

The Latest Statistics from Pew Hispanic Center...

by Rita Deyoe-Chiullan
Publications Coordinator

According to a just released Pew Center study by Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn entitled **A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States** <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=107>, "...the recent rapid growth in the undocumented immigrant labor force has come to a halt...Based on March 2008 data collected by the Census Bureau, the Center estimates that unauthorized immigrants are 4% of the nation's population and account for 5.4% of its workforce."

However, "Their children, both those who are unauthorized immigrants themselves and those who are U.S. citizens, make up 6.8% of the students enrolled in the nation's elementary and secondary schools." A key finding of the report is that "Unauthorized immigrants living in the United States are more geographically dispersed than in the past and are more likely than either U.S. born residents or legal immigrants to live in a household with a spouse and children. In addition, a growing share of the children of unauthorized immigrant parents—73%—were born in this country and are U.S. citizens."

Furthermore, "Nearly half of unauthorized immigrant households (47%) consist of a couple with children. That is a greater share than for households of U.S.-born residents (21%) or legal immigrants (35%)."

For us as educators, it is important to know that "Children of unauthorized immigrants are a growing share of students in kindergarten through grade 12. The Center, analyzing this group for the first time, estimates that 6.8% of K-12 students have at least one parent who was undocumented in 2008. In five states, about 10% or more of students are children of undocumented-immigrant parents. Most of these children, having been born in the United States, are U.S. citizens."

Elsewhere, the report looks at issues such as poverty and health care, which have a tremendous impact on our students, and notes that "More than half of adult unauthorized immigrants (59%) had no health insurance during all of 2007. Among their children, nearly half of those who are unauthorized immigrants (45%) were uninsured and 25% of those who were born in the U.S. were uninsured." Similarly, unauthorized immigrants who are parents are far less likely to have completed high school or had additional education than other groups.

In her *Learning the Language* blog for April 15, 2009, <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning-the-language/>, Mary Ann Zehr highlights the study's findings as reported in the Washington Post in this manner: "The study and the article say that while illegal immigration has slowed, the number of children born in the United States to undocumented immigrants has grown dramatically, from 2.7 million in 2003 to 4 million in 2008. Across the nation, now, one in 15 school-age children has a parent that is undocumented. In Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, and Texas, that ratio is one in 10 school-age children. The *Post* rightly points out that this increase in the number of U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants has implications for schools. They must serve these children."