



All School-Home Communication in One Place. It's That Easy.

A photograph of a family of three: a woman with long dark hair, a young girl with long dark hair, and a young boy with short dark hair, all smiling and looking towards the camera. They are outdoors, with green grass and trees in the background.

Parental Engagement In Immigrant Families & Promoting Student Academic Success

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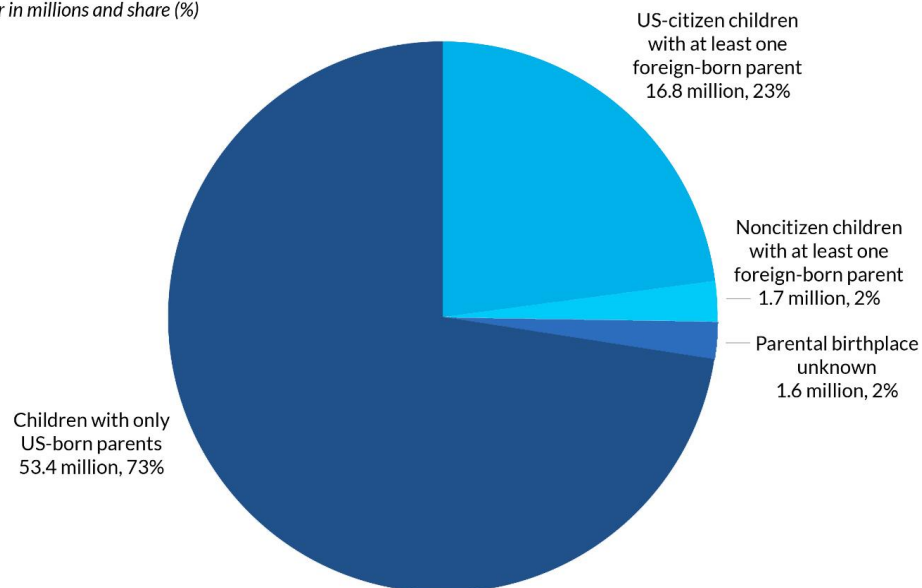
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1.) The Growing Immigrant Population of America

The USA stands at the forefront, surpassing all other nations with the highest number of immigrants in the world. Presently, more than 40 million individuals living within the U.S. were born abroad. Over the past two decades, there has been a modest yet noteworthy increase in the number of children with at least one immigrant parent. In 2006, approximately 16 million children in the USA (comprising 22% of the overall child population) had at least one parent born outside the country. This figure has since grown to 18.6 million children, constituting about 25% of all children in the nation, as of the most recent data in 2017. **This shift underscores the evolving demographic landscape within America, with a rising number of children coming from immigrant backgrounds.**

One-Quarter of US Children Were Children of Immigrants in 2017, and Almost All Were Citizens

Number in millions and share (%)



Source: Urban institute calculations using Census Bureau American Community Survey data.



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2.) A Brief History of Bilingual Education in the USA

Bilingual education in the United States has been present in various forms since its colonial origins until today, except for a short pause during and immediately after World War I, when strong anti-German sentiment and a broader opposition to non-English languages prevailed.

Fortunately, the 1960s brought a resurgence of bilingual education. In 1968, President Johnson signed the Bilingual Education Act, a significant step toward advocating for individuals' language rights. Additionally, the 1970s saw the passing of the Equal Educational Opportunity Act, which spurred the widespread implementation of bilingual education programs. However, between 1980 and 1990, federal funding under the Bilingual Education Act was cut by 47%. President Reagan stated *"It is absolutely wrong and against the American concept to have a bilingual education program that is now openly, admittedly dedicated to preserving their native language."*

Ultimately, the decision to cut funding to the Bilingual Education Act during this period had far-reaching consequences, impacting the educational opportunities and future prospects of bilingual students throughout the United States. It also highlighted the ongoing tension between the desire to unite under a common language and the ongoing efforts to value and preserve linguistic diversity.

WHAT STATES HAVE THE MOST CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS?

California (44%), Nevada (34%), New Jersey (33%), New York (32%) and Texas and Florida (both 31%).



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3.) How Schools are Coordinating with ESL Parents

Effective communication between schools and parents is crucial in fostering a supportive learning environment. Recognizing the diverse linguistic backgrounds within a school community, it is imperative that educational institutions prioritize communicating with parents in their home language. By doing so, schools can ensure that parents are actively engaged in their child's education and can fully participate in school activities.

To successfully communicate with parents in their home language, schools should first conduct an assessment to determine the different languages spoken by families within the school community. This information can be gathered through home language surveys or by collaborating with translators or interpreters. Once the primary languages have been identified, schools can develop a multi-faceted communication strategy. This may include translating important documents such as school policies, newsletters, and progress reports into the parents' native language. Additionally, schools can utilize interpreters during parent-teacher conferences, school events, and meetings to ensure effective communication between teachers and parents. By employing these strategies, schools can bridge the language gap and create an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere.

Utilizing translation services or incorporating multilingual features in school websites, email communication, etc. can enable parents to stay informed and engaged in their child's academic journey. Additionally, hosting workshops or informational sessions in different languages can empower parents by equipping them with knowledge on various topics related to education and parenting. By embracing these strategies, schools can make a commitment to fostering meaningful communication and creating an inclusive environment where parents feel heard, valued, and empowered.



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4.) Inclusive Parent Teacher Meetings



It is imperative that schools make an extra effort to engage and involve immigrant parents in parent-teacher meetings. These meetings serve as valuable platforms for fostering meaningful partnerships between parents and educators, contributing to the overall success of students. By actively striving to include and encourage these parents' participation, schools can create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

Promote parental attendance: To ensure a successful conference night, it is important to actively involve bilingual families and consider bilingual invitations, child care, and other measures to increase immigrant parent attendance.

Make individual contact: Once the conference invitations have been sent home, it is recommended to personally reach out to parents through phone calls or at the school, in order to inquire about their attendance. Taking advice from sales professionals, it is helpful to make a reminder call one day prior to the conference.

Arrange for an interpreter: Don't rely on students as interpreters during the conference. Students might not feel comfortable interpreting for their parents, lack the appropriate vocabulary for interpreting educational information, and may withhold negative feedback about the presented information.



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5.) How Language Translation Software Can Help

Classroom communication apps have become a valuable tool for schools in facilitating language translation and communication with immigrant parents. These apps often feature language translation capabilities that allow teachers and school staff to communicate effectively with parents who may not be fluent in the local language. This technology eliminates the language barrier and ensures that parents are involved and informed about their child's education.

Teachers can use these apps to send important announcements, newsletters, and even individual messages to parents in their preferred language. By providing these translation services, schools can foster a stronger partnership between teachers and immigrant parents, leading to increased engagement and support for the students. Parents can also use the apps to communicate their concerns, questions, or information about their child's educational needs directly to the teacher or school administration.

Furthermore, classroom communication apps (like Bloomz) can be used to schedule and conduct parent-teacher conferences efficiently. These apps allow parents to easily schedule appointments, choose their preferred language for the meeting, and receive reminders.

Nearly 10.4 million or 22% of young people ages 14 to 24 were foreign-born or lived with at least one foreign-born parent in 2015–2019.



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6.) Bloomz Automatic Translation Tools

Bloomz is a communication platform that offers automatic translation technology to help users overcome language barriers. Users can choose from a list of 133 languages to translate their messages, including emergency alerts, posts, announcements, and direct messages. Setting up the preferred language is easy, and users can modify their preference at any time.

A screenshot of the 'Preferred Language' settings screen in the Bloomz app. At the top, there is a back arrow and the title 'Preferred Language'. Below this, there is a toggle switch for 'Auto Translate Content' which is turned on (green). Underneath the toggle is a list of languages with radio buttons next to them. The languages listed are: Arabic - العربية, Chinese - 中國, English, French - Français, German - Deutsch, Italian - Italiano, Korean - 한국의, Russian - Русский, and Spanish - Español. The 'Spanish - Español' option is selected, indicated by a blue checkmark in a circle next to the radio button.

Bloomz ensures that all notifications, whether through email, SMS text, auto-voice, or in-app messages, are automatically translated into any preferred language. Importing languages is also made simple through CSV file or SIS integration. Bloomz also provides customization options for each language, allowing users to customize in-app text, audio messages, and SMS texts.

“When considering options like ClassDojo and Remind, Bloomz stood out. Class Dojo, though suitable for elementary-level behavioral components, felt a bit juvenile for upper elementary and middle school grades. Remind, on the other hand, lacked the community-building factor that Bloomz provided. The intuitive newsfeed feature, along with the translation features, really set Bloomz apart from the competition.” - Erica Levy, Communications & Marketing Director, Rowlett Academy

Are you a school principal, staff, or district admin who struggles with school communication? [Submit your information](#), and we will get back to you to schedule a virtual meeting where we can walk you through all the powerful Bloomz features.



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7.) Cultural Norms and Expectations



A 2014 study (Linking Immigrant Parents' Educational Expectations and Aspirations to Their Children's School Performance) aimed to examine the relationships between immigrant parents' educational expectations and aspirations and their children's school performance. The results

indicated that immigrant parents held high expectations and aspirations for their children, and these expectations / aspirations are directly related to school performance.

The migrant journey often comes with challenges and struggles, including cultural, linguistic, and psychological challenges, as well as economic, social, and environmental stressors. Despite these challenges, the findings of the study suggest that immigrant parents generally have high expectations and aspirations for their children's education.

Additionally, the study found a positive correlation between immigrant parents' expectations and aspirations for their children's educational attainment and their children's overall school performance. Immigrant parents, who have strong beliefs in education and are optimistic about their children's future, tend to prioritize their children's education and provide support. Foreign-born parents, regardless of their countries of origin, believe in the importance of academic success and instill this attitude in their children.

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8.) Challenges Facing Immigrant Families



Children in immigrant families are almost twice as likely to experience poor health, live in overcrowded housing, and live in poverty.*⁵ Many children of immigrants are also part of families where one or both parents lack legal status. These children often take on additional responsibilities, serving as translators and cultural mediators within their families.

A study showed that among students with immigrant parents, 51% earned mostly "A" grades, slightly higher than the 48% among students with native-born parents. In terms of communication from school, a lower proportion of immigrant parents (16%) received contact regarding their child's learning problems compared to U.S.-born parents (22%).

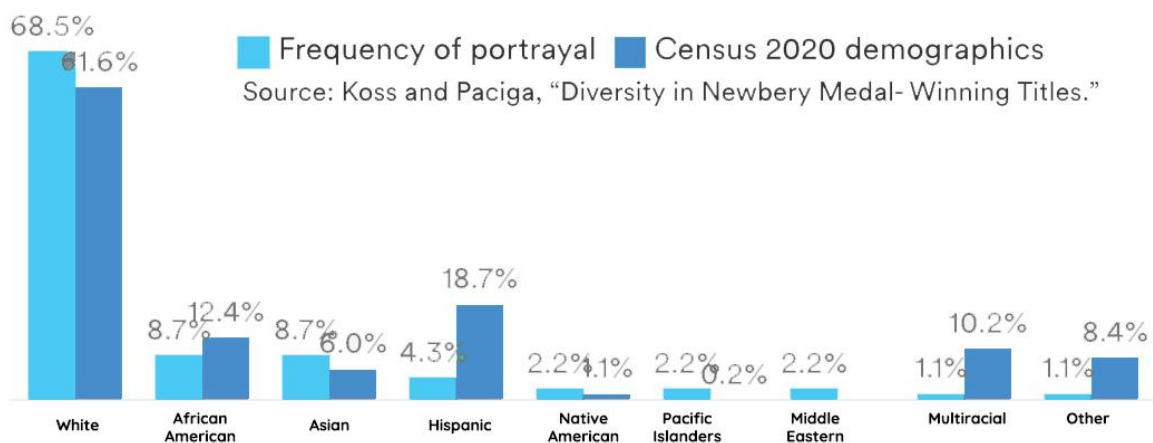
Immigrant parents typically have higher aspirations for their children's educational success, and they often value education more than non-immigrant parents.*⁶ However, their education levels and understanding of the host-country education system may be limited. This lack of knowledge can pose challenges in overcoming educational disadvantages and achieving their goals. Consequently, the transmission of disadvantage from one generation to the next is often higher for immigrants than for native-born individuals.

9.) Representation Matters

Representation refers to the notion that school principals, teachers, and other influential figures within schools should attempt to mirror the racial and cultural makeup of the communities they cater to with their lesson plans, handouts etc. This kind of representation enables students of diverse backgrounds to witness educators and leaders discussing the accomplishments of people who resemble them, fostering a sense of identity and propelling them to aspire to greater goals.

Particularly in the areas of humanities and social sciences, the teaching materials often focus primarily on narratives from Western, white, male, and middle-class perspectives. Collaborate with your teachers to ensure a diverse range of voices is represented in the curriculum.

Figure 1: A comparison of racial and ethnic representation in a study on award-winning children's books with the U.S. 2020 Census





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