

# **A study of Latino Parenting Culture and Practices: Listening to the Voices of Latino Parents**

Nai-Ying Chang, Tung-Yuang Liou

## **Abstract**

This study employed a qualitative methodology to explore the nature of the Latino parenting culture and parenting practices. It attempted to understand and document Latino parenting practices for the purpose of identifying those traits and traditions that would enable the creation and execution of a better family program for Latino population. The participants were recruited from three parenting programs offered by a non-profit family and child support organization in the Southern California Metropolitan area. The study population mainly consisted of low-income, predominately first generation immigrants from Mexico. The study found that Latino mothers are primarily responsible for childrearing whereas Latino fathers are absent from such practice. The results indicated that the participant mothers perceived that communication plays an important role in their families and they made an effort to have open lines of communication with their children. The findings suggested that traditional Latino parents, in general, may have more rigid parenting values compared to their Caucasian counterparts. It was revealed that physical discipline, screaming and profanity were common disciplinary practices in participants' families.

**Keywords:** parenting practice, Latino culture, family programs, parenting styles.

# 拉丁裔父母教養行爲及教養方式之研究

張乃英 劉東遠

## 摘要

本研究採質性研究法，本研究的目的是在於探索美國拉丁裔家庭的教養行爲及教養方式，希冀借由研究結果提供更完整的資訊給學者及家庭成長課程的設計人員。研究對象主要為低收入的墨西哥裔母親且為美國第一代新移民。研究發現，在拉丁文化中，母親為主要的扶養者及教養者，然而父親扮演著負擔家計及威權的角色。此外，親子間主要以言語溝通為基礎。然而，研究顯示，在拉丁文化中，體罰為傳統的教養方式。最後，研究並應證文獻，即相對於西方主流教養文化，拉丁裔家庭對於小孩有更加嚴格的期望。

**關鍵詞：**教養行爲、拉丁美洲文化、家庭成長課程、教養方式。

## Introduction

The United States is becoming culturally and linguistically diverse particularly with the rapidly growing Latino population. The percentage of Latino populations in the 50 states is 12.5% and comprises the largest minority group in the United States (El Nasser, 2003; US Census Bureau, 2000). However, this number is not adequately estimated because it does not reflect the undocumented immigrants who cross the southwestern border of this country daily.

Historically, Latinos have faced great challenges as an ethnic group related to education, family structure, health, safety and income level (Williams, 2001). Given the rapidly growing Latino population in the United States, especially in the metropolitan areas, it is critical to close the disparities and achievement gaps within this population by providing adequate supports for this group. In order to achieve this, there is a vital need for quality family services for this population. These programs should be culturally matched and well-planned to achieve maximum results.

Hanson and Lynch (1995) recommend that when working with families, program professionals need to “be sensitive to and respectful of the different styles, cultural backgrounds, needs and concerns posed by families” (p 106). Field scholars contend that in order to conduct appropriate educational programs, it is critical to assess the target populations’ values, attitudes, interests and needs so the program can reflect those values in a productive way (Chow et al., 2004; Glanz et al., 1997; Gorman & Balter, 1997; Knowles, 1980; Powell, 1988; The Center for Community Wellness, 2003).

In order to design a culturally responsive program, it is critical to understand the target population’s cultural values so that the program can be tailored to meet their needs. However, scarce studies are available in the field in relation to Latino parenting culture and practices. To better understand the Latino population, this research study aims to explore the nature of Latino parenting culture and parenting practices at home.

## Literature Review: Understanding Latino Cultural Patterns

To understand the parenting patterns and parenting needs of Latino parents, it is essential to identify Latino cultural values and beliefs that may be collectively experienced within the

---

dynamics of Latino families. This literature review attempts to obtain a general picture of traditional Latino culture and its relation to parenting, but a cultural portrait that is not necessarily generalizable to all Latino populations. It is important to note that all patterns of human behaviors and cultural similarities have exceptions.

### *Historical and Sociopolitical Background*

Latinos, who comprise the largest ethnic group in the United States, is a term used to describe people who are "Cubans, Chicanos, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Argentinians, Colombians, Dominicans, Brazilians, Guatemalans, Costa Ricans, Nicaraguans, Salvadorians, and the people of all the other nationalities who make up South American, Central American and the Caribbean [populations]" (Garcia-Preto, 2005a, p. 154). In the United States, Mexican, Puerto Ricans and Cubans are and continue to be the three largest Latino sub-groups (Garcia-Preto, 2005a). Although the terms Latinos and Hispanics have been used interchangeable in the field literature, the researcher of this study decided to use "Latino" throughout this study, a term preferred by this group of people (Baca Zinn & Wells, 2003; Folicov, 1998; Paniagua, 2005; Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002) instead of "Hispanic".

Although Latinos are a highly heterogeneous group, they have similar values and beliefs embedded in a history of conquest and colonization (Garcia-Preto, 2005a; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). Just as the cultural heterogeneity of Latino populations, social class and socioeconomic status among the group varies as well (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994, 2004). Except for Brazilians who speak Portuguese, most Latinos speak Spanish and believe in the Roman Catholic religion (Garcia-Preto, 2005a; Smith & Montilla, 2006). Religious leaders such as priests and ministers are influential individuals for most Latino families (Paniagua, 2005). According to Falicov (2005), most Mexican Americans believe in Roman Catholicism and for many of them, churches serve as public supports (e.g. counseling centers, sanctuaries for undocumented immigrants etc.) and life cycle celebrations (e.g. baptisms, *Quinceaneras* - sweet fifteen, and weddings).

Historically social oppression has been deeply rooted in Latino history. Currently socioeconomic and political oppression still remains in many Latin American countries. Therefore, because of the challenges that majority Latinos have faced in their own countries, many Latinos decided to come to the United States in search of better lives financially and

---

socially (Garcia-Preto, 2005a). For example, Mexican Americans, the largest Latino subgroup (Baca Zinn & Wells, 2003; Garcia-Preto, 2005a; Sosa, 1998) in the United States, with major population concentrations in California and the Southwest, continue to constantly enter the U.S. either legally or illegally, in search of a better future and opportunities for their lives. Being one of the largest minority groups in the United States, however, many Latinos have also come to face many disadvantages and discriminations in the US, for example with regards to their SES status, education, and their position in the US labor force (Folicov, 2005; Garcia-Preto, 2005a; Ortiz, 1995; Smith & Montilla, 2006). Because of the focus of this study and available literature, the researcher will review more of the extant literature on Mexican American cultural patterns.

### *General Cultural Values*

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Latino population, the researcher will review the literature related to prevalent Latino cultural values and beliefs, which includes *familismo* (family interdependence), *respeto* (respect) and *personalismo* (the mindset that values human relationships over formal rules and regulations).

*The importance of the family.* “As [a] Mexican family, we are more united and more close to each other compared to [an] American family...my goal is to have my family united and that’s why I attended various classes” ( Rosa, pseudonym). This quote is from a participant under this study. It offers testimony that Mexican families stress the unity of the families and family ties. In addition to Mexicans, Latinos, (e.g. Central America, Mexico, Puerto Rico) in general, have a very strong commitment to and ties with family and family members as a support group (Bernal & Shapiro, 1996; Folicov, 2006; Garcia-Preto, 2005a; Garcia-Preto, 2005b; Grossman, 1995; Hurtado, 1995; Mirande, 1985; Paniagua, 2005; Romeo, 2000; Santiago et al., 2002; Sanchez-Ayendez, 1998; Saracho & Hancock, 1983; Solis, 1995). Even though it can certainly be argued that ethnic groups other than Latinos are also family-centered, the culture of Latino familism is distinctively different from their Caucasian counterparts (Vega, 1995). The existing research (Becerra,1998; Keefe and Padilla, 1987) has indicated that Mexican Americans in particular have more cohesive family support systems than other ethnic groups in the United States. (Note: “*Familismo*” (family interdependence) and “familism” are used by various field researchers. Although the Spanish word *familismo* means family

---

interdependence/family connection when translated in English, the concept of *familismo* and familism mean roughly the same in the existing literature. In general, they all refer to traditional Latino values which stress the importance of the family. The researcher of this study will use these two terms interchangeably based on the usage of the terms in the referenced literature.

Falicov (2005, p 234) defines *familismo*/family interdependence as a cultural dynamic that “involves extended family members sharing the nurturing and disciplining of children, financial responsibility, companionship for lonely or isolated members, and problem solving”. One of the traits of Latino’s familism is that family members offer a great deal of family support to each other (Becerra, 1998; Rogler & Cooney, 1991) and thus they tend to reside and remain in close geographic proximity to other family members or extended families (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Kutsche 1983; Hurtado, 1995). In addition, another dimension of Latino *familismo* is obligations to and recognition for the accomplishment of family members among the nuclear and extended families. According to Hurtado (1995), the extended family support networks also include the support of *Compadrazgo* (god parentage, a pseudo kinship tradition in Latin America), the relationship between parents and godparents sometimes transforming into co-parenting (Folicov, 2006; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). Although some aspects of familism may decrease as acculturation increases, in general, Latinos are more familistic when compared to their Caucasian counterparts (Hurtado, 1995; Midel, 1980).

When designing a family intervention program, for example, it would be more effective to consider the target population’s cultural values as a foundation. A study done by DeBord and Reguero de Atilas (1999) revealed the preferences of Latino parents in terms of the curriculum in a parenting program and the delivery method of that curriculum. This study indicated that Latino parents preferred to use their own parents as primary sources of parenting information and close family members and friends they already trusted and someone who would show *simpatia* (sympathy in English) in the family- like, social learning group. The second preference was to learn from medical staff (e.g. a doctor or nurse) in a medical facility. The study suggested that the findings may be explained by their collective identification as Latino, familism and *respeto* (respect for authorities).

In sum, just as Becerra (1998) stated, “...familial solidarity among Mexican American is not just a stereotypical ideal, but a real phenomenon” (p. 161). On the other hand, Vega

---

indicated, in relation to familism, that “the empirical is sparse and inconsistent” (1995, p.7) regarding this issue. Although in general Latinos are highly familistic, Mirande (1985) has pointed out that there is no one uniform family. In order to obtain a more balanced view of the reality of Latino families, it is important to explore key features among families across various settings and situations.

*Respeto/Respect.* Just as *familismo*, *respeto* is another important belief in Latino culture (Arredondo, 2006; Bernal & Shapiro, 1996; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Folicov, 1998; Folicov, 2006; Grossman, 1995; Paniagua, 2005; Vazquez, 2004). Comas-Diaz and Duncan (1985) refer to *respeto* among Latinos as “the appropriate deferential behavior toward others on the basis of age, social position, economic status, and sex” (p.465). Folicov (2006) further indicated that the meaning of the word *respeto* is different from the meaning of respect in English. In North American culture, *respeto* implies a fairly “detached, self-assured egalitarianism.” For Latinos, *respeto* refers to a relationship involving a “highly emotionalized dependence and dutifulness, within a fairly authoritarian framework” (Diaz-Guerrero, as cited in Folicov, 2006, p. 48; Vazquez, 2004, p. 31). Under the belief system of *respeto*, there are strict rules for Latino youth. For example, children are taught to keep a hierarchical approach toward relationships (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). Latino children are taught to obey and show respect to parents, elders, forms of authority and to God (Garcia-Preto, 1996; Nava, 2000; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002). Paniagua (2005) has indicated that specifically in the context of *machismo*, *respeto* means submission of women and children to the authority of a man. He further indicated that in interpersonal relationships, a person who displays *respeto* for parents and the elderly is considered to be a well-educated person in Latino culture.

In Latino families, parental authority is highly respected and valued and this authority is perceived as a manifestation of parental love. Latino children are expected to follow parents’ instructions without questioning and to be respectful (Bain, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Vazquez, 2004). For instance, Abraham (1986) conducted a study to demonstrate Latino parents’ influence on their children. The study investigated the development of Mexican youth’s ideological orientations, and Abraham found that compared to white youth, Mexican American adolescents appeared more inclined to adopt the religious beliefs, political beliefs and occupational choices of their parents. This study demonstrated that Mexican parents play

---

an influential role in their children's life in terms of the decision making process and the strong influence of *respeto* in the lives of Latino youths.

Particularly in Mexican culture, children are trained to help out with family responsibilities and show respect for their elders (Chilman, 1999; Kutsche, 1983). In Mexican families, parents' status is high and most Mexican parents do not approach their relationship with their children as necessarily that of a "friend". The hierarchy concept is reflected in Mexican childrearing practices as well. Latino parents are generally seen as authoritarian who have a high degree of control over their children. The parenting style is even more rigorously expressed in inner city families, where Latino parents exert even more control and encourage submissiveness from their children as compared with African-American parents (Florsheim, Tolan & Gorman-Smith, 1996).

In responding to their children's misbehaviors, Mexican and Puerto Rican parents sometime use corporal punishment including shaming, belittling, and using threats (Garcia-Preto, 1996; Garcia-Preto, 2005b; Falicov, 1998) to stop disrespectful behaviors (e.g. talk back to the parents). As indicated by Satiago-Rivera et al. (2002), important components of parenting styles within this social group are "control, high level of supervision, and strict standards" (p. 76). Hines, Garcia-Preto, McGoldrick, Almeida & Weltman (1999) have indicated that it is common for Latino parents to impose stricter values on their children, and demand respect and obedience from their children. Corporal punishment may be used for unwanted behaviors. Although Latino children do of course misbehave on occasion, in general, the status of parents remain high and the unquestioned authority of Latino parents with regard to their children persist throughout their family lives (Falicov, 2006).

*Personalismo*. In general, Latinos value warmth greatly in interpersonal relationships (Ho, 1992; Panigua, 2005; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002; Saracho & Hancock, 1983). *Personalismo* refers to "the mindset that values human relationships over formal rules and regulations. Warmth and familiarity in a relationship are central to the establishment and maintaining of it" (Smith & Montilla, 2006, p. 240). According to Santiago-Rivera et al. (2002), one of the primary objectives in Latino parenting is to learn interpersonal skills which include respect for authority and social relatedness. In Latino culture, *una persona bien educado* (a well-educated person) does not only refer to an individual who has a high degree of formal education but

---



rather means one who has good social skills and demonstrates *respeto* in interpersonal relationships (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Ho, 1992; Nava, 2000).

According to Arredondo (2006), in the context of counseling, some Latino clients may need a greater sense of *personalismo*. They might feel disengaged from the therapy if this sense of *personalismo* is absent. Arredondo pointed out that a culturally competent counselor would anticipate and value this belief and spend time building rapport. Similarly, Paniagua indicated that Latino clients, would take the therapist's credentials and professional expertise into account, but at the same time, they would prefer to choose a therapist based on the his/her ability to share intimate information (e.g. favorite food, music). This is because Latino clients feel that by sharing things, the therapist may develop trust and then confidence in a client-therapist relationship. In addition, Latino clients may feel uncomfortable if they feel they are being treated as "things". If the therapist did not understand this cultural value when working with Latino clients, the consequence may be that the clients drop out from the therapy.

Health researchers have noted that traditionally Latinos seek help from their families and communities. They prefer to deal with health problems by consulting those with whom they have a personal relationships or people who know their life situations and problems (National Center for Mental Health Promotion & Youth Violence Prevention, n. d.). Since Latinos tend to value *personalismo*, they prefer to receive information through interpersonal relationships and individuals they trust. Therefore, it is essential for parent educators and family service providers to build up trust and relationships when working with Latino parents.

### *Gender Roles in Latino Culture*

Gender roles affects family related issues. In order to better understand Latino parents' parenting behaviors and practices, this section discusses traditional gender roles in Latino families.

*Traditional role of Latinas.* In general, it is believed that traditional Latino families are often considered patriarchal, and *machismo* for males and *marianismo* for females (Chilman, 1999; Duffey, 2000; Folicov, 1998; Garcia-Preto, 2005a; Garcia-Preto, 2005b; Hines et al., 1999; Romeo, 2000; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002; Southern, 2006). According to Paniagua (2005), *marianismo*, which uses the Virgin Mary as a role model, is a personal characteristic in women that is highly valued by Latinos. After reviewing various literatures, Paniagua

---

concluded that the characteristics of *marianismo* are “submissiveness, obedience, dependence, timidity, docility, sentimentality, gentleness, and virginity until marriage” (p. 56). Because of the notion of *marianismo*, Latino women/wives are often expected to devote their time to activities which benefit their families, children and husbands, for example, running households, cleaning the home, cooking and childrearing (Andrade, 1982; Folicov 1998, Paniagua, 2005; Sanchez-Ayendez, 1998; Suarez, 1998).

Although in the field literature, traditional Mexican wives are described as passive, submissive and dependent on their husbands (Becerra, 1998; Sanchez-Ayendez, 1998) and they may face the dilemmas of working outside the home and being devoted mothers (Garcia-Preto, 1998), the literature also indicates that the conjugal role structure in the Mexican-American families may be changing from patriarchal to egalitarian (Folicov, 2005) because of acculturation or the employment status and education of the wives (Baca Zinn, 1980, Ybarra, 1982). Although male dominance in Latino culture persists, a more complex dynamics is evolving, for example, as Latino females gain more personal autonomy through employment and education, the family structure appears to be moving from patriarchal to egalitarian and with combinations in between (Uribe, F. M. T., LeVine, R. A., & LeVine, S. E., 1994; Vega, 1990).

*Motherhood in Latino culture.* Literature has revealed that for many Latinas, motherhood is one of the most important goals in their lives (Folicov, 2006; Kutsche, 1983; Paniagua, 2005). Motherhood in Latino culture has been romanticized in Latino culture and music and is associated with representing the Virgin Mary (Duffey, 2000, Folicov, 1998). Although motherhood raises the status of Latina women in their culture, it also implies that a woman must devote herself to her children during her lifetime (Duffey, 2000; Garcia-Preto, 1998; Sanchez-Ayendez, 1998). Based on 15 years of ethnographic fieldwork in Northern New Mexico, Kutsche (1983) reported that although childrearing was the joint obligation of both parents, the mother is the primary caregiver especially in early childhood. According to Folicov’s (2006) clinical experience, motherhood may be the highest calling in the lives of many Mexican women. Folicov provided an example of a successful Mexican woman who had totally devoted herself to mothering and homemaking. With her highest aspiration being that of a devoted mother, this Mexican mother believed that she embodied the essence of what a

---

family was and she felt proud of this accomplishment.

Probably because the important role Latino mothers play in the families, Latino children seem to have closer relationships with their mothers than with their fathers. Hines et al. (1999) have speculated that this may be because that traditionally it is the mother who takes on primary family responsibilities and they tend to develop very strong relationships with children and other family members. In terms of the mother-child relationship within the traditional Mexican family, the mother and her daughters have the closest emotional relationship. This may be because the mother and the daughters spend a great deal of time together at home and both experience male dominance and social inequalities (Gonzales, 1998). The mother-son relationship is the second closest. Because of Latino mothers' dedication to their families, mother's day in Mexico is a great celebration to show appreciation for the existence of the mothers (Folicov, 2006).

*The traditional image of the Latino male.* The generally-accepted cultural stereotype is that for the Latino male - *machismo* is rooted in Latino culture (Arredondo, 2006; Becerra, 1998; Folicov, 1998; Garcia-Preto, 2005a; Paniagua, 2005; Romeo, 2000; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002; Southern, 2006; Suarez, 1998). In the field literature, the concept of *machismo* has different interpretations. For example, Morales (1996) has a more positive interpretation. He refers to *machismo* as "a man's responsibility to provide for, protect, and defend his family. His loyalty and sense of responsibility to family, friends, and community make him a good man" (p. 274). For some this concept could be interpreted differently from a negative perspective, for example, Becerra (1998) indicated that many associate *machismo* with "excessive aggression, little regard for woman, and sexual prowess" (p. 159).

Within the belief systems in *machismo*, it is widely believed that the Latino male is assumed to take financial responsibility for the family (Hines et al., 1999). Traditionally, Latino family structure is patriarchal. Due to the influence of *machismo*, in general, the stereotype of the Latino father is that of a dominant, authoritarian figure who commands respect from other family members (Chilman, 1999; Paniagua, 2005), and makes all decisions in the family, and uses corporal punishment as a way to teach the children (Folicov, 2006). Gonzales (1998) indicated that Mexican fathers would limit their interaction with their sons in order to obtain respect from their sons. With regards to father-daughter relationships, Mexican fathers appear to be more relaxed and approachable. They would play and fawn over their daughters. However,

---

as their daughters reach adolescence, their relationships change dramatically (Gonzales, 1998). For example, in order to be protective, Puerto Rican fathers may become “unreasonable, unapproachable and highly critical of their daughters’ behavior and friends” (Garcia-Preto, 1996, p. 189). In addition, Garcia-Preto (2005b) indicated that Puerto Rican parents may become extremely strict and overprotective when their children reach adolescence.

*Emerging view of Latino males.* Although the traditional male dominant image of the Latino male persists, an alternative emerging view of the Latino male is evolving and has been discussed by various researchers (Chilman, 1999; Folicov, 2006; Gutmann, 1999; Lamb, 2004; Mirande, 1977; Mirande, 1979; Mirande, 1985; Mirande, 1988; Mirande, 1991; Powell, 1995). “Emerging from on *La Familia*”, this newer view of Latino male is “less rigid and authoritarian, and more child-centered” (Mirande, 1991, p. 94). Mirande (1977, 1985, 1988, and 1991) proposed that the stereotypical view of Latino males as dominant, patriarchal and authoritarian figures need to be re-examined. After reviewing research related to fatherhood in Latino culture, Mirande (1991) contends that “Latino fathers did not conform to traditional portrayals found in the literature. Rather than being cold and distant figures, Latino fathers often appeared to be warm, nurturing, and companionable” (p. 63).

Bronstein (1988) conducted an observational study in examining parent-child interaction. The sample consisted of 78 parent-child dyads from 19 lower and middle socioeconomic families in a rural area in Central Mexico. Findings indicated no difference between fathers and mothers in scolding and criticizing or practicing authority. It was discovered that mothers were more physically nurturing in childrearing tasks, such as offering food, helping the child with grooming and showing concern for safety and health. Contrary to the traditional view of Latino fathers, the fathers were more emotionally nurturing and more playfully involved with children than the mothers were. Fathers appeared to have more complex verbal exchanges with their children than the mothers. Bronstein’s finding is in contrast to the traditional stereotypical portrayal of Mexican males. Bronstein’s finding aligns with those of Grossman’s (1995) study which suggest that although the role of the Latino mother and Latino father are still distinct, the gender role differences are not so sharp. In sum, research informs us that the traditional view of the Latino male is being challenged. Mirande (1988) cautioned the field researchers that the traditional stereotype of the Latino male has been generalized by “meager or nonexistent

---

evidence” (p. 93) and one that is rooted in a rural past and therefore he questioned if this view is applicable to Mexican-Americans who reside in the US context (Mirande, 1991).

Folicov (2006) explains the contrasting views of Latino fathers/males can be explained as simply the variety of patterns that one finds, not surprisingly, in any large group of people. Folicov contends that Latino families are in transition and thus they display “a mixture of traditional and egalitarian preferences” (p. 53). The researcher of the current study would like to conclude this section with Powell’s (1995) perspective “most likely the important question here is not which view represents the most accurate portrayal of Mexican fathers, but how elements of these differing perspectives might influence a father’s interest and participation in a parent program” (p. 89).

## Methodological Nature of the Study

The researcher used a qualitative approach consisting of in-depth interviews to understand Latino parents’ traditional parenting culture and practices. The participants were parents who attended a cultural relevant parenting program in a low income, predominately Spanish speaking inner city area of East Los Angeles - Dimas Heights (pseudonym). It is so called “Skid Row”, one of the most challenging communities in the Los Angeles’ inner cities area. According to the US census of 2000, approximately 95% of the population in this geographic area is Latino. This community is composed of almost entirely Spanish-speaking residents who have very low incomes coupled with high unemployment. Some residents can speak limited English but almost all of them are fluent Spanish speakers. All participants and participating sites in this study are referred by pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

Three sites which are Jefferson Elementary School, the Fourth Street Elementary and Sun Shine Childcare Center participated in this study. The parenting programs were offered at these three sites in November 2004, January 2005, and December 2005 separately. The researcher recruited a total of 16 parents for the interviews from these three sites. The participants were composed of approximately 6% of El Salvadoran -origin and 94% of Mexico-origin (Appendix A). Most interviews (14 out of 16) were conducted in Spanish with the help of the Spanish/English interpreter. The interview was conducted based on a semi-structured interview (Appendix B) at the school/childcare center site in an informal manner and setting. Some

---

follow-up phone calls were made by the researcher with the English-Spanish bilingual interpreter through a three-way conference call to clarify some of the uncertainty in the interview data. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and qualitatively analyzed for the purposes of the study. Each interviewee in the study was assigned a pseudonym for confidentiality.

### *Data Analysis and Interpretation*

The researcher followed Creswell's (2003) suggestion to create a six step analytical framework. First, the researcher transcribed interviews, scanned materials, and sorted and arranged data. Second, she read through all of the data to obtain a general sense of the information contained therein and wrote notes in the margins to record general thoughts and impressions. Third, she began initial analysis with an *open coding* process and further organized the coded materials into different categories/themes. A description of categories/themes was created for analysis. Fourth, *axial coding* was used to identify the central phenomenon and the consequences. The researcher anticipated generating approximately five sub-categories/themes to answer the research question. Frequency analysis of interview data was created to decide the central phenomenon and themes of the research question. Fifth, the researcher used *selective coding* to develop narrative passages and descriptive information to convey research findings in depth. Finally, the researcher used the existing research to generate interpretations and provide implications for the field.

## Findings

In this section, the researcher presents the feedback from interviewed parents regarding their self-identified parenting culture and practices. In order to faithfully reflect the voices of parents, it was the researcher's intention to present specific quotes and detailed descriptions. In addition, the researcher tried to present the original meaning of the interviewees as much as possible so she purposely did not change the grammar errors and word choices in the quotes. As described below, five themes emerged from the data.

### *Maternal Involvement in Parenting*

When parents were asked about the primary care provider for the children in their families,

---

all parents (16 out of 16) stated that the mother is the primary care provider of the children and provides affection for them. From the parents' interviews, it was repeatedly revealed that the mother fulfilled the daily childcare obligations. The mothers generally seemed to provide a more nurturing presence in the family than the father. For example, one of the participating mothers, Celedonia, provided a vivid description about her daily life with her children. She stated:

In the morning we wake up, I prepare breakfast for everyone. At 6:45 we are at school. They study at school and I work at school. At 2:30 I pick up my kids, I take them to do sports, I take them to practice their game. The 10-year old attends church for after school education. I also take them to church. We arrive home at 7:30. I then prepare dinner and we gather together to talk what occurred during that day to each other. And we wait for my husband and the kids talk about what happened in the day. Then we spent about half hour talking and watching TV. And after to that each one goes to shower and goes to bed.

Celedonia's experience demonstrates how she offers care for her children from the time that they wake up until they go to bed, including preparing meals, taking them to school, to church and to extracurricular activities such as a sporting event. Also, Celedonia reported time talking with her children which indicates she also takes care of her children's emotional needs. Similar to Celedonia, another participating mother, Olga, also shared her daily routine in taking care of her children and her high levels of involvement in her children's school. She stated:

I'll describe our daily routine. Wake them up at 6:30, prepare breakfast, I bring them to school,...And around 2:30 I have to come over and provide lunch, or feed again [child name], which [child name] is here at this school. [2<sup>nd</sup> child name] gets out at 4:00 p.m. And he [2<sup>nd</sup> child's name] stays one hour longer, so I pick them up at 5:30 or 6:00 and we have dinner afterwards. I have to make sure they take a shower... I am taking care of how they do in school. I help the teachers... I am active with both of the teachers. I'm always observing how well they do in school. And just onsite in case of an emergency occurs I am available.

From what Olga shared, the description demonstrates that Olga is highly involved in her children's' school, including helping teachers and being available at the school site in addition

---

to her daily child rearing responsibilities. According to Delgado-Gaitan (2004), parent involvement in their children's school is necessary and beneficial. Delgado-Gaitan (2004) has indicated that although it was widely believed that Latino parents do not care about their children's education because of their lower SES status and low educational levels, the research demonstrates that Latino parents do indeed care about their children's academics. Olga's statement confirms this point of view of Latino parent involvement at school. Similarly, like Olga, another participating parent, Silvia not only takes care of her children on a daily basis, but also serves as a volunteer at school. She expressed her daily experiences interacting with her children and her involvement with the school. She was proud to share:

I am the main person who takes care of the children. My husband works. I take care of them on daily basis. Bring them to school. Wash clothes and prepare breakfast every morning. Sometimes I get a little a bit busy because I have a lot of home duties to do. I consider myself a good mother because I always take care of my children. I might be busy doing other things but I try my best to take care of them. Other people are surprised about I take good care of children. I also a parent volunteer in school.

From the interview excerpt above offers testimony from the mothers about their daily lives, the researcher gained an understanding of how the participant mothers devote themselves to take care of their children. Although Silvia is a full-time homemaker, she is very confident that she is doing a great job in child rearing. In addition, Silvia's statements indicate that she is highly involved in both parenting and in her children's education.

### *Paternal Involvement in Parenting*

The feedback from the majority of interviewed parents (14 out of 16) reveals that they believed that in their culture (Latino), traditionally the fathers take the breadwinner and authoritarian role in the families whereas mothers are the primary caregiver for the children in the families. For example, one parent, Ruth said, "In Mexico, the father works and the mother is always at home, so it might be the mother [take care of the children] because it's not like here [the US], both parents work." Similarly, another parent Angelica said, "Because he [child's father] works. He works all the time. He gets home late. So he really doesn't deal with that [childrearing and parenting]." In addition to working for the families, it was also shown that the Latino father also plays an authoritarian role in the family, Rosa added:

---



For example, in my family, my mother would take care of me... Because typical Latino parents, for example, my family, my mother would take care of me... For typical Latino father would work and wife and children would obey the father's order.

Another parent participant, Fransica, who is a second generation Mexican-American, validated Rosa's idea by sharing her own experience with her parents. She added:

From what I learned I guess from my mom is the mother does all the parenting, but for the dad, not the parenting, I guess brings home the food and the money.... For affection, you know all the emotional parts, is the mom. And for the dad it's the disciplining, I think.

The statements above demonstrate that Fransica's mother engaged in most of the childrearing responsibilities and emotional security for children whereas her father supported the family financially. It also demonstrates that the father played an authoritarian role in terms of maintaining discipline within the family structure. Due to working away from home, Fransica's father had low paternal involvement in parenting in her family. Altogether, the preceding quotations confirm the research in the available literature which depicts that traditional Latino fathers play dominant, authoritarian roles and breadwinners in the families (Chilman, 1999; Folicov, 1998; Hines et al., 1999; Paniagua, 2005; Powell, 1995).

Although the image of the fathers from previous interview quotes has low parental involvement in child rearing, the researcher noted that there were two interviewed mothers who expressed their expectations toward parental involvement of their spouses. One of the parents, Gabriela shared the dynamics of household responsibility. She stated:

..., the father has the responsibility of going to work, that's home expenses, bring in food. And my responsibility is to take care of them. That responsibility of educating them [their children] is both [the mother and the father]. But since he works all day, I am responsible all day. He leaves early in the morning and, arrives late in the evening.

Just like previous interviewed parents, Gabriela's quote reveals that she perceives the primary role of father is to support the family financially. This may be because, culturally, one of the positive qualities of *Machismo* often associates with Latin males, is "to provide for the family" (Mayo, 1997).

---

### *Communication with Children is Valued and Practiced*

When exploring the participant's cultural-relevant parenting practices at home, the researcher discovered that issues related to communication were salient themes that emerged from the interview process. The feedbacks of the parent participants reveal that communication is an important element of their family dynamic.

Rosa, a parent participant who viewed herself as being a friend to her children, described the way she interacts with her children. She said, "I try to communicate as much as possible, as a parent, I want my children to have confidences with me, as a parent but also a friend." Another parent, Sonia, shared that when her children misbehave, she always tries to talk with them. "I try to talk to her whenever she does wrong. I try to talk to her about it. I try to communicate." Similar to Sonia, Martha believes that it is very important to talk to children when they do something wrong, she stated:

I think communicating is very important. Once we [Martha and her husband] provide them [Martha's children] how, after telling them how we feel, they do obey us ... Talking to them what is good, what is bad. After so much telling them, they'll mention, "oh yes I know it."

The above quotation implies that Martha is aware of the importance of having open lines of communication between parents and their children. She described her belief believes that consistently communicating values to their children helps them to understand what is negative and positive. Given Martha's personal experiences, she believes that communication works very well. Just like Martha, another parent, Fransica also makes efforts to talk to her child when he misbehaves. She provided an example of the way she communicated with her 4-year-old when he bit a classmate. She stated:

Well like right now, he [Fransica's son], couple of times in his class he bit, ... I take him home and I talk to him, you know. He understands if I tell him no biting. You know he repeats it and pretty much of it I do is, I just try to engrave it in his mind no biting, no biting, you know while we're doing something like reading a book. After finish reading the book, I'll you know, remind him, remember no biting. And I'll name the kids in his class, no biting [child's name], no biting [child name]. Pretty much, you know trying to explain to him that it's not you know, not good. It hurts.

---

The quote above indicates that Fransica made a thoughtful attempt to communicate to her child not to bite other children in the class. She would repeat to her child several times to make sure that her child understood how other children might feel if he bites. Similar to previously mentioned interviewed parents, Gabriela would communicate immediately with her child when she finds her children made mistakes. She shared:

I would first talk to them about the mistake they were making. If it's a mistake, you know talk to them make sure they don't do it again by talking. Just talking to them about the mistake and hopefully they don't make the same mistake. And just keep on talking and for the second time maybe they don't make the same mistake.

Gabriela's comments illustrate that she talks to her children about their mistakes with patience and thoughtfulness. This implies that she uses communication as a way to teach her children the correct behavior. According to the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service (n.d.), good communication can build strong bridge between parents and children. Parents are recommended to take more time talking with children about their behavior in a positive way. Gabriela and previous quoted parents' statements demonstrate that they were making effort to communicate with her children about their misbehaviors in a positive way. However, when Gabriela found herself unable to communicate with her sons, then she felt it was time for her husband to get involved. She stated:

Sometimes he [the father] talks to them because maybe if the children have a problem talking about with me, maybe they can do it with him, they can talk with him, like a boy, like a child. If it's a boy feels more comfortable with father.

Gabriela's comments reveal that although the father is less involved in child-rearing generally, he plays an essential role in parenting. She reveals that sometimes boys feel more comfortable talking to talk to their fathers, as both belong to the same gender group. Similarly, data also revealed that sometimes mothers felt that they were the best equipped to talk to their daughters. Celendonia stated:

The communication works a lot. Sometimes she has special thing and feel shy so she talks with me. She tells me that the boy she likes, sometimes the parents worry because she is the only daughter. I feel that we are more like friends.

Celedonia's comment demonstrates that she has strong communication with her daughter and

---

they are like companions. It also reveals that, as a mother, she is a trustworthy person that her daughter can go to talk with. Gabriela and Celedonia's statements demonstrate that mothers and fathers are both equally important figures for their children. Their roles maybe different; however, they are equally important in child-rearing matters.

### *Authoritarian Parenting Style*

When parents were asked about the major features of Latino parenting culture, in general, they believed that typical Latino parents are stricter as compared to their Caucasian counterparts. Childhood experiences of the interviewed parents would suggest that Latino parents are more authoritarian when it comes to their children's' behaviors. For example, Sonia, a young mother from the Sun Shine Childcare Center, simply mentioned, "...they're [Mexican parents] more like, more strict with the kids." By being "strict", these parents provide more rules and less freedom for their children. Norma affirmed, "My parents, as Mexican parents were very strict, they would not provide much freedom for children. I didn't enjoy my childhood and my teenage life." Rosa affirmed Norma's statement by sharing her own experiences from early childhood, "...we can't raise our voice toward our parents; otherwise, they will slap. When I hear my children using bad words, I tell them, oh...if I were your grandmother, you will have no teeth by now." Comments such as these indicate that the traditional Latino parents described by the parents in this study are strict with their children. This is confirmed by the existing literature in relation to Latino parenting styles are "stricter values" and "strict standard" (Hines et al., 1999; Satiago-Rivera et al., 2002). In addition, it appears that Latino parents have much freedom in disciplining their children. For example, Ramona compared differences between Mexican parents and European-American parents. She stated:

The difference is that over there [Mexico], there is freedom for parents. But right here we cannot do it. ... The difference from Mexico to America is that Mexican parents have freedom and they can do whatever they want and American parents do not. Over there [Mexico] if you [as the parent] hit a child, no one says anything.

This quote demonstrates that in Mexican culture, parents have more freedom in discipline children. Besides, this affirms previously discussed theme that corporal punishment is a way of disciplining children in their culture. Yet many interviewed parents stated that they would like

---

to make a change in their parenting behaviors by providing more freedom for their children. For example, after living in the US for a long period of time, Sonia felt that the traditional Mexican parenting style was too “strict”, and thus she wanted to provide more freedom for her children. Similar to Sonia, another parent, Martha added:

...I notice that they [American parents] have lots of freedom toward their children. I believe little by little we can provide freedom as they [Martha’s children] grow older and that’s how I believe they can obtain the freedom as they get older.

From Martha’s comments we can see that she has noted cultural differences in parenting styles, with European-American parents giving their children more freedom and are more permissive than traditional Mexican-American parents. Just like Sonia, Martha would like to provide more freedom for her children as they get older.

Bigner (2006) indicated three types of attitude about parenting that influence parental behavior, which are, authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. The data indicates that these interviewed parents believe that the traditional Latino parents are more authoritarian and stricter in parenting their children when compared to their white Euro-American counterparts. They in turn expressed desires to make changes in parenting style by being less rigid and providing more freedom for their children.

### *Traditional Disciplinary Practices*

From the feedbacks of participants, it was discovered that physical means of discipline was another major feature of traditional Latino parenting practices. All parent participants (16 out of 16) consistently indicated that physical discipline/corporal punishment has been a commonly used parenting practice for their nuclear families, especially in their home countries (Mexico or Central America). However, all interviewed parents are aware that physical discipline is considered as a form of child abuse in the United States. Many interviewed parents (ten out of twelve) claimed they obtained this information from attending various programs in the community. The existing research (Garcia-Preto, 1996; Folicov, 1998; Folicov, 2005; Hines et al., 1999) has documented that disciplinary practices such as corporal punishment, shaming, belittling are used to stop disrespectful behaviors. In addition, according to Bigner (2006), corporal punishment (e.g. spanking) is not effective way to discipline children and it has long term negative influences in children’s lives. For example, children may model this type of

---

behavior as an appropriate approach to resolve problems. In addition, Swinford et al. (2000) discovered strong connection between abusive punishment in childhood and violence in their later on adult romantic relationship. Hence, the parent educator urged parents to attend the parenting program so they could learn alternative positive parenting disciplinary practices.

When parents were asked about the traditional parenting practices, overwhelmingly, they shared stories from their own childhood. For example, one parent, Angelica shared her own experience of being spanked when she was a young child. She stated:

I was raised like that [being spanking] yeah. Not hard, not like abuse. I didn't consider it abuse. No bruises or anything, so yeah if I did something wrong I would get hit. And you wouldn't do it again because you would have remembered, oh no I got a hit, so you wouldn't do it again.

Angelica recalled that when she behaved inappropriately she would be punished by being spanked. And from her experiences she seemed to remember that if she knew why she had been spanked, she would engage in that activity again. It shows that the spanking was a way of teaching children at her home. Another parent Olga, noticed the difference between Latino parents and Euro-American parents. At the same time she described her own experience from her childhood as well. She stated:

The difference I noticed Mexican parents apply physical punishment whenever necessary compared to American parents. Another differences is Mexican parents do not provide freedom to their children. Speaking of my own experience, I was 16 year old but was not allowed to go to a party. Compared to American parents, they allow their children to go to party at earlier ages.

Olga's quotation demonstrates that she believed that Mexican American parents, different from European American parents, used physical punishment whenever they thought it was necessary. Olga also recalled that when she was a teenager, she was not allowed to go parties. She believes that Mexican American parents are very different from European American parents in terms of allowing their children freedom. Overall, she summed up that Mexican American parents use physical punishment when they feel necessary and generally allow their children less freedom.

Similar to Angelica and Olga, Celedonia, a mother from Central America who has never

---

used physical punishment on her children, also shared her own stories of common parenting practice in Central America from her viewpoint. She stated:

... for the physical punishment, for example, I am 39 years old, when I was 7 years old, my father would use a cable to educate us he would bend it several times, if we misbehaved we got 3 hits, and currently they don't hit like that. It is common to use the belt to educate the children and it has been currently used. For parents, it is common to hit the children in Central America if the children don't obey parents. They said, if children don't obey, just hit them three times. I tell my children if you know what we have been go thru...they would feel they are lucky. And my children said yes, they feel lucky.

Celedonia recalled that her father used corporal punishment whenever she misbehaved. Her recollections would suggest that physical punishment is a common parenting practice in Central America and parents believe that physical punishment is an effective way to discipline their children. It is important to note that the Celedonia's perspectives were opinions only. Additionally while opinions are important, parent's opinion cannot be generalized to a particular ethnic group. However, Celedonia's remarks also reveal that she does not follow the parenting traditions that she had learned from her parents, as she does not use any physical means of disciplining her children; this maybe because she has been living in the United States for fifteen years, and she has been exposed to the cultural context here in terms of what constitutes allowable punishment. Since Celedonia has experienced corporal punishment in her childhood in Central America, she knows it is not an appropriate way to discipline children. She clearly revealed that she is strongly inclined to abandoning physical means of discipline.

While almost all of the parents interviewed expressed negative attitudes toward the use of corporal punishment, the researcher encountered an interesting incident happened in the middle of a parent interview. The interviewed parent took two of her children with her to the interview because did not have child care. At the beginning, the researcher was impressed by the two well-behaved children but gradually they started to do something to get their parent's attention. The parent held her temper at first but finally spanked her children lightly to correct their misbehavior. The ironic part of this incident was the parent was just sharing her negative attitude toward physical discipline before she spanked her children. This incident reveals that

---

this interviewed parent might have different definition of corporal punishment or she may consider that light corporal punishment was an acceptable form of disciplining.

The interviewed data also revealed to the researcher that few Latino parents who reside in the US still practice the use of physical punishment to discipline their children although it is illegal. For example, another parent Trinidad, never uses corporal punishment herself but she knows of friends and relatives residing in the US, who still believe in the efficacy of physical punishment as a way to discipline the children. She stated:

They [Trinidad's friends] want to take care of them as we were taken care of. They want to set the same rules [corporal punishment]. I am saying that there are some parents that want to go ahead and continue with the traditional Mexican parenting style, they want to continue with the same set of rules that their parents had.

Even in the United States, Trinidad finds that some of her friends practice physical discipline. This is because physical discipline was a part of disciplinary practice in their family of origin. Therefore, they have learned this tradition from their family of origin. This suggests that parenting style can be passed from generation to generation, no matter if these traditions are deemed appropriate or inappropriate to the current group

Although most of the parents do not want to preserve the use of corporal punishment as a way to discipline their children, some continue to practice it. However, the data also revealed that all of the parents would like to adapt the parenting traditions they have learned, to western values. For example, one of the parents, Rosa said, "I would like to maintain the Mexican parenting style and tradition but I understand that the time changes so I must to adapt the Western parenting value."

The interview data suggests that there is a tradition of corporal punishment in Latino families under study. All parents interviewed had experienced corporal punishment as children. Some mentioned that screaming and profanity were also disciplinary practices in their families of origin. Perhaps as a result of the parenting program, nearly all of these same parents chose not to use corporal punishment with their own children, while a few others, maintain the use of light forms of corporal punishment as an effective way to handle behavioral problems.

## Discussions

---



Utilizing a qualitative interview approach, the researcher obtained a picture of the role of the mother in the Latino participant family, and these interviews revealed that the Latino mother is the primary person who carries out the childrearing responsibilities as well as providing nurturing and emotional security in the family. These findings affirm the existing literature related to the role of Latino/Mexican mothers (Andrade, 1982; Falicov, 1998; Garcia-Preto, 1998; Kutsche, 1983; Folicov 1998; Paniagua, 2005; Sampson, 2003; Suarez, 1998). Aside from the specificity of the Latino culture, in many if not most cultures, the mother takes on the primary role of childrearing (Kurz, 1997). In addition, the current study revealed that the mother is the person who seeks parenting information enthusiastically and was highly motivated to attend the various parenting programs.

Due to working away from the home, Latino fathers in the current study were often unable to take on primary childrearing responsibilities and were absent from the parenting program. Just as indicated by the existing literature (Folicov, 2006), for the most part, the fathers in this study played the role of disciplining the children and mothers played the nurturing roles. However, research has shown the important role the father plays in a child's life (Barber, 1998; Golombok, 2000; Lamb & Tamis-LeMonda, 2004), paternal involvement in parenting should be encouraged and promoted.

The findings confirm the extant literature (Hines et al., 1999; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002) related to strict parenting values and high parental authority (Bain, 2006; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Vazquez, 2004) in Latino culture. This study revealed that traditional Latino parents, in general, are stricter in terms of their parenting practices as compared to their White Euro-American counterparts. This finding also supports the perspective that Latino parenting tradition takes a more hierarchical parenting approach (Bigner, 2006; Folicov 1998; Falicov, 2005; Folicov 2006; Garcia-Preto, 1996; Garcia-Preto, 2005; Satiago-Rivera et al., 2002) which maybe influenced by the traditional cultural value of *respeto*. In Bigner's (2006) view, this approach is due to the often low income or educational status of the parents involved. However, in this study, most interviewed parents were willing to acculturate to western parenting values, which they believed, for the most part, provides more freedom and less restrictiveness towards children. Thus because of acculturation, the disciplinary norms of the parents interviewed are closer to the dominant culture.

---

Another acculturation pattern shared by parents in this study, had to do with their changing attitudes towards corporal punishment. Although the literature is incomplete and inadequate on Latinos and child abuse (Fontes, 2002), just as some existing literature has reported (Garcia-Preto, 1996; Falicov, 1996; Falicov, 1998), parents and the parent educator in this study indicated that corporal punishment, screaming and profanity were common ways to discipline children in their family of origin and that they perceived this disciplinary approach as a tradition in Latino families. In the researcher's view, these findings may be related to the SES and the level of educational attainment of the participants in this study and do not necessarily relate to their cultural background. However, almost all of the interviewed parents did not want to preserve the tradition of corporal punishment as a means of discipline because of their own unpleasant experiences from their childhood.

There are two limitations in this study. First, it should be noted that there are cultural variations within the Latino population. The small sample size of this study is a limitation that does not allow for generalization of the findings to a larger Latino population. Second, it was not possible to explore the complete range of parenting practices in this study. Preferably, one of the practices that would have enhanced this study would include parent-child interactions; however, time constraints prevented this type of data collection from being viable.

After reflecting on the findings of the study, the researcher has identified two issues that should be investigated further. First, in terms of research method, observing Latino parents' parenting practices at home (e.g. home visit observation) would be informative for understanding the nature of the Latino parenting practice. The second suggestion concerns the direction of the future research. Many aspects related to Latino parenting culture, parenting practices and the impact of dominant parenting culture on Latino parents need to be further explored. In addition, it would be enlightening if future research attains the perspective of Latino fathers regarding the parenting culture and practices.

## Conclusions

This study assists in filling the gap in the area of Latino parents parenting traditions. This study documented Latino parenting traditions for the purpose of identifying those traits and traditions that would possibly enable the creation and execution of a better parenting program.

---

Although Latino is a highly heterogeneous group, they share some characteristic in general. The study found that Latino mothers are primarily responsible for childrearing whereas Latino fathers are absent from such practice. The results indicated that the participant mothers perceived that communication plays an important role in their families and they made an effort to have open lines of communication with their children. The findings suggested that traditional Latino parents, in general, may have more rigid parenting values compared to their Caucasian counterparts. It was revealed that physical discipline, screaming and profanity were common disciplinary practices in participants' families.

Family program staff and field researchers will learn from the findings of the study. Field researchers will be benefited from the thorough literature review in relation to Latino parenting traditions and as well as the empirical qualitative findings. Program staff can understand Latino parents in this community better. In addition, the study provides information for designing a better family program in Latino communities.

Finally, through this study, field researchers are informed about gaps in the research that exist which is about cultural parenting practices that need to be filled, in terms of both research direction and methodology.

## References

- Abraham, K. G. (1986). Ego-identity differences among Anglo-American and Mexican-American adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, 9, 151-166.
- Andrade, S. (1982). Social science stereotypes of the Mexican American woman: Policy implications for research. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Science*, 4, 223-243.
- Arredondo, P. (2006). Multicultural competencies and family therapy strategies with Latino families. In R. L. Smith, & R. E. Montilla (Eds.), *Counseling and family therapy with Latino populations* (pp. 77-95). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Baca Zinn, M. (1980). Employment and education of Mexican American women: The interplay of modernity and ethnicity in eight families. *Harvard Educational Review*, 50, 47-62.
- Baca Zinn, M. & Wells, B. (2003). Diversity within Latino families: New Lessons for family social science. In A. S. Skolnick, & J. H. Skolnick (Eds.), *Family in transition* (pp. 389-415). New York, NY: Pearson Education, Inc.
-

- Bain, H. (2006). Parenting in Latino families. In R. L. Smith, & R. E. Montilla (Eds.), *Counseling and family therapy with Latino populations* (pp. 161-175). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Barber, N. (1998). *Parenting: Roles styles and outcomes*. Commack, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.
- Becerra, R. M. (1998). The Mexican American family. In C. H. Midel, R. W. Habenstein, & R. Wright (Eds.), *Ethnic families in America* (pp.153-171). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Bernal, G. & Shapiro, E. (1996). Cuban Families. In M. McGoldrick, J. Giordano, & J. K. Pearce (Eds.), *Ethnicity and family therapy* (pp. 155-168). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Bigner, J. J. (2006). *Parent-child relations: An introduction to parenting*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Bronstein, P. (1988). Father-child interaction: Implications for gender role socialization. In P. Bronstein, & C. P. Cowan (Eds.), *Fatherhood today: Men's changing role in the family* (pp. 107-124). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Cabrera, N. J. & Coll, C. G. (2004). Latino fathers: Uncharted territory in need of much exploration. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (pp. 98-120). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Chilman, C. S. (1999). Hispanic families in the United States: Research perspectives. In A. S. Skolnick, & J. H. Skolnick (Eds.), *Family in transition* (pp. 345-360). New York, NY: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc.
- Comas-Diaz, L., & Duncan, J. W. (1985). The cultural context: A factor in assertiveness training with mainland Puerto Rican women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 9, 463-476.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- DeBord, K. & Reguero de Atilas, J. (1999). Latino parents: unique preferences for learning about parenting. *The Forum for Family and Consumer Issues*, 4(1). Retrieved June 1, 2007, from <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/pub/1999/latino.html>
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1994). Socializing young children in Mexican-American families: An intergenerational perspective. In P. M. Greenfield, & R. R. Cocking (Eds.), *Cross-cultural*
-

- roots of minority child development* (pp. 55-86). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (2004). *Involving Latino families in schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Duffey, T. H. (2000). The Hispanic couple in therapy. In M. T. Flores, & G. Carey (Eds.), *Family therapy with Hispanics* (pp. 167-183). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- El Nasser, H. (2003). 39 million make Hispanics largest U.S. minority group. *USA today*. Retrieved May 5, 2007, from [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/census/2003-06-18-Census\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/census/2003-06-18-Census_x.htm)
- Falicov, C. J. (1998). *Latino families in therapy: A guide to multicultural practice*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Falicov, C. J. (2005). Mexican Families. In M. McGoldrick, J. Giordano, & N. Garcia-Preto (Eds.), *Ethnicity and family therapy* (pp. 229-241). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Falicov, C. J. (2006). Family organization: The safety net of close and extended kin. In R. L. Smith, & R. E. Montilla (Eds.), *Counseling and family therapy with Latino populations* (pp. 41-62). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Florsheim, P., Tolan, P. H., & Gorman-Smith, D. (1996). Family process and risk of externalizing behavior problems among African American and Hispanic boys. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 64, 1222-1230.
- Fontes, L. A. (2002). Child discipline and physical abuse in immigrant Latino families: Reducing violence and misunderstandings. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 80, 31-80.
- Garcia-Preto, N. (1996). Puerto Rican families. In M. McGoldrick, J. Giordano, & J. K. Pearce (Eds.), *Ethnicity and family therapy* (pp. 183-199). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Garcia-Preto, N. (1998). Latinas in the United States: Bridging two worlds. In M. McGoldrick (Ed.), *Re-visioning family therapy* (pp. 330-344). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Garcia-Preto, N. (2005a). Latino families: An overview. In M. McGoldrick, J. Giordano, & N. Garcia-Preto (Eds.), *Ethnicity and family therapy* (pp. 153-165). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Garcia-Preto, N. (2005b). Puerto Rican families. In M. McGoldrick, J. Giordano, & N. Garcia-Preto (Eds.), *Ethnicity and family therapy* (pp. 242- 255). New York, NY: The Guilford
-

- Press.
- Golombok, S. (2000). *Parenting: What really counts?*. Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis Inc.
- Gonzales, J. L. (1998). *Racial and ethnic families in America* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- Gorman, J. C., & Balter, L. (1997). Culturally sensitive parent education: A critical review of quantitative research. *Review of Educational Research*, 67, 339-369.
- Grossman, H. (1995). *Educating Hispanic students: implications for instruction, classroom management, counseling, and assessment*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Springfield, Ill.: Charles Thomas.
- Gutmann, M C. (1999). The meaning of Macho: Changing Mexican male identities. In A. S. Skolnick, & J. H. Skolnick (Eds.), *Family in transition* (pp. 99-111). New York, NY: Longman.
- Hanson, M. J., & Lynch, E. W. (1995). *Early intervention: Implementing child and family services for infants and toddlers who are at risk or disabled* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-ed, Inc.
- Hines, P. M., Garcia-Preto, N., McGoldrick, M., Almeida, R., & Weltman, S. (1999). Intergenerational relationships across cultures. In A. S. Skolnick, & J. H. Skolnick (Eds.), *Family in transition* (pp. 304-322). New York, NY: Longman.
- Ho, M. K. (1992). *Minority children and adolescents in therapy*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hurtado, A. (1995). Variations, combinations, and evolutions: Latino families in the United States. In R. E. Zambrana (Ed.), *Understanding Latino Families: Scholarship, policy, and practice* (pp. 40-61). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Keefe, S. E., & Padilla, A. M. (1987). *Chicano ethnicity*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Knowles, M. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: from pedagogy to andragogy*. Chicago, IL: Follett Pub. Co.
- Kurz, D. (1997). Doing parenting: mothers, care work, and policy. In T. Arendell (Ed.), *Contemporary parenting* (pp. 92-118). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kutsche, (1983). Household and family in Hispanic northern New Mexico. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 14, 151-165.
- Lamb, M. E. & Tamis-Lemonda, C. S. (2004). The role of the father: An introduction. In M. E.
-

- Lamb (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (pp. 1-31). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Marsiglio, W., Hutchinson, S., & Cohan, M. (2000). Envisioning fatherhood: a social psychological perspective on young men with kids. *Family Relations*, 49, 133-142.
- Mirande, A. (1977). The Chicano family: A reanalysis of conflicting views. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 39, 747-756.
- Mirande, A. (1979). A reinterpretation of male dominance in the Chicano family. *The Family Coordinator*, 28, 473-479.
- Mirande, A. (1985). *The Chicano experience: An alternative perspective*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Mirande, A. (1988). Chicano Fathers: Traditional perceptions and current realities. In P. Bronstein, & C. P. Cowan (Eds.), *Fatherhood today: Men's changing role in the family* (pp. 93-106). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Mirande, A. (1991). Ethnicity and fatherhood. In F. W. Bozett, & S. M. H. Hanson (Eds.), *Fatherhood and families in cultural context* (pp. 53-82). New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company, Inc.
- Morales, E. (1996). Gender roles among Latino gays and bisexual man: Implications for family and couple relationships. In J. Laird, & R. J. Green (Eds.), *Lesbians and gays in couples and families: A handbook for therapists* (pp. 272-297). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Nava, Y. (2000). *It's all in the frijoles: 100 famous Latinos share real-life stories, time-tested dichos, favorite folktales, and inspiring words of wisdom*. New York, NY: Fireside.
- Ortiz, V. (1995). The diversity of Latino families. In R. E. Zambrana (Ed.), *Understanding Latino Families: Scholarship, policy, and practice* (pp. 18-39). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Paniagua, F. A. (2005). *Assessing and treating culturally diverse clients*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Powell, D. R. (1988). Emerging directions in parent-child early intervention. In D. R. Powell (Ed), *Parent education as early childhood intervention: Emerging directions in theory, research, and practice* (pp. 1-22). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Powell, D. R. (1995). Including Latino Fathers in parent education and support programs: Development of a program model. In R. E. Zambrana (Ed.), *Understanding Latino*
-

- Families: scholarship, pollicy and practice* (pp. 85-106). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rogler, L. H., & Cooney, R. S. (1991). Puerto Rican families in New York City: Intergenerational processes. *Marriage and Family Review*, 16(3/4), 331-349.
- Romeo, L. M. (2000). A multisystemic look at Mexican American gangs: Adolescents at risk. In M. T. Flores, & G. Carey (Eds.), *Family therapy with Hispanics* (pp. 265-279). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Sampson, W. (2003). *Poor Latino families and school preparation: are they doing the right things?*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Santiago-Rivera, A. L., Arredondo, P., & Gallardo-Cooper, M. (2002). *Counseling Latinos and la familia: A practical guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sanchez-Ayendez, M. (1998). The Puerto Rican family. In C. H. Midel, R. W. Habenstein, & R. Wright (Eds.), *Ethnic families in America* (pp.199-222). Upper Saddle River, Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Saracho, O. N. & Hancock, F. M. (1983). Mexican-American culture. In O. N. Saracho, & B. Spodek (Eds.), *Understanding the multicultural experience in early childhood education* (pp. 3-15). Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- Smith, R. L. & Montilla, R. E. (2006). Working with Latino population: Background and historical perspectives. In R. L. Smith, & R. E. Montilla (Eds.), *Counseling and family Therapy with Latino Population* (pp. 27-40). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Solis, J. (1995). The status of Latino children and youth: Challenges and prospects. In R. E. Zambrana (Ed.), *Understanding Latino Families: Scholarship, policy, and practice* (pp. 62-81). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sosa, A. S. (1998). Latinos in the United States: A tapestry of diversity. In M. L. Gonzalez, A. Huerta-Macias, & J. V. Tinajero (Eds.), *Educating Latinos students* (pp. 197-212). Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing Company, Inc.
- Southern, S. (2006). Sexual counseling with Latino couples. In R. L. Smith, & R. E. Montilla (Eds.), *Counseling and family Therapy with Latino Population: Strategies that work* (pp. 177-196). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Suarez, Z. E. (1998). Cuban-American families. In C. H. Midel, R. W. Habenstein, & R. Wright (Eds.), *Ethnic families in America* (pp.172-198). Upper Saddle River, Prentice-Hall Inc.
-



- Swinford, S. P., DeMaris, A., Cernkovich, S. A., & Giordano, P. C. (2000). Harsh physical discipline in childhood and violence in later romantic involvements: The mediating role of problem behaviors. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62, 508-519.
- The Center for Community Wellness (2003). Literature review for the evaluation of the kit for new parents. Retrived May, 03, 2005, from <http://www.cfc.ca.gov/PDF/Kit/LitReview12-08.pdf>
- Uribe, F. M. T., LeVine, R. A., & LeVine, S. E. (1994). Maternal behavior in a Mexican community: The changing environments of children. In P. M. Greenfield, & R. R. Cocking (Eds.), *Cross-cultural roots of minority child development* (pp. 41-54). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). Census 2000: profile of general demographic characteristics for the United States, Table DP-1. Washington, DC: Author.
- Vazquez, C. I. (2004). *Parenting with pride Latino style*. New York, NY: Harper-Collins.
- Vega, W. A. (1990). Hispanic families in the 1980s: A decade of research. *Journal of marriage and the Family*, 52, 1015-1024.
- Vega, W. A. (1995). The study of Latino families: A point of Departure. In R. E. Zambrana (Ed.), *Understanding Latino Families: Scholarship, policy, and practice* (pp. 3-17). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Williams, S. (2001). *Trends among Hispanic children, youth and families*. Washington: DC. Child Trends Inc.
- Ybarra, L. (1982). When wives work: The impact on the Chicano family. *Journal of marriage and the family*, 44, 169-178.
-

## Appendix A

### Characteristics of Interviewees

Characteristics		Number of parents	% of parents
Relation to the Child	1. Mother	15	93.8 %
	2. Grandmother	1	6.3%
Age	1. Below 25	0	0%
	2. Between 26-30	2	12.5%
	3. Between 31-40	5	31.25%
	4. Between 41-50	4	25%
	5. Above 51	1	6.25%
	6. Missing item	4	25%
Ethnicity	1. Mexican	14	87.5%
	2. El Salvador	1	6.25%
	3. Chicano	1	6.25%
Education Level	1. 8 <sup>th</sup> grade or less	9	56.3%
	2. Some high school	4	25%
	3. High school	0	0%
	4. Vocational training	1	6.3%
	5. Some college	2	12.5%
Employment	1. Working part time	4	25%
	2. Working full time	4	25%
	3. Unemployed	3	18%
	4. Missing item	5	31.3%
Income	1. Under \$10,000	7	43.8%
	2. \$10,000 to \$20,000	3	18.8%
	3. \$20,000 to \$30,000	0	0%
	4. \$30,000 to \$40,000	2	12.5%
	5. \$40,000 to \$50,000	1	6.3%
	6. Over \$50,000	1	6.3%
	7. Missing item	2	12.5%
Marital Status	1. Married	10	62.5%
	2. Separated	2	12.5%
	3. Never married	4	25%
Child Age	1. 0-3	3	18.75%
	2. 4-5	6	37.5%
	3. 6-10	5	31.25%
	4. above 10	2	12.5%
Category	1. Normal	15	93.8%
	2. Mentally retarded	0	
	3. Physically handicapped	0	
	4. Learning disabled	0	
	5. Gifted and talented	1	6.3%

## Appendix B

### Parenting practice

1. First of all, can you introduce yourself a little bit?

2. Now let's first talk about the parenting practice at your home.

Who is the main person to take care of the child in your family?

Can you talk about (the primary child caregiver's name)'s parenting style and the way you interact with the child?

3. Can you talk about the way you talk or communicate with your children?

Usually how do your children react to you?

(Have you found any difference after you attending the parenting program?)

4. If the child didn't behave well, what would you do?

5. Does the child live with grandparents?

If the child's father, mother or grandparents have disagreements in taking care of the children, how do you handle the situation?

How does the child react?

6. What is your biggest problem when you take care of your children?

What was your biggest problem before attending parenting program?

7. There are times that parents don't know how to take care their child or teach their child, let's say when you don't know what to do, who do you seek help?

Where do you ask for help?

Did you get the solution?

### Latino parenting culture

1. Do you feel parenting knowledge and skills are very important for you as parents? Why?

2. Since you are come from \_\_\_\_\_, have you ever felt difficult when you raised your children in this country?

3. In your country, who has the major responsibility to take care of child in a family?

Do (country) parents (both father and mother) share equal responsibility in taking care of a child?

---

4.Can you share with me about typical Latino parents' parenting style?

5.Do you want to preserve (keep) the \_\_\_\_\_ (country) parenting tradition? Why?

6.Just from your experience, what do you think the major difference between \_\_\_\_\_ (country name) parents and American parents?

7.Do you want to learn more about the American way of parenting? Why?

### Ending

I appreciate your time. In addition, I'd like to be able to talk to you again if any question comes to mind or if certain answers need elaboration. Again, thanks for your participation.

---