

A POLICY BRIEF

The Bienestar (Well-Being) of Texas
Hispanic Children: Public
Policies Matters

E D U C A T I O N

H
E
A
L
T
H



E
C
O
N
O
M
I
C

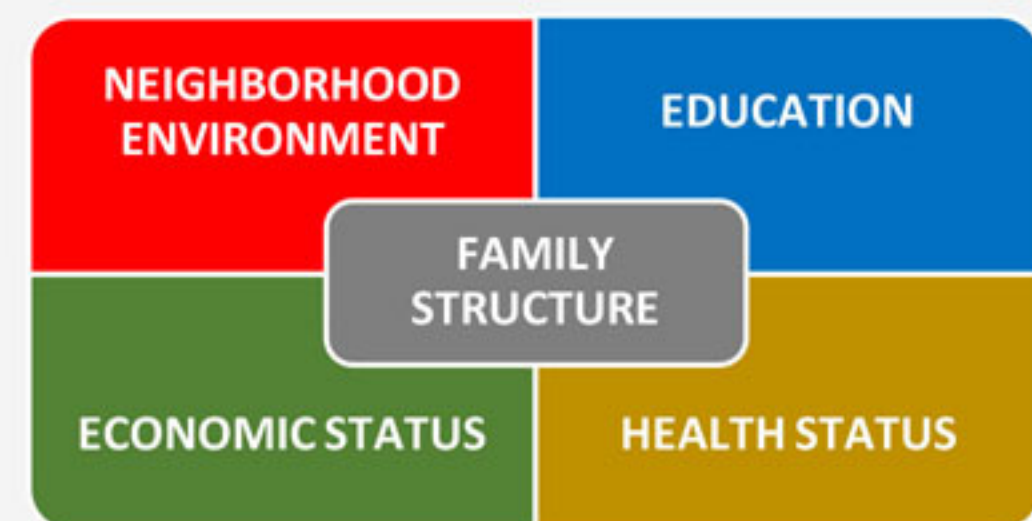
N E I G H B O R H O O D

FOREWORD



This infographic policy brief illustrates that the Bienestar (well-being) of one-half of Texas Hispanic families and their children are at risk from achieving the American Dream of middle-class status. Like most Texas families, future opportunities and a better life for their children is a driving Hispanic goal. Parents have expectations that their children will enter adulthood with social capital assets evidenced by their achievement of a quality education, a comfortable paying job, good health, and a strong family and positive community relationships.

A strong family is determined by education level, economic and health status, and neighborhood environment. These indicators are interrelated, with each enabling or challenging parental capacity to provide a thriving and supportive child development environment. The development foundation established from ages 0 to 8 is the cornerstone for subsequent life stage(s) successes.



The strong work ethic and resiliency of Hispanics, civil rights progress in eliminating overt racial policy barriers, and increasing access to education have resulted in family strengthening improvements. However, Texas public policy-making and institutional barriers still contribute to the weakening of the Hispanic family support structure resulting in perpetuating barriers to opportunities for their children.

Certainly, parents have the primary responsibility for assuring the safety and ongoing developmental foundation of their children for productive adulthood. However, the family's social and economic environment and associated risk factors shown here are extensive.¹ The view that the parents and their children can simply pull themselves up from their 'bootstraps' is unrealistic given the state's inequitable public policies and minimal human capital investments - in schools, job training, health care, neighborhood infrastructure development, etc. In addition, regressive tax policies, excessive tax credits to business interests, inadequate consumer protections, voter suppression, and immigration policies further worsen opportunities for economic mobility.

¹ Detailed information and data in this infographic brief are drawn from the report, "The Bienestar (Well-Being) of Texas Hispanic Children. Copy request can be made to juan@ix.netcom.com.

The often referenced 'Texas Way' to policy-making does not support the adage, "equality of opportunity" for all Texans. It seems that the state's population shift to a people of color/Hispanic majority has the state increasingly defaulting to racialized policy-making; i.e., - more population diversity and high immigrant in-flow yields more restrictions and less human capital investment.

Regardless, the state's policy making approach produces inequalities that place children at-risk and impede their ability to develop a strong foundation for future success. Hispanic's and their allies are working to change this situation. We argue that real change, not having another generation of Hispanic children growing into 'low-income/poverty' adulthood; will only result from Hispanics acquiring political power that produces a difference policy-making culture.

Juan H. Flores, M.U.P
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center

Report prepared by La Fe Policy Research and Education Center (La Fe PREC), a component of Centro de Salud Familiar-La Fe, Inc, based in El Paso, Texas. La Fe is a multiple service organization with over 47 years of social justice and direct service delivery experience in health care, social services, cultural arts, housing, economic development, and education.

© Copyright 2016

INTRODUCTION

Problem: The bienestar¹ (well-being) of 1 of 2 or 2.3 million Hispanic children are at risk of becoming another generation of low-income families. Their future as well as Texas's economic prosperity are at-stake.² Strong families and equitable public policies are critically important to effective child development and positive social, economic and health results into adulthood.



STRONG FAMILY STRUCTURE



EDUCATION

Both parents are high school graduates or have a college degree or a professional trade skill.



ECONOMIC SECURITY

Families have living wage employment, leave benefits, health insurance, retirement fund and home ownership.



NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT

Strong public infrastructure, quality schools, amenities and safety.

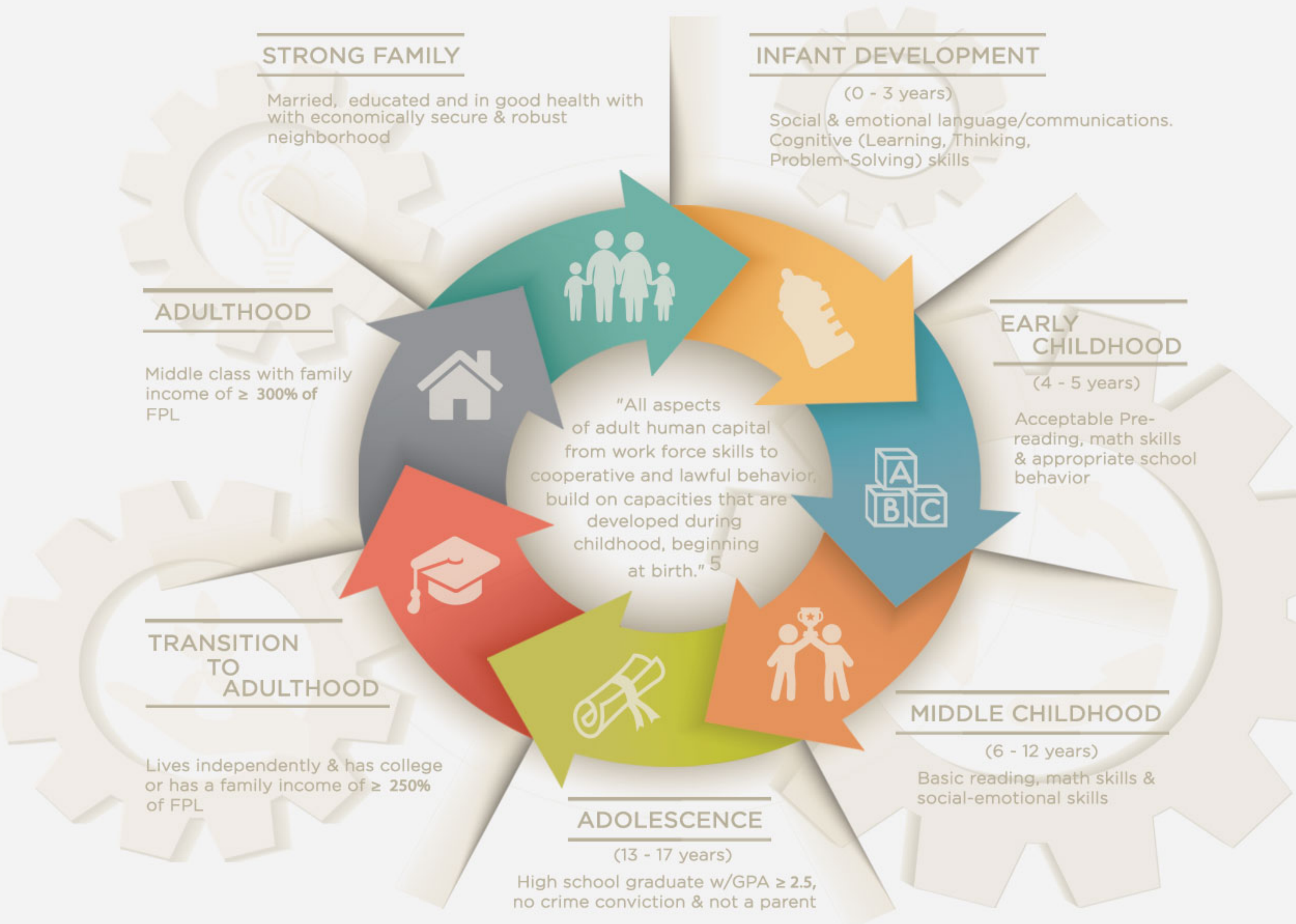


HEALTH

Health care access, preventive health behavior and good health.

LIFE STAGE SUCCESS MODEL³

The first **5 to 8 years** of life are the foundation for building strong physical, cognitive, intellectual, social, emotional, speech and language skills.⁴ These skills are **KEY** to advancing education, career success, higher incomes, asset accumulation and good health. The opportunities for each life-stage are increased, forming the foundation for middle-class and greater success.

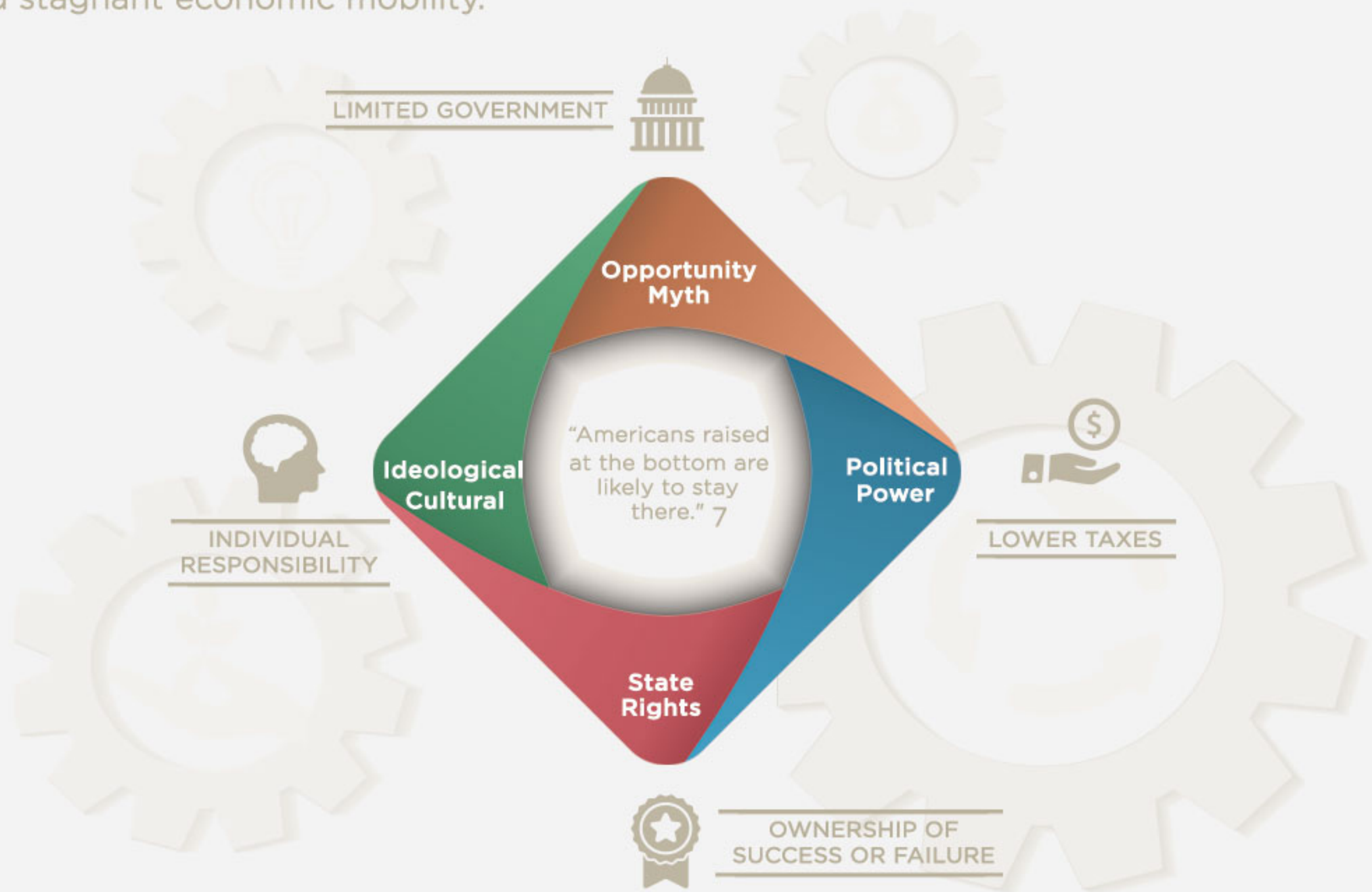


THE TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY WAY⁶

The history of Texas's minimalist approach to policy-making has led to limited human capital investments, and unequal opportunities for many of its citizens, particularly, for low-income and people of color. It has contributed to generations of poor and low-income families.

The Texas Public Policy Way is supported by the combination of an ideological conservative culture, political power and state's rights perspectives that perpetuate the myth of opportunity for all Texas citizens. It underpins the rhetoric of limited government, lower taxes, individual responsibility and blame for individual purported failures.

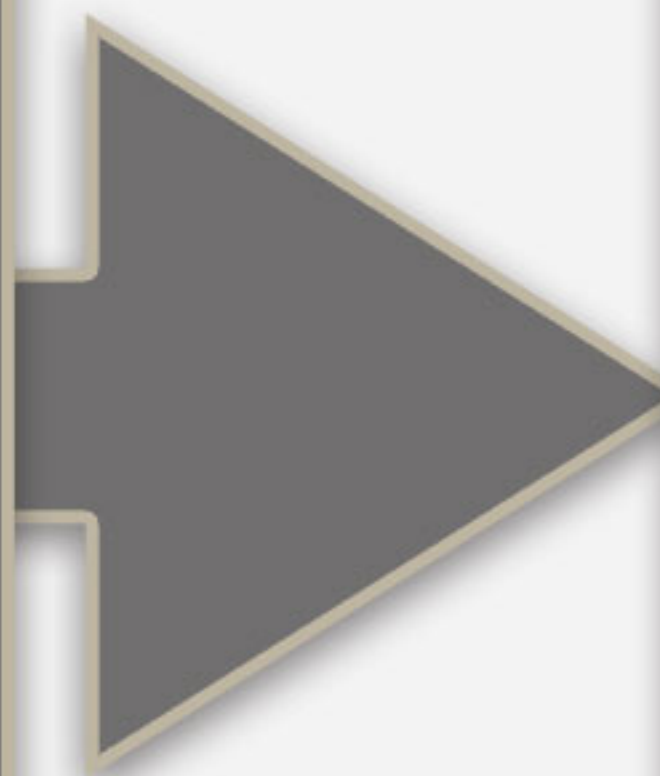
For over-one half of Hispanic families the results continue to be lower education, cheap labor, poor health and stagnant economic mobility.



RESULTS

POLICY IMPACT

- Business Friendly
- Inadequate Human Capital Investments
 - Education
 - Health Care
 - Social Services
 - Job Training
- Education and Income Gaps
- High Low-Wage Employment
- Regressive Taxation
- Imbalanced Resource Budgeting
- Civic Engagement Suppression
- Immigrant Barriers
- Local Government Burdens



DECADES OF DISPARITIES

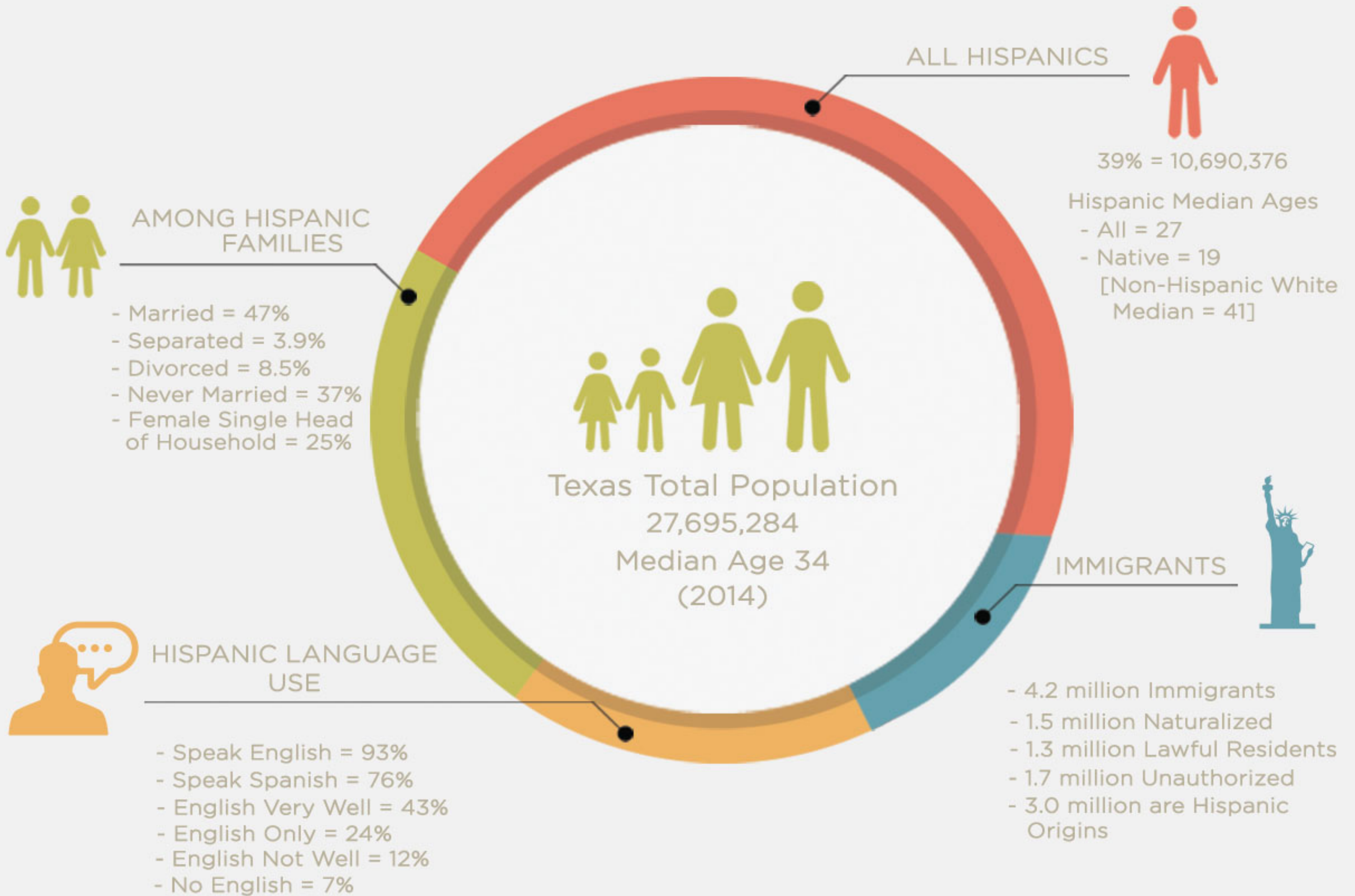
- Poor National Performance In
 - Overall Well-being
 - Education
 - Poverty
 - Income Inequality
 - Poor Health
 - Imprisonment
 - Economic Mobility
 - Environment
- Inadequate Consumer Protections
- Racial and Ethnic Inequalities
- Family In-stability
- Inequality/Discriminatory Lawsuits

HISPANIC\FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS



Changes to the traditional American family structure of married household families and the widening income and wealth-gap are obstructing economic mobility. Families strength is weakened if their resource capacity is limited, regardless of their adherence to standards of personal and parental responsibilities. It intensifies the challenges to build strong families that further facilitate a protective and supportive child development environment.

Hispanic families represented 34% of all Texas families and accounted for 64% of the states total family growth between 2000 & 2013. Over one-half of these families have limited resource capacity which results in added risks to effective child development and their future.



HISPANIC FAMILY RESOURCE CAPACITY

Resource disparities limit and challenge family child development support choices. The resource capacity of over one-half of Hispanic families are 1 to 3 times less compared to Non-Hispanic Whites across asset indicators in education, employment, income, income, neighborhoods and health.



EDUCATION

- Families with Bachelor's Degree = 10%
- Husband-Wife No High School Diploma = 43%
- Single Female Head Household No High School Diploma = 37%



EMPLOYMENT

- 55% Husband-Wife Employed
- 21% Female Head Household Employed
- 60% Employed Husband-Wife Have High School or Less Education
- 56% Employed Female Head Household Have High School or Less Education



INCOME

- Family Median Income = \$41,343
- Families Below Poverty = 24%
- Low-Income \leq (200%FPL) = 55%
- 50% Work in low-wage occupations
- 65% of All Texas Families Below Poverty Are Hispanic
- 52% of All Texas Single Head Households Below Poverty Are Hispanic
- Hispanic Women Earn 45 Cents of Dollar Paid To White Males



NEIGHBORHOOD

- 10 of 50 U.S. Metropolitan Areas with Highest Exposure to Poverty & Hispanic Concentration are in Texas
- Dallas, Tarrant, Harris & Bexar Counties in Top 24 U.S Counties with Highest Income Inequality
- Home Ownership and Renters = 57% & 43%
- Home Value Greater Than \$125,000 = 29%
- Monthly Home Costs of 35% or More as a Percent Household Income = 32%
- Disproportionate Availability and Access to Quality School and Built Neighborhood Public Infrastructure and Amenities

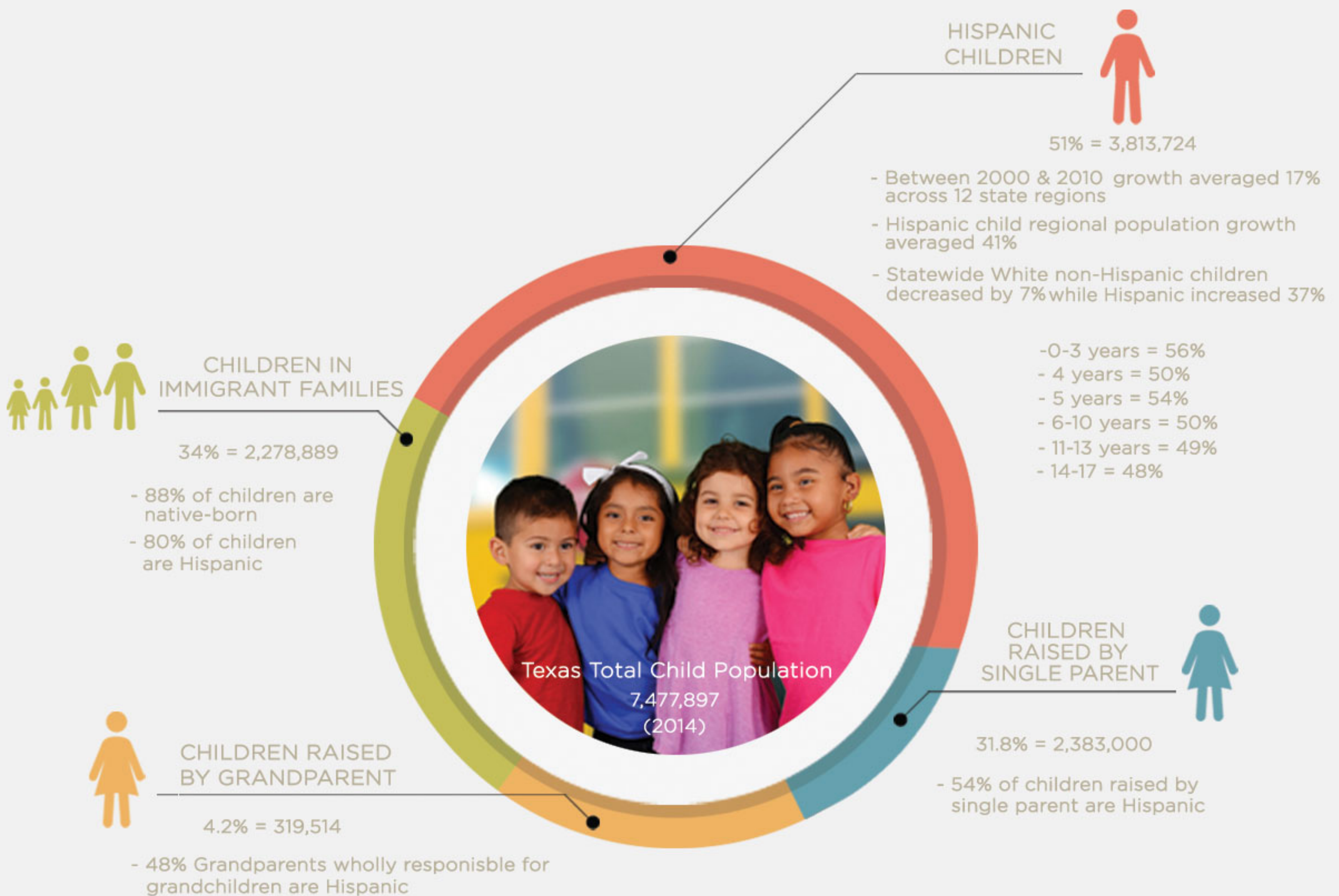


HEALTH

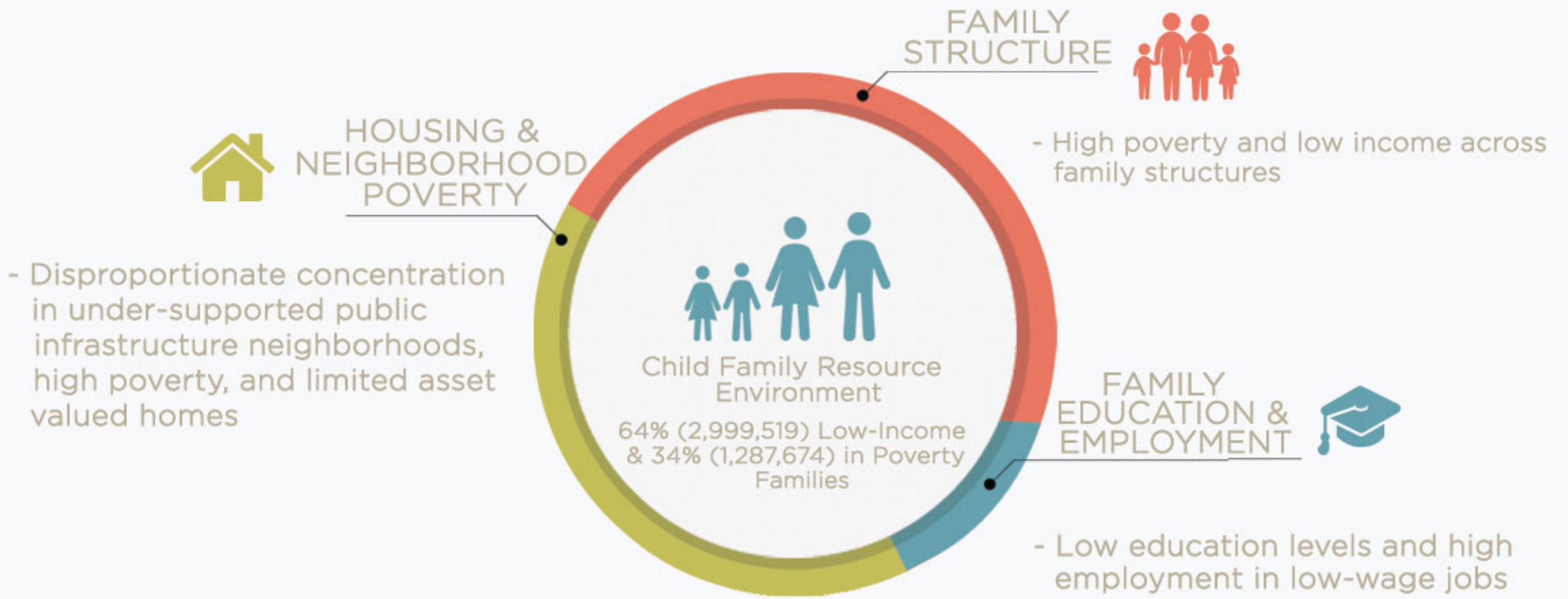
- 39% (ages 16-64) Without Health Insurance
- Private Employer Sponsored Health Insurance = 35%
- Unauthorized Immigrant Adults with No Health Insurance = 71%
- Disproportionate Health Disparities
 - Diabetes, Obesity, Breast & Cervical Cancer
 - Prenatal Care Access
 - Access to Regular Health Care Source
- Projected to Exceed All Populations in Prevalence of Most Chronic Diseases

CHILD IN FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS

The bienestar (well-being) of over one-half or 2.3 million Hispanic children does not look promising. The children live in families that are not strong, measured by educational achievement, economic status, health, family structure and neighborhood environment. They are at risk of becoming another generation of Hispanic adults who will be undereducated, have limited job skills and lower incomes. They will not achieve 'real' middle-class status - a status that would give financial security from income and asset accumulation that provides them with resources and choices in supporting their children's development.




CHILD FAMILY RESOURCE ENVIRONMENT





FAMILY STRUCTURE

- Female head of household poverty rate 58% & 84% low income
- Married family poverty rate 22% & 54% low-income
- 1,037,000 low-income children live in mix-status immigrant families
- U.S. born children in families with incomes 200% below FPL twice that of children in immigrant families
- Children in immigrant families have larger labor force (70%) participation and secure employment (31%) rate than U.S. born families of 54% & 26%

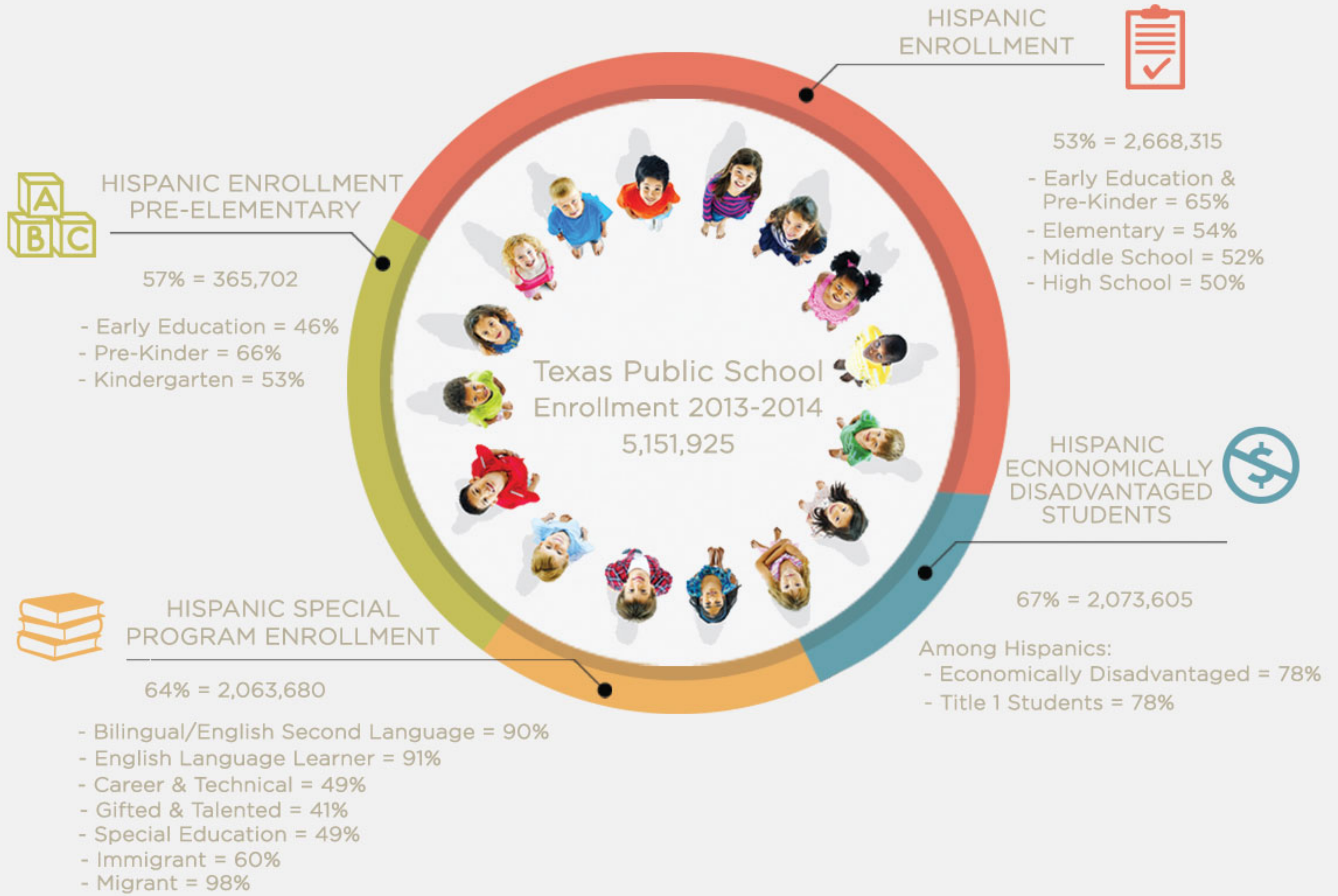


HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD POVERTY

- 2.2 million Texas children living in high housing cost-burdened families (housing cost to income ratio exceeds 32%)
- Among Hispanic, 37% with high housing cost-burden
- Hispanics comprise 56% (1,267,000) of all children in high housing cost-burdened families
- Hispanics represent 77% (1,020,000) of all children living in concentrated areas of poverty
- Among Hispanics, 30% are in concentrated poverty areas, & 46% in low poverty areas


FAMILY EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT


- 1.5 million (22%) Texas children in families where head householder lacks a high school education; 84% (1,279,000) are Hispanic.
- Comparatively, 5% of White non-Hispanic households are without a high school education as opposed to 37% and 10% for Hispanic and Black households respectively.
- 2 million (29%) Texas children in families where no parent has year round full-time job; 55% (1,150,000) are Hispanic
- 33% (1,150,000) Hispanic children in families who lack adequate year round full-time employment

EDUCATION PIPELINE AND ACHIEVEMENT PROFILE

HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

- Hispanic High School Completion Rate = 69%
- Hispanic High School Drop-Out Annual Rate = 31%
- Average Math, Science, Reading 4th & 8th Grade Gap between Hispanic and White non-Hispanic Students = 24 points
- College Readiness of Hispanic High School Students = 32%
- Hispanic College Entry Rate After Graduation = 46%



COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY

- Hispanic College & University Enrollment in 2013 = 33%
- Economically Disadvantaged Hispanics Entering College = 49%
- Hispanics likely to have completed a College Degree in 2013 = 18%
- Hispanic 7th grader who achieved a certificate or College Degree from Pipeline ending 2015 = 11%
- Hispanics ages 18-24 are under-represented in college and university enrollment

HEALTH AND SOCIAL ISSUES



The evidence is significant that low levels of education and poverty negatively impact health and social behaviors from infancy to adulthood; often resulting in both risky behaviors and poor health. In turn, health and social problems such as no health insurance coverage, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and child abandonment and abuse further challenge effective child development. The results contribute to another generation of poverty and low-income adults with limited economic mobility opportunities. The social and economic mobility costs to families and the cost to the state's economic productivity are staggering.



HEALTH

- Hispanic children comprise 68% (514,684) of the state's uninsured rate of children
- Native and undocumented Hispanic children had an uninsured rate of 12% and 54%
- By 2040, the prevalence of most child diseases and disorders are projected to triple to 62.8%



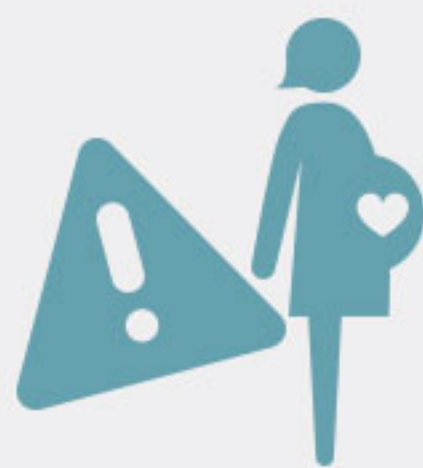
NUTRITION/OBESITY

- 1 of 4 or 30% of Hispanic children live in food insecure households
- Hispanic children, ages 10-17, had an overweight and obese rate of 46.8%
- 51.3% of Hispanic 4th graders were overweight or obese



CHILD CARE/SAFETY

- 47% (28,935) of all confirmed cases of child abuse were Hispanic children
- 42% (12,492) of all children in Texas's foster care system were Hispanic



BEHAVIOR RISKS

- 51% (68,000) of all (133,000) teens ages 16 to 17 not attending school nor working are Hispanic
- The attempted suicide rate = 11.4%
- The dominant substance abuse rates include Marijuana (21.5%), Inhalants (10.2%), and Cocaine use (10.2%)
- Risk behavior for pregnancy because of high rate (25.5%) Non-Use of Prevention Methods
- High teen pregnancy rate of 16.6% resulting in 62 births per 1000
- 64% of all (40,451) teen births were Hispanics



JUVENILE & CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- Hispanics 1.5 times more likely than White Non-Hispanics to be criminalized for minor misbehavior in public schools
- 48% of 70,000 youth referred to the juvenile justice system were Hispanic
- 48% of juveniles committed to Residential Placement were Hispanic
- Hispanics youth and adults are incarcerated at 1.5 times the rate of Whites
- An estimated 25% to 30% of 250,000 children who have at least 1 parent incarcerated are Hispanic

CONCLUSION



State policies matter because of how they impact on family well-being. They affect each child's school access and educational success, family economic mobility, healthy families, youth development, family relationships, and child safety. Texas policy-making falls short in most areas for Hispanic families.

Overall, Hispanics in Texas fare worse than their Hispanic counterparts in nearly three-fifths of the U. S. states and the District of Columbia across six indicators - educational attainment, employment, poverty, earnings, the prevalence of disabilities and insurance.⁸

Significant barriers to building wealth and future opportunities for their children weaken Hispanic families. Nearly 2.3 million Hispanic children are at risk of facing the same or worse than their parents disadvantaged position. Therefore, another generation of their children will be at-risk from achieving greater economic mobility and middle-class status. Not surprisingly, they will represent the majority of client recipients of most of the state's chronically underfunded and often restrictive social welfare and health programs.

Hispanics would prefer not to merely survive on limited social and health welfare programs. Instead, they want to work in building their resource capacity so that their children can have economically successful families to live in supportive communities; and to meet developmental, health and educational milestones.

Texas needs to change its conservative policy-making approach which is better defined as a Texas policy-making culture that limits human capital investments and economic mobility opportunities. In order to demonstrate 'real' change, Texas needs policies that level the playing field by targeting education, neighborhood economic development, health care, and job training. In addition, establishing policies that facilitate and not obstruct civic engagement.

Without political power Hispanic labor will be on 'the cheap', and another generation of their children will not achieve prosperity.

There is significant policy research and economist perspectives that the state's own economic future is at-risk in its continuing refusal to change its policy-making approach. Indeed, the state is losing billions in economic growth and long-term prosperity.

It's apparent that new paradigms, policies, and program approaches are needed to address the disproportionate inequalities Hispanic families continue to experience from state policy making. Texas Hispanics capacity to influence the state minimalist policy-making approach and its negative impacts on their bienestar requires:

- Increased civic education and engagement, concurrent with more organized pro-active versus reactive policy involvement positions.
- Concerted strategies that address structural problems underlying most issues; e.g., policy-making that limit human capital investments, regressive tax laws, and revenue and budget approaches that undercut equity and prosperity.
- Support from 'applied' policy analysis of legislative and regulatory rule-making impacts and development of legislative and regulatory proposals.
- A statewide Hispanic policy strategy that builds both 'resource and political capacity' to influence policy making, and involves on-going assessment of progress.

Public policies matter, and change will be insufficient without Hispanic policy influence.

References



1. Bienestar is defined as a perceived quality of life status among individuals, families and communities affected by social, environmental, and systemic factors – a concept of holistic wellness.
2. Changing Texas: Implications of Addressing or Ignoring the Texas Challenge, Texas A&M University Press, December 16, 2013. Steve H. Murdock PhD, Michael E. Cline, Mary A. Zey, P. Wilner Jeanty, and Deborah Perez.
3. The Social Genome Model, originally developed at the Brookings Institution and base at the Urban Institute, is a collaborative effort of the Brookings Institution, Child Trends, and the Urban Institute.
4. The First Eight Years: giving kids a foundation for lifetime success. Annie E. Casey Foundation Policy Report, November 2013.
5. The Science of Early Child Development: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do, National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, November 2007.
6. Lone Star Tarnished: A Critical Look at Texas Politics and Public Policy, 2013, Cal Jillson.
7. Pursuing the American Dream: Economic Mobility Across Generations, The PEW Charitable Trusts, July 2012.
8. Latino Bienestar in Texas in the Globalization and Federalism Age, Paper presented at the IUPLR Fifth Siglo XXI Conference. University of Notre Dame, April 25, 2015, Juan Flores, La Fe Policy Research and Education Center, and Rogelio Saenz, Dean, College of Public Policy, University of Texas at San Antonio.

Strong Families Ensure Children
Are Succeeding in School and
Growing Healthy



APRIL 2016