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**OUTLINE**

- Latinx families in context
- Why focus on strengths?
- How do strengths support development
- Fathers' unique role in families
- Summary and Recommendations



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**Use of Terms "Latino/x" and "Hispanic"**

We use "Hispanic" and "Latino/x" interchangeably throughout the presentation. Consistent with the U.S. Census definition this includes individuals having origins in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, as well as other "Hispanic, Latino or Spanish" origins.



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### Adversity exposure is common for Latinx children and families

- ❑ 54% of Latinx children live in or near poverty.<sup>1</sup>
- ❑ 1 in 4 Latinx children have an [unauthorized immigrant parent](#).<sup>2</sup>
- ❑ During COVID,
  - ❑ 4 in 10 Latino households with children reported [housing insecurity](#).<sup>3</sup>
  - ❑ 1 in 5 Latino households with children were [food insufficient](#).<sup>4</sup>
  - ❑ Over one third of lower-income Latino adults living with children have frequent [anxiety or depressive symptoms](#).<sup>5</sup>

Sources: 1) Guzman, L. & Chen, Y. (forthcoming); 2) Guzman, L., Clarke, W., & Turner, K. (2017); 3) Chen, Y., Guzman, L. (2021); 4) Chen, Y. (2020); 5) Chen, Y., Ramos-Olzagasti, M. A. (2022).

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Latinx families are "more than their hardships."

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Strengths of Latinx Families



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# Individual & Parenting Strengths

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## Most Latinx children enter formal schooling with strong social skills

**Figure 3. Low-income Hispanic Children's Interpersonal Skills Equal or Exceed Those of Their Peers Throughout Early Elementary School**

**Why it matters:** Latinx children's social skills are important for developing resilience because they promote other domains of development.

Source: Padilla, C. M., Cabrera, N., & West J. (2017). The Development and Home environment of Low-income Hispanic Children: Kindergarten to Third Grade. National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families (NRCHCF). <https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/research-resources/the-development-and-home-environment-of-low-income-hispanic-children-kindergarten-to-third-grade/>

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## Latinx children and families may benefit from their bilingual and bicultural status

- 85% of Latinx parents speak Spanish to their children.
- 70% of Latinx parents report often encouraging their child to speak Spanish.
- Among immigrant parents,
  - 97% of immigrant parents report speaking Spanish.
  - 82% report often encouraging their child to speak Spanish.

**Why it matters:** Being bilingual promotes children's social and cognitive development. Parents' biculturalism is also promotive of better parenting behaviors, which are, in turn, related to better outcomes in children.

Source: Lopez, M. H., Kingstad, J. M., & Flores, A. (2018). Most Hispanic parents speak Spanish to their Children, but this is less the case in later immigrant generations. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/10/most-hispanic-parents-speak-spanish-to-their-children-but-less-as-their-ages-increase/>

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### Many Latino children benefit from positive parenting experiences

- Warmth and supportiveness
- Frequent father involvement – “hands on” parenting
- Engagement in learning experiences



Source: Cabrera, N., Abroso, A., Chen, Y., Ghosh, R. (2022). *Latino Families' Strengths and Resilience Contribute to Their Well-Being*. National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families. <https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/research-resources/latino-families-strengths-and-resilience-contribute-to-their-well-being>

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### Latinx parents are highly invested in their children's futures

Table 3. Parenting in low-income Latino families

Variables	9 Months (n= 852)	24 Months (n= 852)	48 Months (n= 852)	60 Months (n= 852)	Overall child-level difference
<b>Reading activities</b>					
Never	31.1%***	6.7%***	4.7%*	3.0%**	
1-2 times per week	44.2%*	42.0%*	45.0%	36.7%***	A, B, C, E, F
3-4 times per week	24.4%***	51.3%***	50.3%***	59.9%***	
<b>Sings songs</b>					
Never	2.0%*	4.2%*	2.2%*	1.6%*	
1-2 times per week	34.4%***	36.7%***	28.3%***	14.9%***	A, B, C, D, E, F
3-4 times per week	63.5%***	59.1%***	69.5%***	83.5%***	
<b>Talks about</b>					
Never	28.9%***	15.9%***	10.7%***	8.8%***	
1-2 times per week	36.8%***	38.2%***	49.2%***	44.8%***	A, B, C, F
3-4 times per week	34.3%***	45.9%***	40.1%***	46.4%***	

Parents in low-income Latinx families read more often to older children and sing more to infants.

**Why it matters:** Parent engagement in their children's learning activities foster the development of early school readiness skills.

Source: Cabrera, N., Herrigar, A., Chen, Y., West, J., Fagan, J., & Wildsmith, E. (2021). *Programs can build on the strengths of Latinx families with low incomes to improve outcomes*. National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families. <https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/research-resources/program-can-build-on-the-strengths-of-latino-families-with-low-incomes-to-improve-outcomes>

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# Family Strengths

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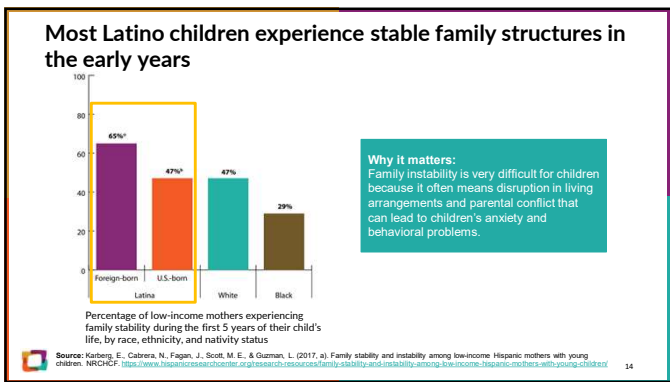
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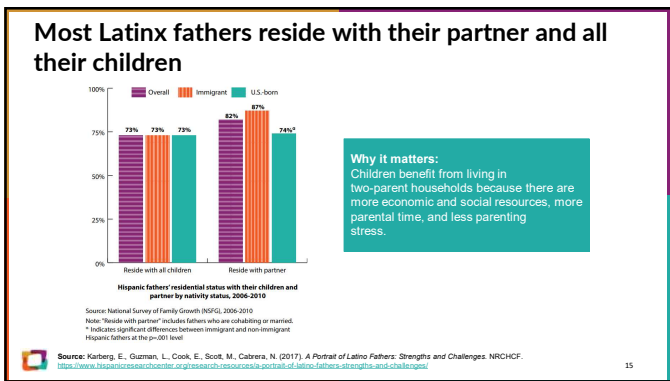
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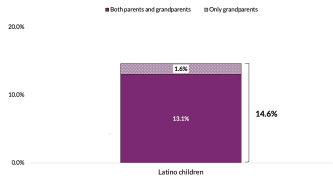
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### Many Latinx children live in intergenerational households with extended family who can support their cognitive skills and social-emotional functioning.

Figure 1. Close to 15 percent of Latino children lived with grandparents in 2019; the vast majority also lived with parents or in 3-generation households  
Percentages of Latino children under age 18 who lived with both parents and grandparents and with only grandparents in 2019



**Why it matters:**  
Intergenerational households can be protective for Latinx children by

- Increasing availability of economic resources
- Positively influencing Latinx parents' behaviors and their children's development



Source: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) 2019 American Community Survey, University of Minnesota, <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipedsonline/>  
Notes: Percentages rounded to the nearest percent. Not applicable to these estimates.

Source: Yyu, C., Guzman, L. (2022). One in Seven Latino Children Live With Grandparents, Who Play an Important Role in Children's Lives. NRCHCF. <https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/research-resources/fall-in-latinx-children-to-ut-diverse-family-structures-but-most-live-with-two-parents/>

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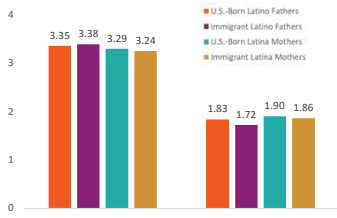
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### Latino parents experience positive, low conflict, co-parenting relationships



**Why it matters:**  
Parents who support each other in their parenting roles are more likely to have fewer conflicts and to show more supportive and responsive parenting, both of which are important for children's development.

Average ratings on cooperative co-parenting and co-parenting conflict for U.S.-born and immigrant Latino fathers and Latina mothers

Source: Cabrera, N., Chen, Y., Abrego, A., West, J., Fagan, J. (2021). Latino Parents Report Positive Co-Parenting and Parent-Child Interactions that Vary by Gender and Nativity. NRCHCF. [https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Hispanic-Center-SHM-brief-2021\\_Final.pdf](https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Hispanic-Center-SHM-brief-2021_Final.pdf)

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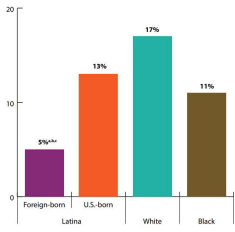
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### Foreign-born Latinx mothers report fewer depressive symptoms



**Why it matters:**  
Parents' psychological functioning is a promotive factor that can influence young children's development, through its effects on parenting practices and the quality of the early home environment.

Source: Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing, 2001-2003

Source: Katzberg, E., Cabrera, N., Fagan, J., Scott, M. E., & Guzman, L. (2017, a). Family stability and instability among low-income Hispanic mothers with young children. NRCHCF. <https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/research-resources/family-stability-and-instability-among-low-income-hispanic-mothers-with-young-children/>

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### Latinx children’s day-to-day experiences are often characterized by routines and predictability.

- The majority of Latinx mothers report that their families eat meals together three or more times a week.

Table 3. Parenting in low-income Latino families

Variables	9 Months n= 950	24 Months n= 950	48 Months n= 950	60 Months n= 950	Overall significant differences
<b>Family has a regular mealtime routine</b>					
Never	7.2%	14.2%*	11.5%*		
1-2 times per week	...	5.2%*	8.4%*	7.0%	6, 4, 1
3+ times per week		87.6%*	77.3%*	81.5%*	

Note: n=1 for missing data on variables. <sup>a</sup>Statistically significant at p < .05 difference between 9 months and 24 months. <sup>b</sup>Statistically significant at p < .05 difference between 24 months and 48 months. <sup>c</sup>Statistically significant at p < .05 difference between 48 months and 60 months. <sup>d</sup>Statistically significant at p < .05 difference between 60 months and 60 months. <sup>e</sup>Statistically significant at p < .05 difference between 9 months and 60 months. <sup>f</sup>Statistically significant at p < .05 difference between 24 months and 60 months. <sup>g</sup>Statistically significant at p < .05 difference between 48 months and 60 months. <sup>h</sup>Statistically significant at p < .05 difference between 60 months and 60 months. These cells are shaded to indicate no significant differences were found in this comparison.

**Why it matters:** Regular routines support healthy social-emotional development in early childhood. Children with regular routines at home tend to have greater self-regulation skills, which are the building blocks of good mental health.

Sources: Cabrera, N., Henggeler, A., Chen, Y., West, J., Fagan, J., & Wissameth, E. (2021). Programs can build on the strengths of Latinx families with low incomes to improve outcomes. National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families. <https://www.nrcchcf.org/research/programs-can-build-on-the-strengths-of-latinx-families-with-low-incomes-to-improve-outcomes/>  
 Butler, L. R., & Jordan, B. D. (2017). Child routines and self-regulation serially mediate parenting practices and externalizing problems in preschool children. Child & Youth Care Forum, 46(2), 243-259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0898010116684025>

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### Latinx fathers' commitment to their children starts early in childhood and is long-term

- Latinx fathers report engaging in physical play and caregiving activities with their infants.
- More than 90% of Latinx fathers report eating dinner with their child every day or several times week.
- U.S-born Latinx fathers report frequently playing with, reading to, bathing, and changing their children's diapers.

**Why it matters:** Latinx fathers' engagement with their children significantly contributes to children's cognitive, language, and social development, over and above mothers' contributions.

Source: Wissameth, E., Kanberg, E., Whitefield, B. (2020). Resident Hispanic Father Report Frequent Involvement in the Lives of Their Children. NRCCHCF. <https://www.nrcchcf.org/research/resident-hispanic-fathers-report-frequent-involvement-in-the-lives-of-their-children/>

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### How Fathers Matter for Children's Development in Early Childhood



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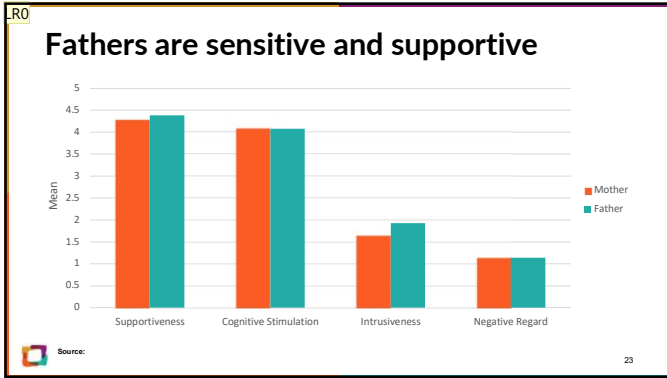
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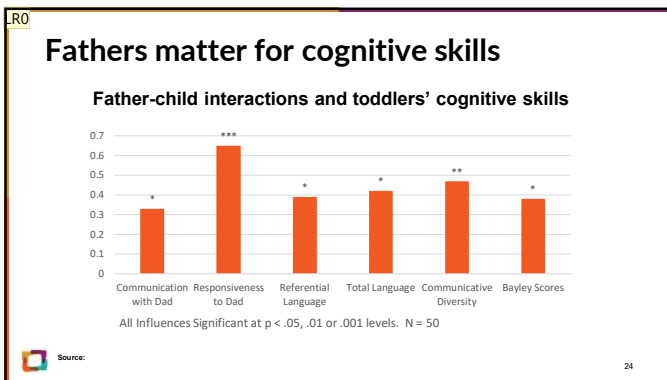
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## Slide 23

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Laura Ramirez, 2023-04-24T21:48:49.419

**LR0**

## Fathers help their toddlers comply and self-regulate



At 24 months:

- ❑ Fathers use **regulatory language** (e.g., direct commands "don't do that") to promote compliance
- ❑ Fathers use **regulatory language** with boys and **regulatory behavior** (e.g., physical) with children with poor language skills
- ❑ Fathers' **regulatory language** → child **emotion regulation**
- ❑ Fathers' **regulatory behavior** → child **sustained attention** at preK

Source: 26

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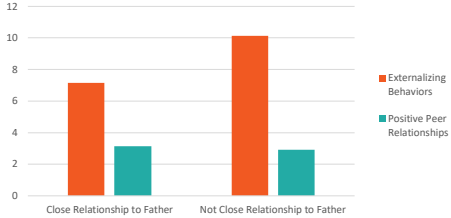
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## Father-child relationships during toddlerhood matter for social adjustment in middle school



Relationship to Father	Externalizing Behaviors	Positive Peer Relationships
Close Relationship to Father	~7	~3
Not Close Relationship to Father	~10	~3

Study of N=509 children and their families: Father residency did not predict social adjustment, only father-child relationships mattered

Source: 27

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## Summary

- ❑ Latinx families have the key ingredients to thrive.
- ❑ Programs need to recognize and capitalize on the strengths of Latinx families to build further competencies.
- ❑ Building on strengths helps provide culturally responsive services.

Source: 28

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## Slide 26

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## Slide 27

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Laura Ramirez, 2023-04-24T21:49:23.487

### Recommendations for programs and practice

- ❑ Curricula for parenting programs should **include** the culturally specific ways in which Latinx parents promote child development and should encourage Latinx parents to maintain these practices.
- ❑ **Acknowledge** Latinx parents' and families' strengths and **encourage** families to use these strengths to build further competencies.
- ❑ **Increase** own understanding of the cultural beliefs and practices that Latinx parents view as important resources to help them live in the United States.
- ❑ **Capitalize** on Latinx parents' optimism



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### Recommendations for programs and practice

- ❑ **Invite involvement from fathers** and extended family members who may be sources of social support for Latinx parents.
- ❑ **Meet families where they are** and be flexible and targeted in programming efforts.
- ❑ **Build on Latinx parents' high levels of investment** in their children's futures and engage parents in programs by validating and encouraging these investments.



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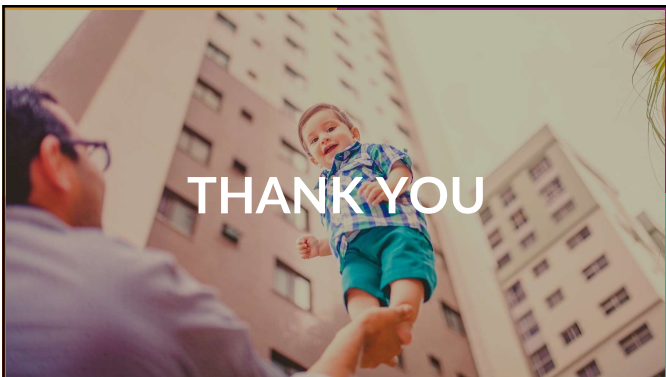
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### Disclaimer

The National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families is supported by grant #90PH0028-01-00 from the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents of this presentation are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



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# Q&A

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