



PRESS RELEASE

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Report: Immigrant Children More Likely to Live in Poverty, Have Parents with Low Levels of Educational Attainment

ALBUQUERQUE—While 27 percent of all New Mexico children live in poverty, the rate is much higher (42%) for the state’s immigrant children. And while about 10 percent of New Mexico children in U.S.-born families have parents with less than a high school diploma, more than 35 percent of children in foreign-born families have parents who did not finish high school.

These are two of the conclusions in a new report, “Immigration Matters in New Mexico: How KIDS COUNT,” released today by New Mexico Voices for Children’s KIDS COUNT program. The report looks at several indicators of well-being among both foreign-born children and U.S.-born children of foreign-born parents. The report also finds that immigrant New Mexicans—even those who are naturalized citizens and thus potentially eligible for public health programs—are much less likely to have health insurance than New Mexicans who were born in the U.S.

“Immigrants often have a tough time establishing themselves economically and socially after arriving in the U.S., even though they also bring with them many strengths,” said Christine Hollis, NM Voices’ KIDS COUNT director and report author. “Studies show that immigrant families, in general, tend to have two parents at home, a very strong work ethic, and are tight-knit and supportive of their children, which helps counteract some of the socio-economic risk factors their children are likely to face, especially in the school system.”

New Mexico’s immigrant community is small. Just under 10 percent of the state’s total population is foreign-born and fewer than half of those—or just over 4 percent of the total population—lack documentation. Only about 4 percent of children age 18 and younger are foreign-born. Of children who have foreign-born parents, the vast majority are U.S. citizens.

The full report is available online at: <http://www.nmvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/KC-immigrant-full-report-web.pdf>

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New Mexico Voices for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico's children, families and communities.

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