children who should be receiving early education in New York City (197,000 of the 401,000 children under age 5). However, there are today an estimated 88,668 Latino children in New York City without pre-K options of the 45% of children who do not receive the subsidies for which they are eligible.

K-12 Education

As of 2007, Latinos represented 20% of students in New York State's public education system. In New York City, they were the largest group, making up 39% of New York City's public school system,^{82, 83} a percentage that will only increase with time.

Testing performance: 4th and 8th graders in Math and ELA

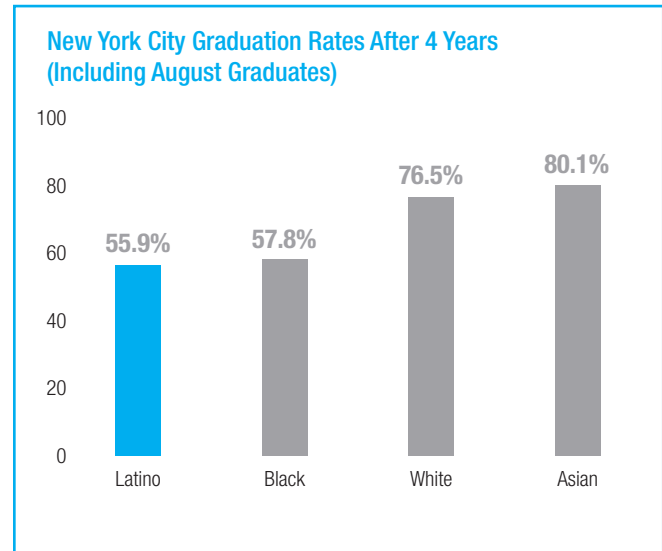
Deficiencies in early education are only the beginning of a very serious problem. Looking at testing performance of fourth and eighth graders in Math and ELA as well as high school graduation rates, it is clear that Latinos' educational attainment is well below average compared to their White peers. Figure 7 displays the academic disparities amongst Latino, Black and White children in ELA state testing in New York State and City.^{84, 85} Please note that the New York City data is from 2009 and the New York State data is from 2008. According to the NYC DOE, between fourth and eighth grades the achievement gap between Latino (and Black) and White students only widens. In 2009, in New York City, over 80% of White fourth graders achieved a level 3 or 4 of proficiency on their ELA exam, while only 62% of Latino children perform at the same level.⁸⁶ In the eighth grade only 76% of White students and a mere 49% of Latino students in the city were at level 3 or 4 on the ELA exam. Test performance disparities were relatively consistent across city and state levels in 2008 and 2009, which clearly shows that it is a statewide trend.⁸⁷

Graduation Rates

When it comes to high school graduation rates, Latino students fare no better. As Figure 8 shows, only 55.9% of Latino students in New York City high schools graduated in 2009, while 76.5% of the White students did so that year.⁸⁸ The disparity was even greater at the state level (Figure 9), with only 54.8% of Latino public school students graduating in 2009, compared to 82.7% of their White peers, according to the NYSED.⁸⁹ English Language Learners (ELLs) are also falling behind, with a graduation rate of 38.6% in New York State and 44.4% in New York City.⁹⁰ It is worthwhile mentioning here that 67.4% of the total 149,000 ELL students in New York City come from Spanish-speaking homes, thus highlighting the impact that ELL difficulties have on Latino families.⁹¹

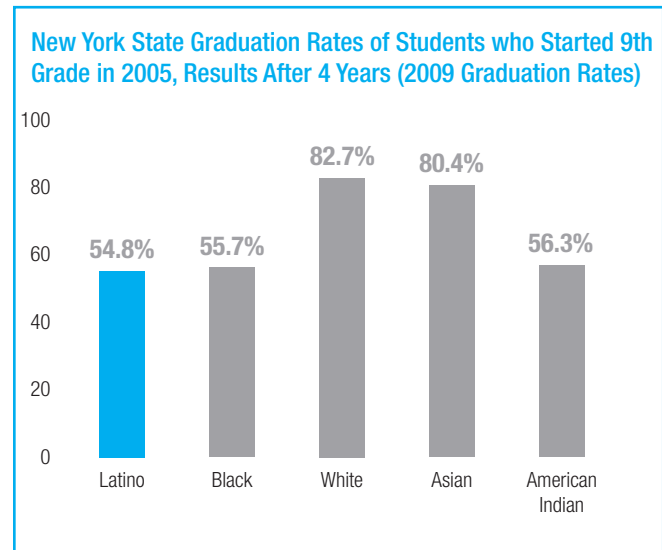
According to NYC DOE, 40% of the Latinos who graduate from high school in New York City earn a local diploma rather than a Regents diploma.⁹² Regents' diplomas, now mandatory for graduation throughout New York State,⁹³ are awarded to students who have passed a series of examinations that are more rigorous and require higher scores than those for a local high school diploma. For the many Latinos and ELLs whose native language is not English, the requirement of passing these high school exit exams creates yet another obstacle to graduation.

Figure 8



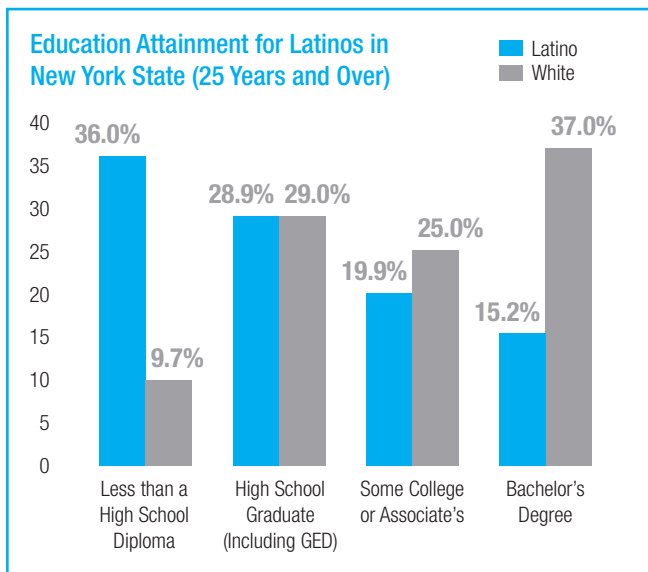
Source: New York City Department of Education. (2010). NYC Graduation Rates Class of 2009 (2005 Cohort).

Figure 9



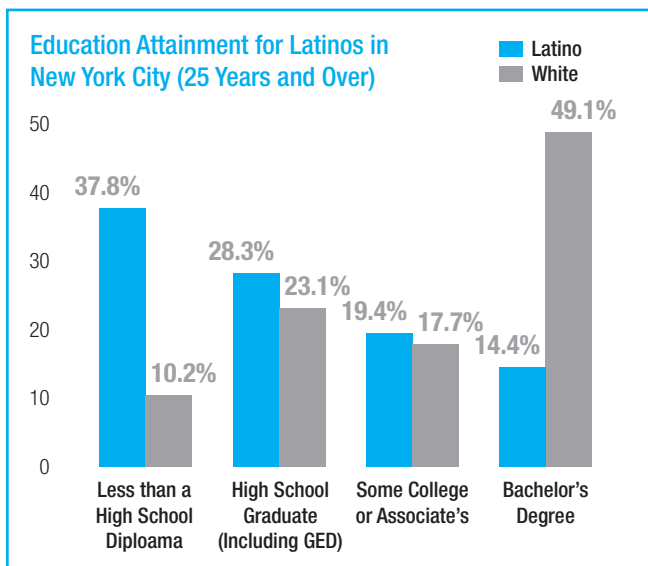
Source: New York State Department of Education. (2010). Graduation Rates: Students who started 9th grade in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 Supplemental Packet. (State Power Point Slides).

24 Figure 10



Source: US Census Bureau. 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Detailed Tables .

Figure 11



Source: US Census Bureau. 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Detailed Tables .

Higher Education

When it comes to higher education, Latinos experience the lowest educational attainment in the state and in the city, a situation that will have long-term effects on the community's upward mobility; without higher education, Latinos are overwhelmingly placed at a disadvantage to compete for higher-wage jobs.⁹⁴ The statistics in Figures 10 and 11 show an overwhelming disparity between the educational attainment of Latinos and Whites. In New York State, 36% of Whites have received Bachelor's degrees, more than double the Latino rate (15.2%).⁹⁵ In New York City, 49.1% of Whites have received a Bachelor's degree, three times the rate of Bachelor's degrees received by Latinos (14.4%).⁹⁶

Circumstances such as poverty, poor school conditions, over-crowded classrooms, low levels of parental education, neighborhood segregation, low-quality teachers and lack of culturally sensitive educational resources all contribute to the difficulties with standardized tests and the lagging graduation rates in Latino communities.

Analysis and Recommendations

Analysis of Data and Implications

There is no doubt that a successful educational career begins at a young age and continues throughout one's life. In order to ensure the best path for all children of New York State and New York City, it is imperative that government officials respond accordingly to demographic changes, recognize the increased proportion of Latino students and provide every child with equal educational opportunities at each stage of life—an ideal which unfortunately has yet to be met for the Latino community.

When enrolled in early education, children are exposed to stimulating and enriching educational experiences and make significant gains in learning and development that will aid them throughout their whole academic life. For Latino children, enrollment in quality early care and education programs is even more vital, since they often enter kindergarten with lower assessment scores in reading and mathematics when compared to other children.⁹⁷ The low enrollment of Latino children in pre-K programs is often mistaken for reluctance on the part of Latino families to seek center-based programs. However, evidence suggests that Latino children have limited access to early education programs, most often due to budget cuts that have reduced the programs available to meet the demand.⁹⁸ Thus, the dearth of publicly funded, high quality programs in Latino communities leaves families with few options, therefore reducing access and consequently, enrollment.⁹⁹ Furthermore, Latino parents' limited English proficiency is an obstacle to finding information about such programs. For those without access or means to this valuable resource, the disparity in educational attainment will only grow wider with time.

When Latino children enter public elementary schools, they come equipped with valuable Spanish linguistic skills upon which they have the potential to build a bilingual literacy. For many, public school will be the first time they have significant contact with the English language. Unfortunately, without the proper support in

both English and Spanish, Latino children risk beginning their academic careers at a severe disadvantage to their English-speaking peers and miss a key opportunity to become bilingual, an important asset in the 21st century. In many schools, teachers are only hired for non-language subjects such as math, science, history or elementary education. As a result, they are not adequately equipped to deal with the linguistic diversity that exists in their classrooms, thus making a strong corps of bilingual teachers imperative in New York's school districts. Consequently, the reduction in funding for bilingual teachers and programs is academically detrimental to a large percentage of New York's citizens.

The dismal math and ELA assessment scores of Latino students compared to their White peers is testament to the barriers, linguistic and non-linguistic, placed on their success from the very beginning of their education. Circumstances such as poverty, poor school conditions, over-crowded classrooms, low levels of parental education, neighborhood segregation, low-quality teachers and lack of culturally sensitive educational resources all contribute to the difficulties Latinos have in attaining an optimal education in New York. If these concerns are left unattended, Latino students will likely fall even further behind their White peers and forego a valuable opportunity for a college education.

Education Recommendations

- Increase enrollment in early childhood education programs.
- Professionalize and strengthen the informal, familial daycare programs.
- Increase parental participation and family support to schools by conducting outreach efforts in English and Spanish.
- Ensure the hiring of an adequate pool of bilingual education teachers in K-12 and offer incentives and training so that they are encouraged to teach academic Spanish.



Latino Youth in the **Juvenile Justice System**

YOUTH ADMISSIONS
COMMUNITY ORIGINS
DISPROPORTIONATE
TREATMENT
COMMUNITY-BASED
ALTERNATIVES

This section examines how exposure to adverse social, economic and environmental conditions disproportionately impact Latino youth, which results in their overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system both at the state and city level. It sheds light on the number of youths within the system who overwhelmingly come from specific districts with large Latino populations. This section also details the factors that may contribute to inequitable treatment of Latinos and analyzes how community-based alternative programs can be more effective and less costly than incarceration.

28

percent of Latinos admitted to NYC juvenile facility in 2010

26.2

percent of Latinos admitted to NY State juvenile facility in 2008

For many Latino youth the juvenile justice system has become a **mandated replacement for the functional model of family life**. Indeed, research has shown that the juvenile justice system is like quick sand; **the longer youth are kept in the system, the harder it is to get out.**

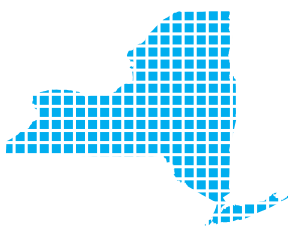


NYC DJJ Admissions 2010



Inequality and Racial Imbalance

It is revealing that many of the children admitted into custody in New York City resided in community districts with large Latino children populations, which indicate inequalities and racial imbalance in the system.



Of the 5,490 youth admitted into custody in NYC in 2008, 28.6% came from the Bronx, the county with the largest Latino population in the city and state.

5

in 2010 5 of the 10 areas where youth are admitted into custody are largely Latino

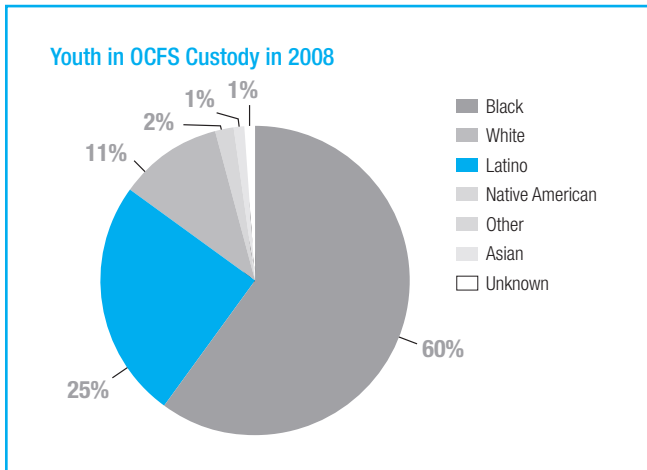
Top Origins of Youth Admissions

- Tremont
- University Heights
- Morris Heights
- East Harlem/Upper East Side
- Soundview
- Bedford Park
- South Bronx



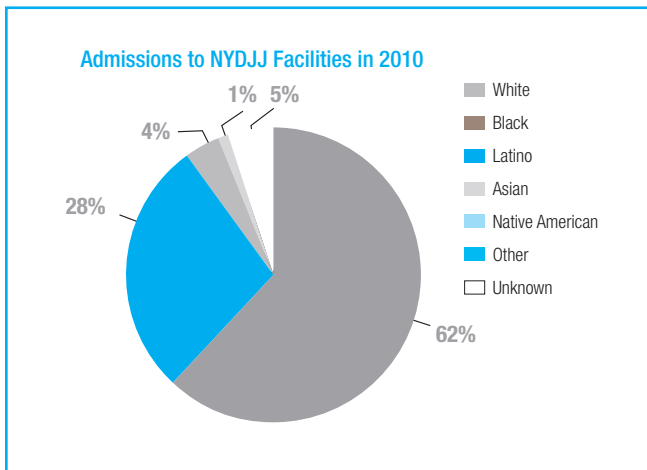
\$210,000 per child for detention facilities vs. **\$35,081** for alternative programs

28 Figure 12



Source: NYDJJ Detention Demographic Data 2010

Figure 13



Source: NYDJJ Detention Demographic Data 2010

For many Latino youth the juvenile justice system has become a mandated replacement for the functional model of family life. Indeed, research has shown that the juvenile justice system is like quick sand; the longer youth are kept in the system, the harder it is to get out. However, juvenile court officials often tend to generalize Latino youth delinquency and attribute it to a lack of parental monitoring and supervision. In this context, it is determined that minority youth are in need of more formal social control and due to the lack of alternatives they default into the juvenile justice system.

Overwhelmingly Represented in Prison

In recent years, government reports have consistently observed an overrepresentation of Latino youth in the New York juvenile justice system. According to OCFS, of the 2,180 children in custody within the State of New York in 2008, 25% were Latino children compared to only a 11% representation, as shown in Figure 12.¹⁰⁰ For the same year, OCFS also reported a disproportionate amount of Latino youth admitted to the state juvenile justice system; of the 1,632 youth admitted to OCFS' custody, 86.8% were youth of color, 26.2% were Latino compared to their Anglo counterparts that only made up 9.6%.¹⁰¹ In New York City, the disproportionate representation of Latino children in institutional settings is also striking. Figure 13 displays that in 2010, of the 5,837 youths admitted to the system, 28% were Latino and 4% White, according to the NYC DJJ.¹⁰²

A multiplicity of factors may contribute to Latino unfair treatment and Latino overrepresentation; however, many studies are unanimous in affirming that the justice system treats youth of color differently as a consequence of preconceptions, stereotypes, and assumptions of all involved in the system, in comparison to attitudes toward White youth.

Community Origins of Youth Admissions

It is revealing that many of the children admitted into custody in New York City resided in community districts with large Latino children populations, which indicates inequalities and racial imbalance in the system.

According to the NYC DJJ, of the 5,490 youth admitted into custody in NYC in 2008, 28.6% came from the Bronx, the county with the largest Latino population in the city and state, followed by Brooklyn (27.5%), Queens (19.9%),

Manhattan (18.1%) and Staten Island (5.1%). As an example, Table 1 shows the 7 of the 15 community districts where most children admitted into custody reside. These seven districts have large Latino populations.¹⁰³ NYC DJJ data from 2010 shows similar findings; out of the ten community districts where most children admitted into custody reside, five are Bronx neighborhoods with large Latino communities (Morrisania, Highbridge, University Heights, Fordham, and Melrose).¹⁰⁴

Table 1

	Board District	Neighborhood	Number of Unique Youth Admitted	Latino and Black Children Population ¹²³
1	Bronx 3	Tremont	152	60.5% (L) 36% (B)
2	Bronx 5	University Heights	144	67.7% (L) 27.25% (B)
3	Bronx 4	Morris Heights	138	66.1% (L) 29.7% (B)
4	Manhattan 11	East Harlem/Upper East Side	134	54.5% (L) 34.7% (B)
5	Bronx 9	Soundview	134	58.7% (L) 32.2% (B)
6	Bronx 7	Bedford Park	131	69.3% (L) 19.3% (B)
7	Bronx 1	South Bronx	125	72.7% (L) 24.1% (B)

Source: NYC Department of Juvenile Justice, Top 15 Residential Community Districts for Youth Admitted to Detention in Fiscal 2008

Analysis and Recommendations

A multiplicity of factors may contribute to Latino unfair treatment and Latino overrepresentation; however, many studies are unanimous in affirming that the justice system treats minorities differently as a consequence of preconceptions, stereotypes, and assumptions of all involved in the system, in comparison to attitudes toward White youth.

Analysis of Data and Implications

The data presented clearly indicates that Latino youth are represented in much larger numbers in the juvenile justice system than would correspond to their actual population of residents in New York State and New York City. This finding should lead one to conclude that Latino youth face differential treatment within the juvenile justice system both in New York State and City, which raises questions about the fairness and effectiveness of the system.

Multiple factors may contribute to the disproportionate treatment Latinos face with regards to the juvenile justice system. Many studies are unanimous in affirming that the justice system treats minorities differently as a consequence of preconceptions, stereotypes, and assumptions of all involved in the system, in comparison to attitudes toward White youth. This is true across the board from minor offenses to much more serious charges.

A common example of this discriminatory treatment is the police preference for targeting certain high crime community districts, which are usually high-minority neighborhoods as well.¹⁰⁵

It is well established that the key in reducing juvenile delinquency and reversing the “cradle to prison” pipeline is prevention and availability of programs that have been proven to work and are less costly. Alternative evidence-based programs, in 2007 dollars, cost between \$952 and \$35,081 per child, compared to the \$210,000 for placement.¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, there are some high-risk and more serious juvenile offenders that need to be placed in custody, but while in custody, they need to receive effective and appropriate interventions. Thereafter, when these youth are released, they will be less dangerous and less violent.

OCFS has already begun a reform process to reevaluate institutional placement for youths in New York State and has led to progress in reexamining juvenile institutional placement; closing detention facilities; expanding community-based alternatives to detention; and decreasing the number of youth entering OCFS or DJJ custody.¹⁰⁷

However, more needs to be done. Clearly, programs targeted to at-risk-youth will in the long term decrease youth crime. In order to reduce the disproportionate number of Latino children entering the juvenile justice system, these programs need to encompass community-based alternatives placement that embrace parental involvement and are near their homes.

In addition hiring linguistically and cultural competent staff will make these programs more responsive in addressing the needs of Latino children involved in the juvenile justice system.

In order to reduce the disproportionate number of Latino children entering the juvenile justice system, these programs need to encompass community-based alternatives placement that embrace parental involvement and are near their home.

Develop alternatives to detention and increase the number of cost-effective, rehabilitative, community-based alternative programs that emphasize family participation and reentry into society.

Juvenile Justice Recommendations

- Develop alternatives to detention and increase the number of cost-effective, rehabilitative, community-based alternative programs that emphasize family participation and reentry into society
- Ensure that these community-based programs are culturally competent, racially and ethnic specific, bilingual, and target counties where most of the children that come into OCFS' custody reside
- Create a comprehensive mapping to assess and track the disproportionate representation in all case processing decisions along every point in the juvenile justice system: arrest, referral to court, detention, court processing, and dispositional decisions (dismissal, conditional discharge, probation supervision, out of home placement with custody, and other social services)¹⁰⁸
- Improve the recruitment of Latinos for professional positions in corrections, law enforcement, juvenile justice programs, and police positions



Latinos in the **Child Welfare System**

ABUSE AND NEGLECT
EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT
FOSTER CARE
MANDATED PREVENTION
ROLE OF POVERTY

This section takes a look at the social welfare and wellbeing of Latino children. In New York State and New York City's child welfare systems, Latino children are overrepresented in comparison to White children in substantiated abuse and neglect reports, foster care placements and case openings. Coupled with increased deportations and ineffective preventive care services, Latino children are put at greatest risk of abuse or neglect.

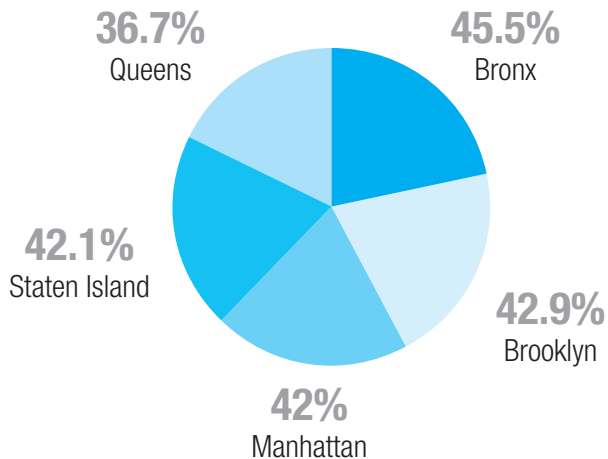
39.8

percent of Latino children in NYC abuse and neglect reports

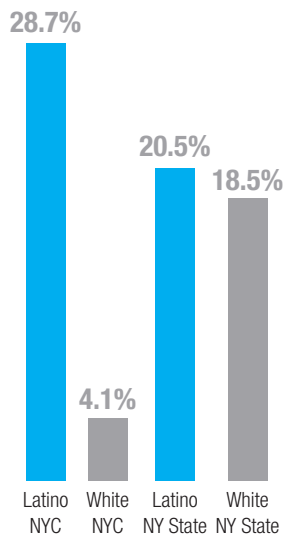
28.7

percent of Latino children in foster care in NYC in 2008

Reports of Abuse and Neglect



Foster Care Placements



The Mandated Preventative Service program is designed to work with families in order to help prevent their children from being placed in the **foster care system**.



39.9

percent of Latino children who received mandated services

Districts with Highest Removals

- St. George/Stapleton
- Parkchester/Soundview
- Jamaica/Hollis
- Highbridge/Concourse
- Fordham/Univ. Heights



New York State's investment in community based prevention and intervention services for Latino children and families have failed to keep up with the changing demographics and demands of the Latino population.



greater numbers of Latino parents have been detained and/or deported

34 Reports of Abuse and Neglect

In 2008, Latino children in New York City comprise of 39.8% of the substantiated or indicated child abuse and neglect reports, while White children comprise 6.4%.¹⁰⁹ As would follow, most cases involving children in substantiated reports of abuse and neglect came from the poorest community districts in New York City, where majority of the Latinos reside. Bronx's indication rate of 45.5% was followed by Brooklyn with 42.9% then Manhattan 42%, Staten Island, 42.1% and Queens, 36.7%.¹¹⁰ In New York State, the number of Latino children in these reports comprised 24.2% of unique children in 2008, compared to 32.8% of White children.¹¹¹

Educational Neglect

Educational neglect cases have been especially alarming among Latino adolescents, whose parents are reported to the child protective system due to their children's high rate of school absenteeism. Since Latino children comprise a significant percentage of the child abuse and neglect reports in the New York City, it is fair to imply that they are overrepresented in educational neglect cases as well. To that end, it is important to discuss the rising rate of educational neglect in the state and city, even though statistics for this area were not able to found for Latinos. According to New York State law, educational neglect is a specific type of neglect that involves the failure of a parent or caregiver to ensure that his or her child attends school regularly. In New York State, one in every 10 children in investigations of abuse and neglect in 2008 was the subject of an allegation of educational neglect. In New York City, the rate of educational neglect cases was 19% in 2008. Furthermore, New York City students ages 13 to 17 accounted for 61% of all educational neglect allegations in 2008.¹¹²

Placements in Foster Care

Historically, most of the children placed in foster care in New York reside in New York City and are children of color, Black or Latino. In 2008, of the 25,925 children in foster care, 63% were New York City children. Of these children, 28.7% were Latino, 56.7% were Black and 4.1% were White.¹¹³ In 2009, 20.5% out of 24,505 children placed in foster care in New York State were Latino, compared to 18.5% White and 47.2% Black.¹¹⁴

Since most foster care placements occur in New York City, Table 2 enumerates 5 community districts with high numbers of removals and placements, the percentage of Latinos in those districts, the percentage of Latino children placed in foster care, and the percentage of household in which Spanish is the primary language. Of note, 3 of the 5 districts have 50% or more of the families who speak primarily Spanish, which indicates a need for bilingual caseworkers.

Deportation and Child Welfare

Due to increased enforcement actions by the federal agency, Immigration and Customs enforcement (ICE), greater numbers of Latino immigrant parents have been detained and/or deported. As a result, more Latino children of deported parents are likely to be left unattended or in substitute care, and may end up the child welfare system. Since 1996, over 36,000 Dominicans have been deported. Importantly, the majority of Dominicans in the United States live in New York City. Of note, the deportations have been increasing at a rapid pace, as 600 Dominicans were deported in the first five weeks of 2009. If the current rate of deportation continues, immigration enforcement would have removed over 5,000 Dominicans in 2009, almost double that total the previous years.¹¹⁵

Table 2

Rank	CD	Number of Placements in Foster Care in 2008	CD Total Population	Percent of Latino population in CD	Percent of Latino children in Foster Care (5/09)	Children living below Poverty Rate in CD	Spanish Spoken at Home
1	SI01-St. George/Stapleton	423	173,832	32%	23.6%	22%	16%
2	QN12-Jamaica/Hollis	362	226,989	17%	11.1%	13%	13%
3	BX05-Fordham/Univ. Heights	316	127,457	68%	40.6%	42%	57%
4	BX09-Parkchester/Soundview	298	171,437	59%	42.6%	38%	50%
5	BX04-Highbridge/Concourse	296	142,191	66%	37.7%	49%	54%

Sources: ACS Community Snapshot 2008; Office of Children & Family Services, Facts About Children in Foster Care in New York State-2008

Mandated Preventive Services

The Mandated Preventative Service program is designed to work with families in order to help prevent their children from being placed in the foster care system. Unfortunately, too many Latino families are being required to receive mandated services, when their family conditions could have been addressed through community based programs. In 2008, New York City had a total of 17,326 of children in mandated openings of preventive services cases and of these 39.9% were Latino.¹¹⁶ In New York State, Latino children constituted 28.9% out of 45,691 total children that received mandated preventive services in 2009.¹¹⁷ Considering the complexity and variety of factors affecting Latino families today, Mandated Preventive Services need to be more comprehensive in their efforts to keep families united.

Due to the high correlation between poverty, the preconceptions of neglect, and the lack of family supports, Latino children are at higher risk for entering the child welfare system. Furthermore, needs are increasing as the economy declines and budget cuts are proposed putting children and families in further danger.

Analysis and Recommendations

Analysis and Implications of Data

Due to the high correlation between poverty, pre-conceptions of neglect and lack of family supports, Latino children are at a higher risk for entering the child welfare system. Furthermore, their needs are increasing as the economy declines and budget cuts are proposed putting children and families in further danger.

Poverty is firmly connected with reports of abuse and neglect. Studies have found that the occurrence of child abuse and neglect is much greater for children from low-income families. Thus, since many Latinos live below the poverty, it could be argued that the large numbers of Latino children in foster care are a result of poverty.

Racism, which is seen in the preconceptions of neglect, is additional factor that adds to the greater numbers of Latino children in the child welfare system. Research has documented that Latino parents have been erroneously charged with abusing or neglecting their children because non-Latino caseworkers are confused by their foreign, yet safe customs.¹¹⁸ Other research has shown Latino families, with the same characteristics as White families, are more likely to have their children put into foster care and the only different variable was race.¹¹⁹

In regard to the lack of family supports, the child welfare system is not the best option to respond to adolescent's educational neglect because it is not well equipped to identify problems such as school absenteeism. From a Latino perspective, a better response is to develop community based programs that involve family participation and services that support the teens' families. Moreover, to adequately serve Latino families, community based programs must be tailored to their linguistic and cultural needs. This means additional bilingual and bicultural staff to offer culturally competent services and training to current staff.

Additionally, we must advocate for the rights of the growing immigrant population whose children are becoming increasingly vulnerable to the child welfare system because of growing deportation rates among the Latino community. The deportations of Latinos from New York leave more than just upset the immediate lives of these Latino deportees; it also leaves their children behind.

Finally, New York State's investment in community based prevention and intervention services for Latino children and families have failed to keep up with the changing demographics and demands of the Latino population. Although families receive counseling to create healthy and stable environments for their children, the Latino community is diverse and has a variety of specific needs that are not accounted for in the preventive system like immigration and deportations. As a result, Latino children are at greater risk of abuse and neglect. In order to protect children from abuse and physical, emotional and educational neglect, these services are instrumental in strengthening families.

Child Welfare Recommendations

- Develop a better monitoring system for addressing chronic absenteeism outside the child welfare system to assist struggling Latino students to improve educational outcomes.
- Require city and state agencies to report their progress in developing culturally and linguistically competent capacity in all areas of child welfare and demonstrate indicators measuring progress.



Conclusion

New York has a long tradition of opening the doors of opportunity to immigrant populations. These doors must remain open to the Latino community with its mosaic of peoples, diverse cultures and ethnicities.

Latinos are the fastest growing population in New York State and in New York City. The issues presented in this report, *The State of Latino Families in New York 2011*, provide a current analysis of the Latino community for city and state leaders. It assembles a profile of Latino needs for elected officials to use in budget considerations. Furthermore, the report offers recommendations for programs and initiatives to improve the quality and increase access to services for Latino communities.

Latinos today face issues of poverty, discrimination, low school performance, risky-health behaviors, and the historically disproportionate entries into the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. As city and state leaders work to address the social and economic problems for New York residents, they have to take into consideration whether their policy goals and budget priorities are able to effectively address the issues facing New York's different populations. We believe that such efforts will not only benefit the Latino community, but New York as a whole.

Policymakers must not let the fiscal conditions of today affect their efforts for the future. Now is the time to take the opportunity to invest in Latino children, families and workers to create the conditions necessary to mobilize and develop the New York's future citizens and workforce.

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