

Latinos and Early Education:



*An Account of Family
Engagement and Academic Gap
Reductions*

Latino Demographics

- Hispanic maternal educational attainment varies by:
 - Immigrant status
 - Native mothers are 50% more likely than immigrant mothers to hold high school/college degrees [8th grade mean].
 - National heritage
 - Mexican and Central American mothers are the least likely groups to have degrees [9th grade mean].

Young Hispanic Children's Educational Circumstances

- Academic Gap
 - At nine months of age no gap is identified by race/ethnicity in infant development outcomes
 - However, Hispanic children start kindergarten behind in mathematics and literacy when compared to White children

Young Hispanic Children's Educational Circumstances

- Hispanic children face negative structural educational circumstances and segregated schooling
- Latino children
 - are the most segregated group of children in the American educational system
 - are much more likely to attend schools that are overcrowded, with a high proportion of students of color who live in poverty, with under-qualified teachers
 - are the least likely group of children to attend preschool
 - Although Hispanic parents have demonstrated great interest in enrolling their children in preschool programs if programs were available

Family Engagement and Positive Effects



- When parents are educationally involved:
 - students improve academically
 - students have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in post-secondary education
 - teachers hold higher opinion of parents (Antunez, 2000)

Family Engagement and Latinos



- Parent involvement initiatives that are normally in place in schools better complement the values of mainstream, middle class families
- Schools are particularly challenged when providing services to Latino immigrant families

Common Factors Dissuading Immigrant Family Involvement

- Language and cultural differences
- Lack of familiarity with U.S. school system
- Inflexible work and school functions schedules
- Lack of transportation
- School's climate toward immigrants & parent involvement

Successful Family Engagement Strategies for Immigrant Families

- Initiatives should be carried out in the families' home language
- Programs should be community based
 - Families should be consulted when creating programs intended for their use
 - When possible programs should be facilitated by members of the community
- Information about schools and programs, leadership and decision making power needs to be shared with parents

Hispanic Family Characteristics & Positive Educational Effects

- **Familism/La Family**

- family identification, obligation and support (Velez-Ibañez & Greenberg, 1992).
- Positively affect Latino students' academics (Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994).

- **Intact Families**

- help contribute to Mexican-American children's high levels of psychological wellbeing, which in turn positively affects academics (Crosnoe, 2006).

- **Education “Positives”**

- *Esperanzas; Educacion; Confianza* have been linked to family education participation (Garcia, Schribner & Cuellar, 2009).

Promising Hispanic Parent Involvement Programs

- Abriendo Puertas
- Home Instruction of Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
- AVANCE
- Project FLAME (Family Literacy: Aprendiendo, Mejorando, Educando)
- Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)

Conclusions

- Latino family engagement can improve children's educational outcomes
- Schools are often ill-equipped to work with linguistically and culturally diverse immigrant families
- Community-based programs have tried to mitigate this program
 - providing parents with information about parenting, the US. Schooling system, services, their role, etc
 - Partner with the family to support children
- Evaluations of the programs on average show promising findings for Hispanic immigrant parents

Publications

- García, E., Scribner, K. and Cuellar, D. (2009) Latinos and early education: Immigrant generational differences and family involvement. In E. L. Grigorenko and R. Takanishi (Eds.), *Immigration and Diversity*. New York, NY: Routledge, 95-111.
- Rodriguez-Brown, F. V. (2009) *Home-School connection: Lessons learned in a linguistically and culturally diverse community*. New York, NY: Routledge.