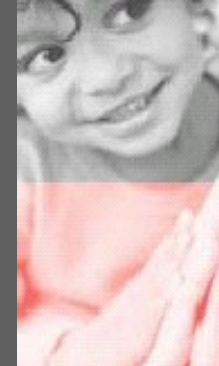


# The Child Welfare Research Program



## Immigration Issues in the Child Welfare System: Findings from Texas

Tracy Vericker

*The Intersection of Immigration and Child Welfare: Emerging Issues and Implications*  
Chicago, IL  
April 2, 2008



# Child Welfare Implications of Immigration Trends

- Almost 1/4 of children in U.S, 1/3 of children in Texas have immigrant parents.
- Latino immigrants/Spanish widespread, other languages/cultures rarer (especially in Texas).
- Children of immigrants poorer, especially younger children (higher risk of system involvement).
- Children of immigrants LESS likely to live with single parents (lower risk of system involvement).
- 1/3 of limited English proficient families are poor.
- Legal status = bigger barrier for parents (very few children are undocumented).
- Young children of immigrants almost all U.S.-born, older children more likely to be foreign-born, non-citizens.



# Research Questions

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Are immigrant children and children of immigrants over-represented or under-represented in the child welfare system?

How do their experiences in child welfare systems differ from those of children of natives?



# Methodology

- Foreign born children identified in child welfare administrative data; second generation immigrant children identified by linking files.
- Probabilistic matching software (Linkage Wiz) linked Texas birth certificate records to child welfare administrative data
- **92 percent match rate**
- Children excluded from matching:
  - Born after December 31, 2004
  - Born out of state
- Matched on mother & child SSNs, child date of birth, and child, mother and father first and last names.
- Weights assigned to each variable based on whether there is an exact, partial or no match.
- Based on Linkage Wiz thresholds and spot checking results, we established a set of linkage rules.



# Preliminary Findings from Texas

- **Matched Sample: Children in out-of home care on March 31, 2006**
- **Four populations:**
  - Latino immigrant children (n = 200)--in admin data already
  - Children of Latino immigrants (n = 1,700)
  - Latino children of natives (n = 6,600)
  - Children of natives (non-Latino) (n = 11,900)
- **Research topics:**
  - Disproportionality of removal from the home
  - Demographic differences by nativity status
  - Placement & case goal differences by ethnicity and nativity status
  - Differences in reasons for removal
  - Title IV-E funding differences



# Latino Children of Immigrants Under-Represented; Latino Children of Natives Over-Represented

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- Latino immigrants = **1%** of all children in out-of-home care in Texas in March 2006.
- Latino immigrants = **7%** of all children in Texas in 2005.
- Latino children of immigrants = **8%** of all children in care.
- Latino children of immigrants = **20%** of all children in Texas.
- U.S.-born Latino natives = **33%** of all children in care.
- U.S.-born Latino natives = **22%** of all children in Texas.

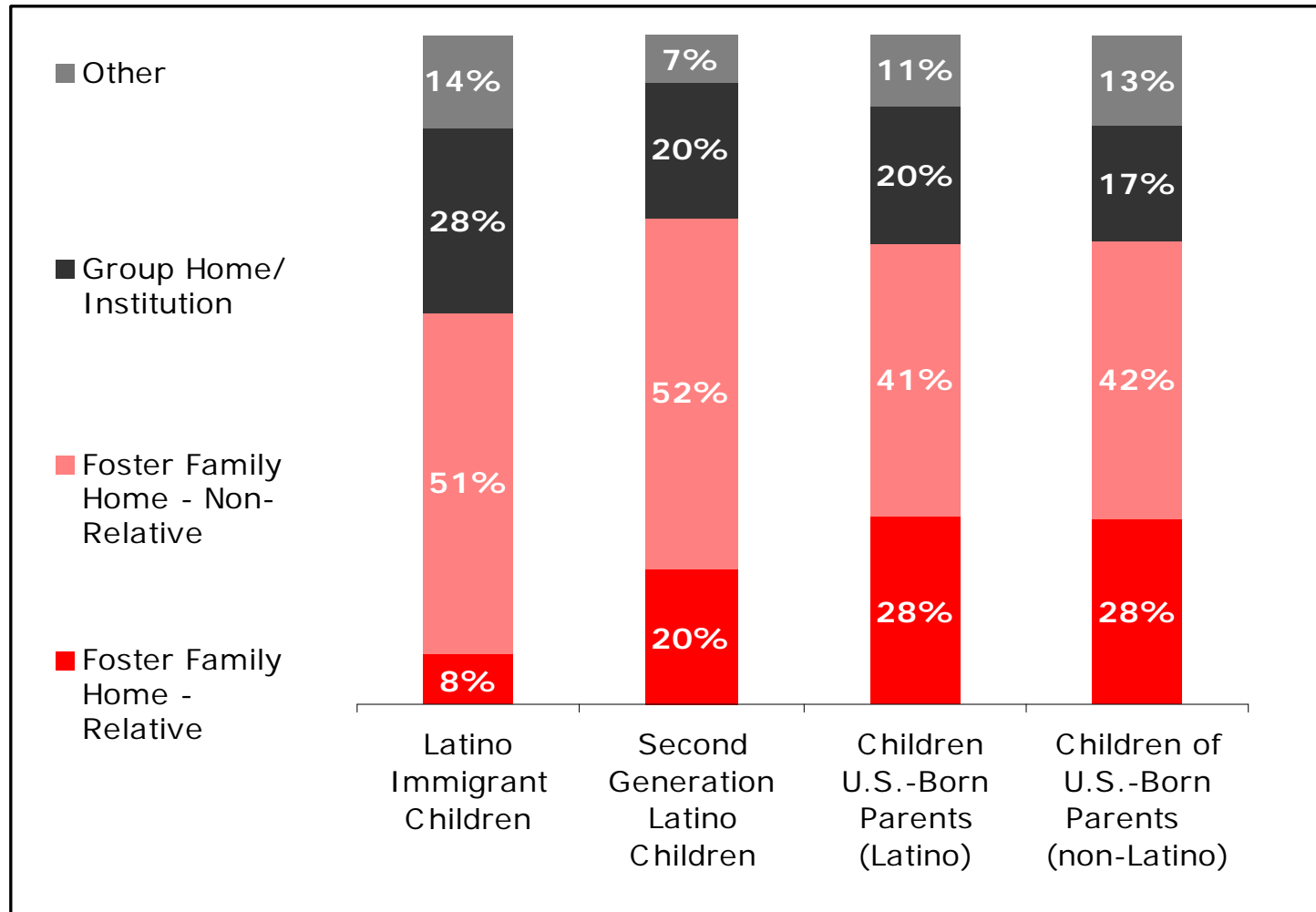


# Latino Immigrant Children Older and More Often Female

	Latino Immigrant Children	Second Generation Latino Children	Children of U.S.-Born Parents (Latino)	Children of U.S.-Born Parents (non-Latino)
<b>Age</b>				
1 - 5 Years	7%	32%	32%	30%
6 - 10 Years	20%	35%	29%	28%
11 - 15 Years	37%	21%	24%	24%
16 - 18 Years	<b>37%</b>	12%	15%	18%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	<b>59%</b>	49%	51%	52%
Male	41%	51%	49%	48%

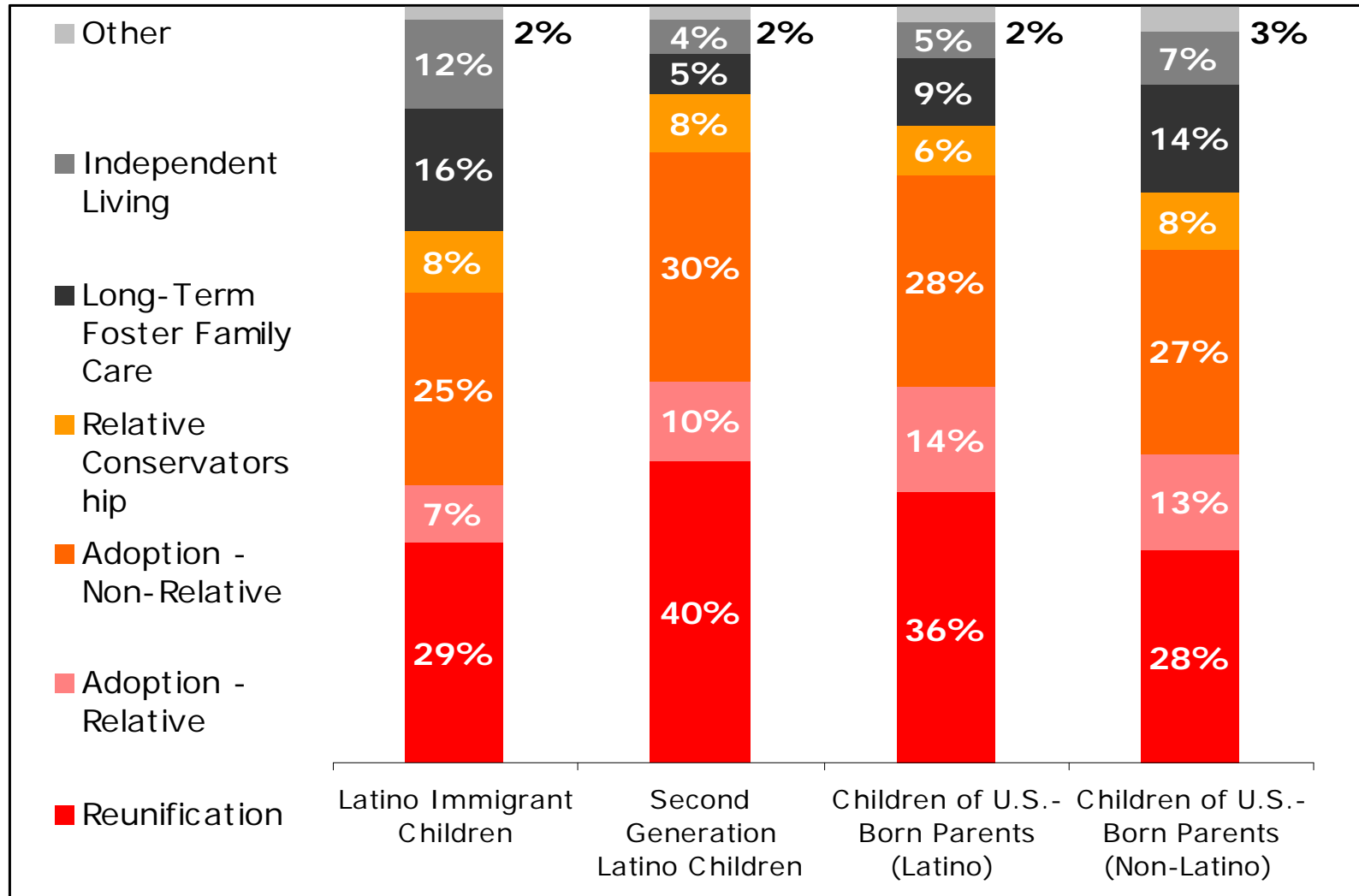


# Latino Children of Immigrants Less Likely to be Placed with Relatives

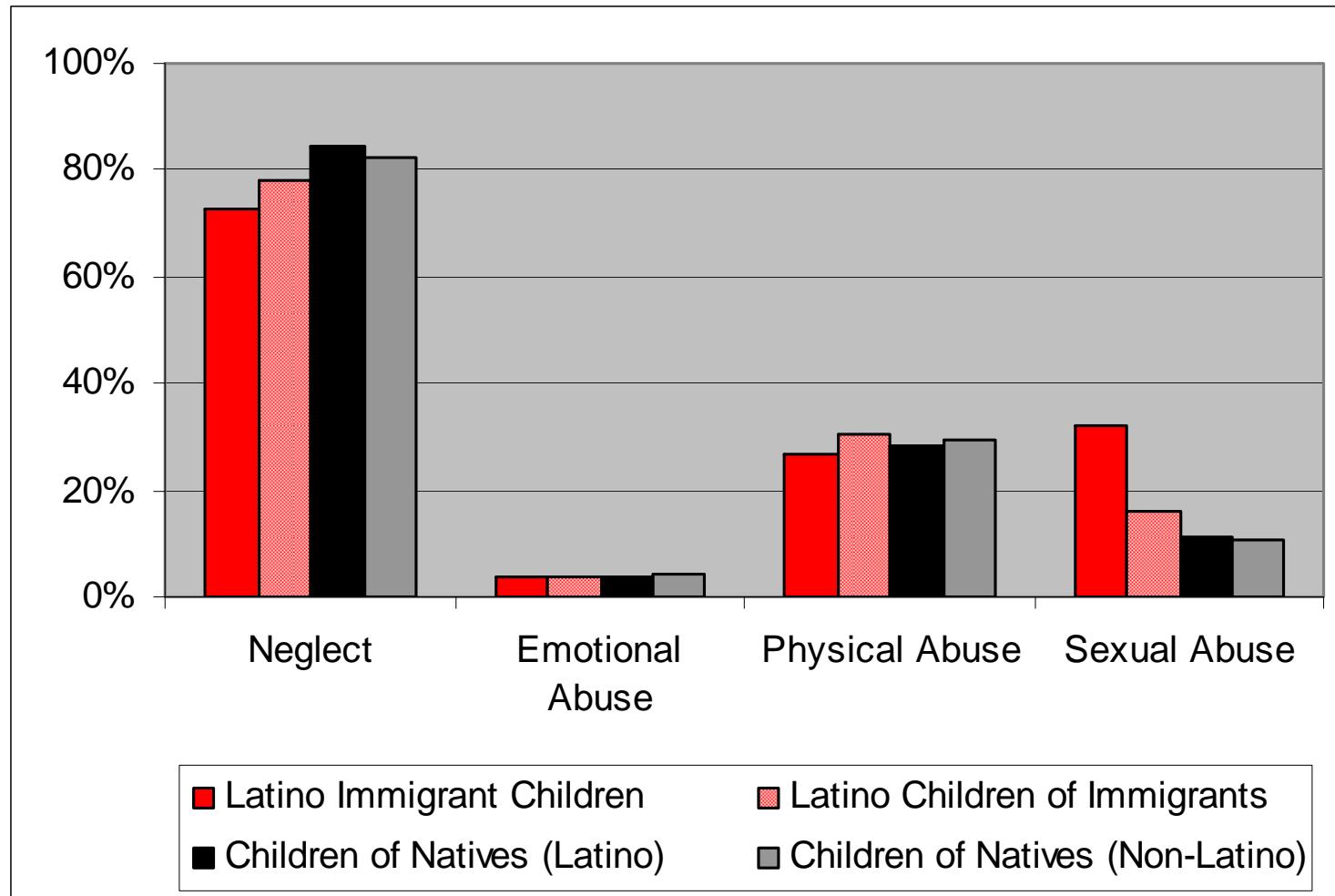




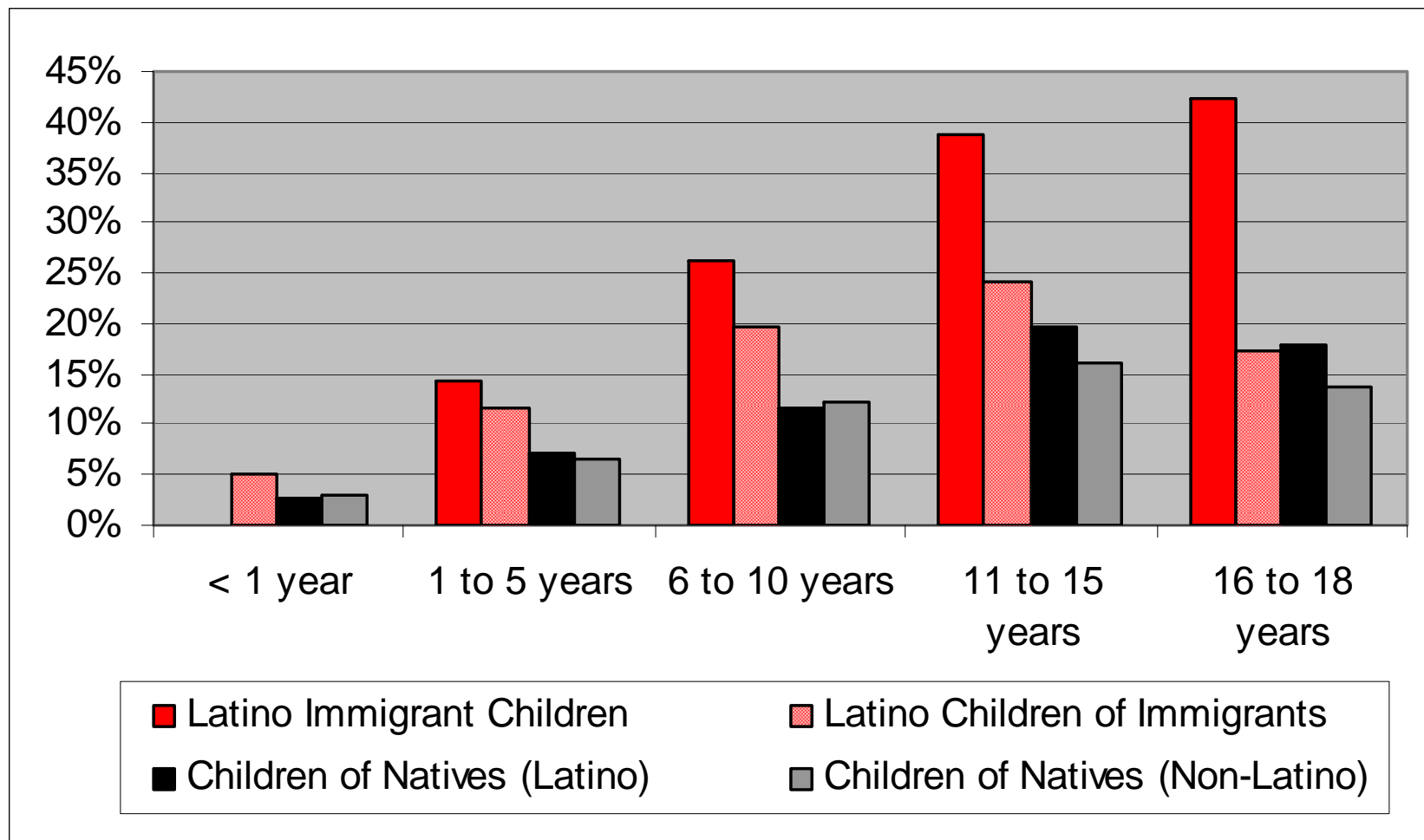
# Latino Immigrant Children Less Likely to Have Case Goals Involving Relatives



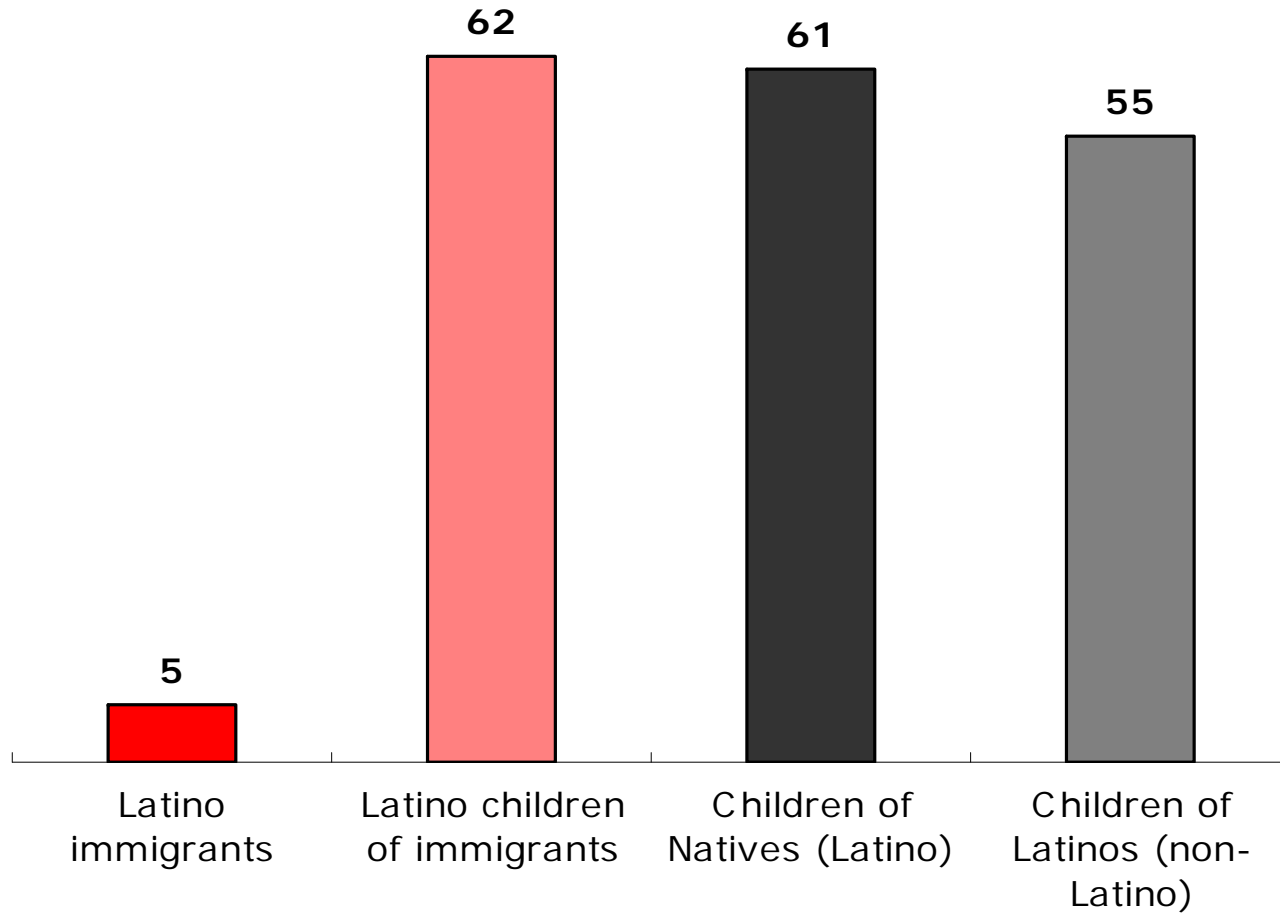
# Latino Immigrant Children in Care More Likely Removed for Sexual Abuse



# Age Does Not Explain Higher Share of Sexual Abuse in the Immigrant Population



# Most Latino Immigrant Children Not Title IV-E Eligible



# Conclusions

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## **All children of immigrants:**

- Latino children of immigrants under-represented; Latino children of natives over-represented, among population in out-of-home care.
- Latino children of immigrants less likely to be placed with relatives.

## **Immigrant children only:**

- Latino immigrant children older and more often female.
- Latino immigrant children in care more likely removed for sexual abuse.
- Most Latino immigrant children not title IV-E eligible.



# Implications

- Disproportionately *low* removal of children from immigrant families may mean protective factors outweigh risk factors
- Alternatively, children of immigrants may be less likely to come into contact with reporters; parents may be fearful of agency contact.
- Placements and case goals of children of immigrants do not conform to the beliefs in the field about placement and permanency planning—i.e., are not relative-centered.
- There may be difficulties finding relatives in immigrant families who can provide short or long-term care and supervision.
- More removals for sexual abuse *may* indicate reluctance to report and/or higher severity of reports in immigrant families, or different reasons why immigrants come to attention of CPS.
- State child welfare funding will be stretched as the immigrant population grows.



# Contact Information

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