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## **New Neighbors Find Success, Face Challenges**

### WCCF Report Highlights Well-Being of Wisconsin Children in Immigrant Families

A new report by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) provides a statistical portrait of children in immigrant families in our state. “Wisconsin Children in Immigrant Families,” one in a series of WisKids Count issue briefs, finds that most Wisconsin children in immigrant families are U.S.-born citizens, speak English well and live in two-parent working families.

About one in 11 Wisconsin children lives in an immigrant family, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. Nationally, one in five kids is either an immigrant or the child of an immigrant. Approximately three-fourths of Wisconsin children in immigrant families are citizens born in the United States. Eighty percent speak English well, 82 percent live in married couple families, and three-quarters live with a parent who has stable employment.

At the same time, many immigrant families face significant barriers to success. While immigrant families have a high rate of workforce participation, their children are more likely to be living in poverty than non-immigrant kids. Nearly a quarter of them live below the poverty line, and almost half are in low-income families (below 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold). Kids in immigrant families are also less likely to have health insurance. While 63 percent of immigrant families with children own their own homes, they are more likely to have an excessive housing cost burden and more likely to be living in over-crowded conditions.

Children in immigrant families are more likely to speak English than their parents. Nearly a quarter of these children are considered to be living in linguistically isolated families, meaning no one over the age of 14 can speak English well. This isolation can limit parents’ ability to communicate with their children’s teachers and doctors, and often hinders job advancement and income gains.

“Immigrants to our state bring new ideas, energy and talents,” says WCCF Executive Director Charity Eleson. “Wisconsin benefits when all families are successful; but success is much harder for immigrant families with low educational levels and difficulty speaking English. As Wisconsin continues to become more diverse, our public systems must be prepared to address the needs of our new neighbors.”

“Wisconsin Children in Immigrant Families” is available on the WCCF website at [http://www.wccf.org/pdf/wi\\_children\\_immigrant\\_families.pdf](http://www.wccf.org/pdf/wi_children_immigrant_families.pdf)