

# Report documents ethnic disparities

By Diana Del Mauro  
The New Mexican

A new examination of statistics comparing Hispanic and non-Hispanic families in New Mexico documents disparities in educational attainment, steady employment and income.

A report titled "Hispanic Children in New Mexico," based on 2000 census figures, was released Friday by New Mexico Voices for Children.

"New Mexico has the highest proportion of Hispanics of any state in the country at 42 percent, and Hispanic children make up 50 percent of the state's child population," the report says. "Not surprisingly, New Mexico celebrates a very rich Hispanic cultural heritage. Yet despite their historical contributions, many Hispanics still suffer disadvantages in many important areas when compared with the general population."

A few key findings:

- ◆ The percentage of Hispanic children living in poverty

**SANTA FE COUNTY**

The report "Hispanic Children in New Mexico" summarized the following data for Santa Fe County, based on the 2000 census:

- ◆ 62 percent of the population under age 18 was Hispanic.
- ◆ The percentage of Hispanic children living in poverty was 20 percent, compared with 16 percent of all children.
- ◆ The percentage of Hispanic children with no parents in the labor force was 15 percent, compared with 12 percent of all children.
- ◆ The percentage of Hispanic 18- to 24-year-olds with at least a high-school diploma was 70 percent, compared with 84 percent of all children.
- ◆ The percentage of Hispanic 16- to 19-year-olds not in school was 20 percent, compared with 15 percent of all children.
- ◆ The percentage of 5- to 7-year-old Hispanics speaking a language other than English was 40 percent, compared with 29 percent of all children.

**ON THE WEB**

- ◆ To find a link to the report, go to [www.freewmexican.com](http://www.freewmexican.com).

is higher than for children in New Mexico generally, 30 percent compared with 25 percent.

- ◆ Sixteen percent of Hispanic children have no parent in the labor force, compared with 14 percent of New Mexico

children generally.

- ◆ The percentage of 18- to 24-year-old Hispanics with at least a high-school diploma is 64 percent, compared with 79 percent of the general population.

- ◆ The percentage of 16- to

19-year-old Hispanics who are not working, enlisted in the military or enrolled in school is 14 percent, compared with 12 percent of the general population.

Gerry Bradley, research director for New Mexico Voices for Children, said the 2000 census data are the most recent available for county-by-county numbers. While the report documents widely known trends, he said it was important to compare how Hispanics are doing with the general population on a county level.

Bradley said the findings make a case for New Mexico to invest more deeply in public day care and an educational system for 3- and 4-year-olds. He also supports establishment of an Office of Hispanic Affairs to focus on ethnic disparities.

The hardship of poverty was most pronounced for Hispanic children in Curry, De Baca, Hidalgo, Lea and Otero counties, all in Southern or Eastern New Mexico.

Santa Fe County seemed to

fare better than most counties in the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds with at least a high-school diploma, the percentage of poor children living in a single-mother household and the percentage of children living in poverty in general, according to Lisa Adams-Shafer, a research associated with New Mexico Voices for Children.

"The Hispanic culture is one of honoring tradition, working hard, taking pride in that work, and family values," Ralph Arellanes, District I director of the League of United Latin American Citizens and executive board member of the Hispano Round Table of New Mexico, said in a news release.

"Unfortunately, hard work alone is no longer the key to the American dream that it once was," he added. "New Mexico's children need a better support system if they are to succeed."

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