



Office of English Language Acquisition

Migratory Children Who Are English Learners

The Unique Education Needs of Migratory Children

A migratory child is one whose parent or guardian is a migratory agricultural worker or fisher and who has moved from one school district to another during the regular school year. The Migrant Education Program (MEP) provides supplemental support to eligible migratory children from birth through age 21. Children who are themselves migratory agricultural workers or fishers, or who are the children of such workers, face numerous education challenges. Because of their migratory lifestyle, these children may start school late, leave early, or miss long periods of schooling during the academic year. Additional challenges may include language and cultural barriers, economic hardship, and access to continuous health care. For more information about migratory children and the programs that support their educational opportunities and academic success, please visit [the Office of Migrant Education](#).

304,480

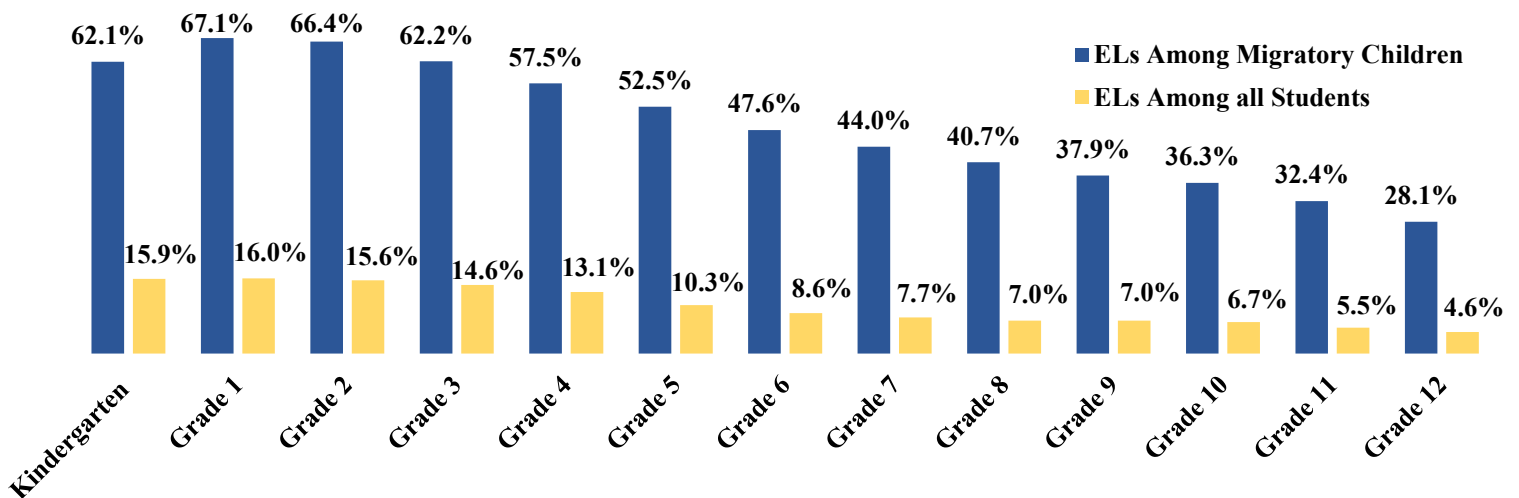
Number of migratory children in the U.S. in school year (SY) 2017–18.



Percentage of migratory children who were English learners (ELs) in SY 2017–18.

Across all grade levels, migratory children are at least five times as likely as all students to be ELs.

Percentage of Students Who Are English Learners, by Grade, Among All Students and Migratory Children: School Year 2017–18



Sources: All Students — U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *EDFacts* file 141, Data Group 678, extracted August 30, 2019; and Digest of Education Statistics, 2019 (Table 204.27), Common Core of Data (CCD), “State nonfiscal survey of public elementary and secondary education,” 2017–18. Migratory Children — U.S. Department of Education, Ed Data Express, *EDFacts* FS121 (Migratory Students Eligible — 12 months), extracted July 7, 2020, and SY 2017–18 *Consolidated state performance reports*, Parts I and II.

Five States With the Greatest Number of Migratory Children Who Are English Learners: School Year 2017–18

State	Number of Migratory Children Who Are ELs
California	40,995
Washington	12,567
Texas	11,076
Florida	7,754
Oregon	6,480

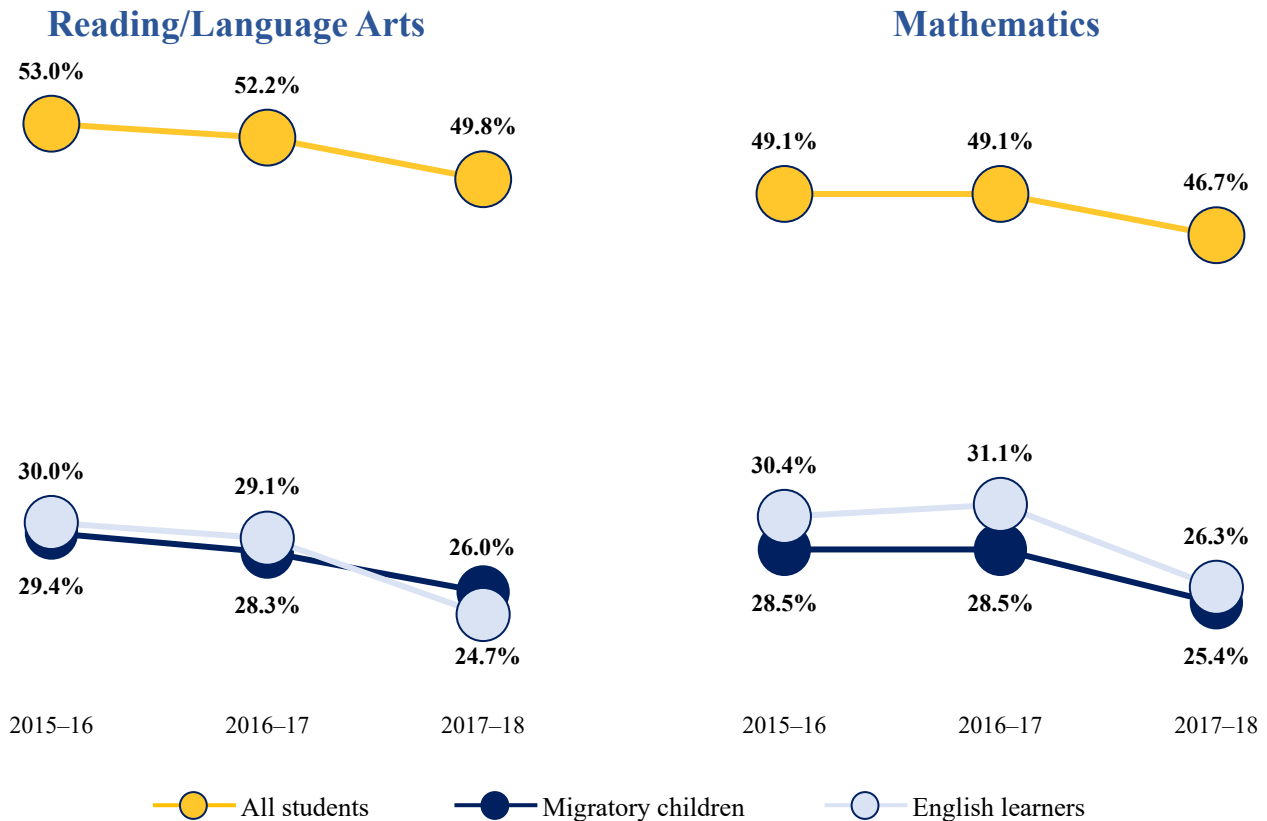
Five States With the Highest Percentage of Migratory Children Who Are English Learners: School Year 2017–18

State	Percentage of Migratory Children Who Are ELs
New Hampshire (<i>N</i> = 138)	96.4%
Michigan (<i>N</i> = 5,258)	84.4%
Pennsylvania (<i>N</i> = 5,374)	75.6%
Virginia (<i>N</i> = 564)	75.4%
Massachusetts (<i>N</i> = 508)	73.0%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Ed Data Express, ED*Facts* FS121 (Migratory Students Eligible — 12 months), 2017–18 school year, extracted July 7, 2020.

A performance gap between migratory children and all students has persisted over several years. This gap is similar to that existing between ELs and all students. Between SY 2015–16 and SY 2017–18, migratory children and ELs in grades three–eight were approximately 20 percentage points less likely than all students to receive a score of proficient or above on statewide assessments.

Percentage of Migratory Children, English Learners, and All Students Who Received a Score of Proficient or Above on Statewide Assessments in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics: School Years 2015–16 Through 2017–18



Source: SY 2015–16 through SY 2017–18 Consolidated State Performance Reports, Parts I and II.