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Children of Immigrants Have Advantage in Academics, School Engagement

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PRESS RELEASE

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Distinct Trajectories in the Transition to Adulthood: Are Children of Immigrants Advantaged?

Read the Child Development article:

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A new study has found that children of immigrants have an advantage over children of nativeborn Americans when it comes to the transition to adulthood. Among children of similar socioeconomic backgrounds, school conditions, and other characteristics, those born abroad to immigrant parents who came to the United States before their teen years are more likely to follow the best trajectory in academic achievement and school engagement, followed by those born in the United States to immigrant parents.

Those are the conclusions reached by a study conducted at Johns Hopkins University that appears in the September/October 2012 issue of the journal *Child Development*, in a special section on the children of immigrants.

In addition to examining immigrant children's trajectories in cognitive and behavioral areas, the study looked at how they fared psychologically. There were no differences in depression trajectories between children of immigrants and children of native-born Americans.

"Our findings challenge pessimistic views that having immigrant parents places children at a disadvantage at the point of transitioning to adulthood," according to Lingxin Hao, professor of sociology at Johns Hopkins University, who led the study. "Children of immigrants, when compared to children of native-born parents, are actually at an advantage on some key early adult outcomes."

The study looked at 10,795 children ages 13 to 17 who were followed to ages 25-32, using data from two related representative data sets—the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) and the Adolescent Health and Academic Achievement (AHAA) study.

Both Add Health and the AHAA study are funded mainly by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). The current study was funded by an NICHD training grant to the Hopkins Population Center at Johns Hopkins University.

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Summarized from *Child Development*, Volume 83, Issue 5, Distinct Trajectories in the Transition to Adulthood: Are Children of Immigrants Advantaged? by Hao, L, and Woo, HS (Johns Hopkins University).
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