# Methodology

This analysis slightly revises earlier Pew Research Center estimates of the number of births to immigrant mothers in the United States, using more refined methods and more recent data.

We previously estimated the number of unauthorized immigrants living in the country using data from two U.S. Census Bureau surveys:

- The American Community Survey (ACS) for 2005-19 and 2021-23, provided by IPUMS USA at the University of Minnesota
- The Current Population Survey's Annual Social and Economic Supplements from the Census Bureau for 1995, 1998, 2000 and 2003.

In developing these estimates, we assigned legal statuses to individual survey respondents; linked spouses, partners and children; and adjusted the survey weights for omissions. For this analysis, we could then estimate the number of births to immigrant mothers from these augmented datasets.

The starting point for this estimate was an ACS question that asked women ages 15 to 50 whether they had given birth in the 12 months before their interview. In the survey datasets, we also linked children born in the U.S. to their mothers. With these linkages we can infer when women had their births; for example, we can tell that a woman linked to a 2-year-old child had a birth two years ago.

We estimated births for mothers who are U.S. natives, legal permanent residents or naturalized citizens, legal temporary immigrants, and unauthorized immigrants. Read "Who are unauthorized immigrants?" and Methodology A in our August 2025 report for definitions of these groups.

We determined the father's legal status from the woman's spouse or partner, if present.

We adjusted our estimates by status slightly to agree with data from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) on annual births, which are classified by the mother's country of birth. The NCHS data is for calendar years, but our estimates mainly use ACS data, which is benchmarked to populations on July 1 of each year. Thus, the ACS question on births in the previous 12 months applies to the months of July 1 in the year before the survey to June 30 of the survey year (e.g., for the 2022 ACS, July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022).

Similarly, the age groups in the ACS are ages as of July 1. That means that 1-year-olds in the 2023 ACS were born between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. So, we averaged consecutive calendar years of NCHS data to ensure that, for example, our 2023 birth estimates agree with the average of the 2022 and 2023 NCHS birth data.

We rounded all estimates of births to the nearest 5,000. We calculated shares and differences from unrounded numbers.