

THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL MATCH AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY ON  
LATINO SCHOOL-BASED PARENT ENGAGEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

Ethnic minority children in the United States, particularly Latino children, are more likely to have lower levels of academic achievement than their White counterparts. Increasing Latino parent engagement in their children's schooling may help reduce this gap in academic achievement. Parent engagement is of particular importance in early childhood given it may lay the ground work for their engagement throughout their children's years of schooling. Despite Head Start's efforts to increase parent engagement, research has shown that parent engagement in school is lower among Latino parents. It might be the case that cultural congruence between schools and Latino parents may be linked to their higher engagement. Yet, very few empirical studies have examined this gap in our knowledge. The current study addressed this gap in knowledge through its examination of cultural match between Latino parents and their children's teachers at Head Start centers. Participants in the present investigation include 294 consenting Latino parents with children enrolled in Head Start programs throughout a large city in the Northeastern United States. Parents ( $N = 294$ ) and teachers ( $N = 37$ ) provided their generational status, country of origin, and primary language use in the home or classroom. Teachers also provided information regarding the frequency and quality of family engagement over a one-month period in the school. Using hierarchical linear modeling, findings indicated that Latino match (whether a parent and the Head Start teacher both identified as Latino) and parent-reported sense of community were significantly associated with teacher-rated parent involvement. When a parent had a Latino teacher, it explained a significant but modest amount of the variance in parent engagement. That said, sense of community was not found to be the mechanism explaining why Latino match was linked to parent

engagement. Implications for Head Start's recruitment and training of their teachers are further discussed.

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## The Influence of Cultural Match and Sense of Community on Latino School-Based Parent Engagement

### **Introduction**

The Latino population in the United States is the fastest growing demographic, accounting for more than half of the total growth in the population from 2000-2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). National education statistics indicate that Latino children as early as fourth grade score lower on reading, math, and science assessments compared to their White counterparts (Duncan & Magnuson, 2005; Snyder & Dillow, 2012). In addition, preschool and kindergarten aged Latino children showed a similar gap from their White peers on standardized assessment scores in general school readiness skills (Snyder & Dillow, 2011). While there have been slight increases over the last several decades in achievement scores for Latino children, the gap between Latino students and White students remains large. Moreover, later in their education, Latino students are three times more likely to drop out of high school than their White peers (Snyder & Dillow, 2011). One avenue to increase the performance of Latino students in education may be to increase parent engagement. Below is a brief review of the literature, which is presented at greater length in Appendix A.

### **Parent Engagement**

Parent engagement is conceptualized as the manner in which parents assist in their children's education. When parent engagement is increased it has been related to subsequent increases in both academic and socio-emotional outcomes throughout educational development (Barnard, 2004; Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, Cox, & Bradley, 2003). Parent engagement takes place both in the home and at school, and when parents

are involved, children have improved attendance, motivation toward learning, and overall academic performance (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2003). Jeynes (2003, 2005, 2007) conducted meta-analyses that identified family engagement as a protective factor for a variety of minority groups and also found that it was associated with improved academic outcomes. In his most recent meta-analysis examining home and school-based parent engagement, Jeynes (2007) was able to demonstrate an overall effect size on academic variables between .27 (small effect size) and .53 (large effect size), all reaching statistical significance at the .05 level. In addition, using longitudinal data over 16 years with a sample of minority children, Barnard (2004) found that high levels of elementary school parent engagement, both in home and at school, was associated with low rates of future dropout from school and increased rates of high school completion.

The majority of research has examined parent engagement at the elementary and high school level (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2003); however, parent engagement may be crucial in early childhood education and may serve as a protective factor for low-income children in urban poverty (McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004). Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, and Ortiz (2008) demonstrated that in preschool classrooms with a diverse population, parents who were rated by teachers as more involved had children with significantly higher standardized literacy scores after a two-year follow-up. Another study also found that early engagement, when the child is between ages two and five, leads to later sustained engagement and increased achievement after a five year follow up (measured using standardized assessments; McBride, Dyer, Liu, Brown, & Hong, 2009). Overall, research suggests that promoting parent engagement may help close the achievement gap between White children and

ethnic minority children (DeBlassie & DeBlassie, 1996; Jeynes, 2005; Wong & Hughes, 2006). The present study aims to identify effective ways to promote engagement of Latino populations in the school setting through examining the ecological context of Head Start programs and how characteristics of school-home cultural match may relate to parents' levels of engagement.

### **Parent Engagement and Latino Parents**

Current research has identified parent engagement within two categories: engagement in the home and engagement at school (McWayne, Campos, & Owsianik, 2008; Meidel & Reynolds, 1999). Recent research has included an examination of the quality of interactions between home and school as another influence on whether parents become engaged in their children's schooling (Epstein, 2002). Theoretical understandings of parent engagement have often utilized Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, focusing primarily on the mesosystem, or the interaction between the micro and macrosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Joyce Epstein (1987), one of the most influential researchers in the parent engagement field, identified five main types of parent engagement, which focused on interactions between the school and home: (a) parents fulfilling their obligations towards their children (i.e., providing food, clothing, shelter), (b) schools informing parents about basic school programs, (c) parents participating in activities at school (school-based engagement), (d) parents mediating home-based learning activities (home-based engagement), and (e) parent engagement in governance and advocacy at the school, district, and state levels. Epstein (2002) later added a sixth dimension, which addresses how the schools collaborate with the community (e.g., identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school

programs, family practices, and student learning and development). Epstein's current model of parent engagement; however, has failed to incorporate parent culture and the *congruence* between the parent and the school (Epstein, 2002). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997) model was one of the first to incorporate the match between parent engagement in activities and school expectations. Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues (2005) focused on the match between the school and the parent, but primarily through the examination of parents' perceptions of invitations for engagement from the school in general. This revised model, therefore considered congruence as facilitated by schools reaching out to parents; however, it does not address larger sociocultural issues especially relevant to ethnic minority parents (Hiatt-Michael, 2008). Ethnic minority parents may experience sociocultural issues that affect their engagement both at home and at school, which each relate to academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009).

While both school-based and home-based engagement are important in child development, certain groups exhibit more engagement at home or school. A majority of research on Latino parent engagement has examined the activities that parents engage in at home in order to prepare their children for school (Barrueco, Lopez, & Miles, 2007; Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Hong & Ho, 2005). European-American parents are more likely to focus on academics at home to support their child's learning versus focusing on activities that may promote social skills, a common focus of Latino parents (Durand, 2010). In addition, Latino parents monitor their children and engage in behavioral control at home more than other ethnic groups (Chao & Kanatsu, 2008), which has implications for their overseeing their children's academic progress. Latino

parents, however, are less likely to provide cognitively stimulating materials or to enroll their kids in enrichment activities outside of the school, compared to other ethnic groups (Cooper, Crosnoe, Suizzo, & Pituch, 2010). Compared to nonimmigrant groups, immigrant Latino parents often struggle with English proficiency and are less formally educated in general, making them less likely to participate in home-literacy activities (Cooper et al., 2010; Farver, Xu, Eppe, & Lonigan, 2006). A study has also shown that, in relation to other parent groups, Latino parents read less often with their children and own fewer reading materials (Raikes et al., 2006).

Although Latino parents may struggle to become engaged at home, home-based involvement has been shown to be the weakest link to academic achievement in two separate meta-analyses, especially in Elementary and Secondary education (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009). In contrast, school-based involvement (visiting the school, communication with the school, and volunteering in and attending events at school) or the school-home connection has been shown to be significantly and positively related to academic achievement across studies (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009). Within the school context; however, Latino parents are the least engaged when compared to other ethnic groups (Suizzo & Stapleton, 2007). Parents who do not speak English, or who report having a more “Latino” cultural orientation rate themselves as less engaged in school-based activities, which is corroborated by teacher-reported engagement (McWayne et al., 2008; Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryalls, & Nero, 2010; Wong & Hughes, 2006). Moreover, Latino parents who only speak Spanish are less likely to seek care at a preschool center and more likely to rely on larger family networks (Liang, Fuller, & Singer, 2000). Some research has suggested that the lack of Latino school-

based parent engagement is rooted not just in language but also in cultural differences (Ryan et al., 2010). Researchers in the field have stressed the need to understand the varying cultural beliefs regarding parent engagement for people from different countries, with the aim of increasing engagement for Latino parents (Hill & Torres, 2010; Lahaie, 2008). Little is known; however, about the impact of contextual factors that may limit Latino parent comfort with engagement. Research needs to offer more insight into ways that Latino parents' level of comfort with the school can be increased—one promising avenue may be through cultural match between themselves and their children's teachers.

### **Cultural Match**

Researchers have emphasized the importance of prioritizing language and cultural values when working with Latino populations (Bermudez & Marquez, 1996; Scribner, Young, & Pedroza, 1999). The construct, cultural match, however may potentially help deepen our understanding of the home-school connection and the lack of school-based parent engagement among Latinos. More specifically, understanding if a teacher is similar to and understanding of a parent's cultural norm of engagement, may increase parent comfort levels with the school and thus their quality of engagement. There is little agreement on a clear definition for this concept. Gloria and Robinson-Kurpius (1996) defined it as the congruence between one's personal cultural values and the cultural values held by the environment in which they are served. Meanwhile, Constantino, Malgady, and Primavera (2009) defined a lack of cultural match as the gap between the cultural competence of the practitioner and the cultural need of the client. Regardless of the definition, this construct has primarily been utilized in studies on minority undergraduate students' cultural match with their educational institution (Castillo et al.,

2006; Gloria, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005) and within higher education, medical, and clinical settings (Costantino et al., 2009; Schim & Doorenbos, 2010).

The idea of match between a school and parents has not been examined extensively; however, some studies have pointed to student and teacher match having a powerful effect on student development and academic outcomes. For example, when students match ethnically and culturally with their teachers, they have been found to perform better in school over a three-year period (Dee, 2004). Ryan and colleagues (2010) found that Latino parents who were more culturally identified with mainstream culture parents (measured by thinking in English, identifying as American, and holding similar values) were more involved than Latino parents who were less culturally identified with White parents. These findings emphasize the importance of cultural match through language use and ethnic identification.

The importance of being of the same ethnicity as those whom you teach may influence teacher perspectives as well. In phenomenological interviews, Latino educators have reported success within Latino communities based on their understanding of the community and context where they work, as well as their ability to speak both English and Spanish (Irizarry & Raible, 2011). Plata (2011) described cultural schemata that teachers use to address and assess students from culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse populations, asserting that those who have limited cross cultural knowledge are more likely to believe that they possess superior cultural values and beliefs than their students. Teachers have also been found to be unaware of the challenges related to the language barrier for Spanish-speaking Latino parents (Ortiz, 2004; Pena, 2000), these studies examined predominantly White teachers working with minority populations.



Other barriers that have been identified along with language difficulties were: poverty and immigrant status, parent's education level, attitudes towards school staff, differences between the home and school cultures, and discriminatory practices of schools (Bohon, Macpherson, & Atilas, 2005; Pena, 2000; Sosa, 1997; Tinkler, 2002; Waanders, Mendez, & Downer, 2007; Wong & Hughes, 2006). Taken together, these studies examining teacher and student cultural mismatch suggest that the congruence between the parents and the teacher may have powerful effects on parent engagement.

### **Language and Cultural Impacts on Parent Engagement**

Effective communication between both the school and the parent is necessary to develop the skills parents need to improve home education. Within the Latino population, language may be the most significant barrier to interfacing with English-dominant institutions (Sosa, 1997). For example, parents who speak a language other than English in Head Start populations have been found to be less involved in school based activities (McWayne et al., 2008). This suggests that parents who are language minority parents may be less involved in schools because of their inability to communicate effectively with school staff and engage in appropriate engagement activities.

There is a dearth of research on Latino parent engagement, language use, and ethnicity match. One exception is worth examining in further detail (Wong & Hughes, 2006). Wong and Hughes (2006) conducted a study with 481 diverse parents of 1<sup>st</sup> grade students (34% Latino) and 648 teachers. They collected measures of acculturation, language, and engagement. Their findings indicated that Latino parents had less communication with schools and felt less shared responsibility regarding their children's

education compared to their non-Latino counterparts. In addition, the Spanish-speaking population within this sample accounted for the highest between-group differences on multiple measures of parent engagement, indicating the greatest engagement gap was between Spanish-speaking parents and all other parents (Wong & Hughes, 2006). Moreover, compared to English-speaking Latino parents, those who spoke Spanish reported significantly lower shared responsibility in their child's education with the school, indicating language had a sizeable effect (Wong & Hughes, 2006). Sánchez, Plata, Grosso, and Leird (2010) argued that the use of the parents' language could be an effective tool in improving home-school collaboration, particularly through the use of colloquialisms and other culturally bound phrases.

Variations within culture and context influence a parents' level of comfort within the school setting. In Pyle, Bates, Greif, and Furlong's (2005) study they found that while Latino parents genuinely want to help their children, only half know how to find educational services for them. Moreno (1999) demonstrated that Latino parents who were more culturally aligned with the dominant culture better understood school expectations than those who were less culturally aligned. While there is little research in the area of school engagement for Latino preschool parents, even less research focuses on the importance of their levels of comfort with the school and understanding how efforts from the school at being culturally welcoming might address parent engagement. Head Start is a unique setting because it focuses on creating a comfortable place for parents and may help provide a welcoming atmosphere to language and cultural minority Latinos. Marcon (1999) demonstrated that Head Start parents were more involved than parents whose children attended other preschools, and their children performed better on

measures of adaptive skills. These findings underscore the impact that the structure of Head Start can have on parent engagement rates.

### **Sense of Community**

If cultural match is linked to higher parent engagement, then it is important to understand what process accounts for their relationship. In other words, it is worthy to identify a potential mediating mechanism between cultural match and parent engagement. Albeit somewhat speculative given the lack of prior research in this area, sense of community is one possible mediating mechanism. Social identity theory posits that people develop a social identity based on the overarching social organizations to which they belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Latino parents in particular report facing institutional boundaries as a result of their out-group affiliation resulting in a sense of being marginalized in schools, which leads to poorer academic achievement (Martinez, De Garmo, and Eddy, 2004). This highlights the potential powerful processes that could unfold if parents meet teachers whom they experience as “in group.” Thus, according to social identity theory, parents may strongly relate to someone of their background or ethnicity (Padilla & Perez, 2013). As a result of the affiliation solely on shared identity, parents who match culturally with their child’s teacher may develop a sense of community. In other words, the parents may feel a sense of shared norms and belonging given their identification with the teacher. In addition, when individuals are in the process of acculturating to a new country (Berry, 2005), culturally similar teachers may serve as a bridge to formal US schooling. In so doing, they may assist Latino parents in their acculturative process and facilitate their sense of being meaningfully connected to their child’s schooling.

One of the founding fathers of community psychology, Sarason (1974) stressed the importance of establishing a sense of community and wrote, “The absence or dilution of the psychological sense of community is the most destructive dynamic in the lives of people in our society” (p. 1). Sense of community literature indicates that the concept of community relates to subjective aspects of social interaction (Obst & White, 2004; Peterson, Speer, & Hughey, 2006; Peterson, Speer, & McMillan, 2008; Tartaglia, 2006). Sense of community is a valuable component of community life, and has been linked to increased psychological well-being (Pretty, Conroy, Dugay, Fowler, & Williams, 1996; Prezza, Amici, Roberti, & Tedeschi, 2001), perceptions of belonging and community connectedness (Sonn & Fisher, 1996), and participation in the community (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). Some contemporary case studies have examined how allowing parents to feel a part of the community and maintaining a positive and consistent focus on parents’ cultures increase parent engagement behaviors (De Gaetano, 2007; Jasis & Ordonez-Jasis, 2005). To date however, few studies examine the impact of sense of community within the school on parents’ level of engagement.

When parents develop a sense of community in schools it may reflect the positive relationships they have developed with the teachers. Affiliation and connection to teachers may, in fact, be facilitated by cultural match – given the match may increase affinity between the groups. Prior research has shown that the quality of parent-teacher relationships are linked to parent engagement. Nzinga-Johnson, Baker, and Auperlee (2009) found that the perception of the teacher-child relationship played a fundamental part in determining how teachers reported parent engagement in kindergarten; indicating that the more positive the parents perceived their relationship with teachers, the more

highly they were rated on engagement measures by their teachers. Studies have shown that the relationship between parents and teachers is also a very important contributor to a child's readiness and achievement (Jeynes, 2003; McBride et al, 2009; Miedel & Reynolds, 1999; Tan & Goldberg, 2009). Moreover, in a study examining a diverse Head Start sample, teacher ratings of their relationship with parents were significantly correlated with parent reports of school-based engagement (Waanders et al., 2007).

The relationship that is built between teachers and parents can create a sense of belongingness for parents within the school setting. For example, when administrators make greater efforts to promote sense of community through strengthening the communication between parents and teachers, parent engagement is increased (Endsley, Minish, & Zhou, 1993). Research has supported the importance of the school reaching out and inviting parents, demonstrating that school invitations are a strong predictor of increased engagement among low-income parents (Christenson, 2003; Marinez-Lora & Quintana, 2009; Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011). Marinez-Lora and Quintana (2009) showed that Latino parent perception of teacher invitations to engage in school predicted their engagement, while this was not predictive for African American preschool parents. These findings indicate that perceptions of their relationships with teachers is particularly salient for Latino parents, regarding how welcome they feel at their child's school. Early childhood administrators, including Head Start administrators, have reported more challenges in working with Latino populations than compared to White English-speaking parents, due to communication difficulties and a lack of bilingual staff (Buysse, Castro, West, & Skinner, 2005). Buysse and colleagues (2005) examined early childhood administrators' beliefs regarding the needs of Latino families; they found

that across all programs administrators endorsed a need of greater communication and cultural understanding between staff and parents. In other words, the staff felt a need to increase sense of belongingness and ultimately sense of community. This points to the salience of sense of community in school settings. Next, research needs to examine why sense of community may explain why cultural match is associated with higher parent engagement although this has yet to be empirically tested.

### **Summary**

Latino children face challenges in their academic careers in the United States indicated by high drop out rates and low achievement (Snyder & Dillow, 2012). The present study aims to identify effective ways to promote school-based engagement of Latino populations through examining how the cultural match between parent and preschool setting may influence parents' levels of engagement at school. Educational settings may need to consider the demographics of their language minority Latino parents and to emphasize the importance of the culture and language diversity of their parents. Unfortunately, aspects of parent culture typically are ignored or diminished (De Gaetano, 2007). Cultural match between teachers and parents has not been widely examined in education research, and it may provide some insight into why Latino parents appear less engaged in schools. If schools are able to match culturally with their parents, they may ascribe a stronger social identification with the teachers and staff with whom they interact (Tajfel & Turner, 1987). Sense of community may relate to cultural match, in that if parents match culturally with their teachers, they will be more likely to develop a social identity which encompasses their school and increase their sense of community in Head Start. In other words, higher sense of community may help explain the link between

cultural match and parental engagement (See Figure 1). The current study examines the links between cultural match, parent engagement, and sense of community through the following four research questions:

**Research question 1:** Does teacher and parent higher cultural match (measured by generational status, country of origin, and language preference at home and school) predict higher parental engagement ratings by teachers in the school, compared to lower cultural match between teachers and parents?

**Research Question 2:** Is cultural match between teachers and parents associated with higher parent–reported school sense of community?

**Research Question 3:** Does parent-reported school sense of community predict higher parental engagement, as rated by teachers?

**Research Question 4:** If the above relationships are present, does school sense of community help explain or mediate the relationship between cultural match and parent engagement?

**Hypothesis 1:** It was anticipated that Latino Head Start parents would be more highly involved in their child’s education if the level of cultural match was high between parents and teachers, measured by generational status, country of origin, and language preference at home and school.

**Hypothesis 2:** It was anticipated that Latino Head Start parents would rate the sense of school community higher if there was a higher level of cultural match between parents and teachers.

**Hypothesis 3:** It was anticipated that parents who rated higher school sense of community would be rated by their teachers as more highly involved in their child's education.

**Hypothesis 4:** Finally, if the other hypotheses were confirmed, it was anticipated that high school sense of community would be predictive of parent engagement and would account for the relationship between cultural match and parent engagement, suggesting it serves a mediational role.

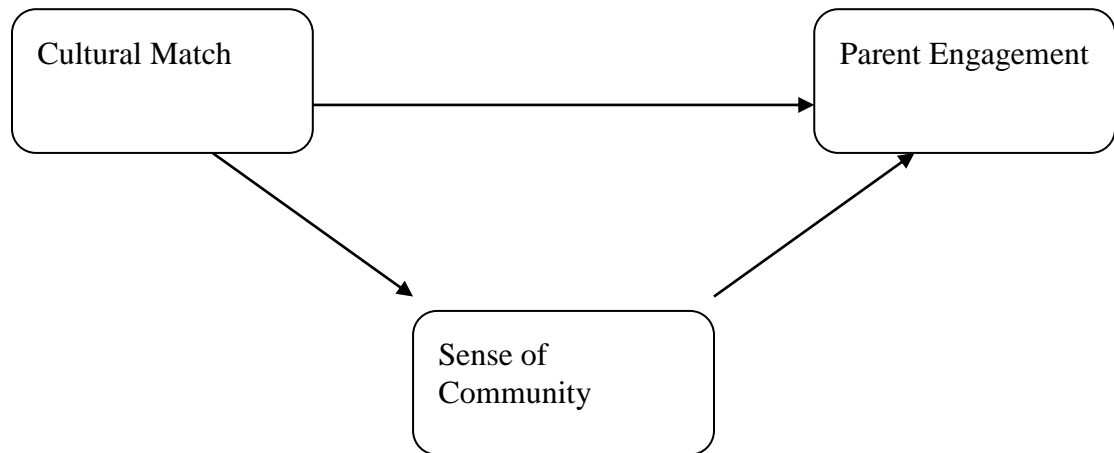


Figure 1. Proposed mediation model.

## Methods

The data that was used in this study was collected in a larger study, the Latino Family Involvement Project, at New York University. The larger study was funded by an NICHD R03 grant and by an Administration of Children and Families (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services) Head Start University English Language Learners Partnership Grant awarded to the original principal investigators, Dr. Christine McWayne and Dr. Gigliana Melzi (McWayne, Melzi, Schick, Kennedy, & Mundt, in press).



**Participants**

Participants in the present study included parents and teachers who were drawn from New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Head Start programs as part of the larger study, the Latino Family Involvement Project. Centers were selected to participate based on the high enrollment of Latino children (at least 65%) as well as representation of subgroups of Latino populations throughout NYC. Overall, nine Head Start centers participated in the larger study. One thousand one hundred and forty three parents participated in the study. The 1143 primary caregivers participated in the study were served in 38 classrooms throughout 9 centers, and all 38 teachers of those classrooms agreed to be involved in the study.

**Procedures**

Families and teachers were asked to participate in the spring and summer of 2010. Researchers presented the purpose of the study to families at meetings within Head Start centers that had enrollment of over 65% Latino students. Interested families signed parental consent forms for themselves and their child and completed survey materials. Teachers were asked to be involved in the study and provide formal consent. They completed survey data and recorded parent engagement in the classroom. Parents completed both a demographic questionnaire and the Parent Satisfaction with Educational Experiences Scale. As compensation for their time, parents were provided with a \$20 gift card. Overall, 65% or more of Latino parents with children enrolled in each center participated in the current study, which is an adequate response rate (see Appendix C for percent participation for each site ). Teachers also completed ratings on a demographic questionnaire as well as parent engagement checklists and questionnaires for a subsample

of 300 of the participating parents. The 300 parents and children who made up the subsample were chosen randomly to be rated by teachers regarding their parent engagement. Teachers were asked to participate and were provided a \$20 gift card for new educational materials per child completed, for the class. In an effort to minimize missing data, parents were contacted by phone to complete missing items, and face-to-face contact was made with teachers in order to correct any missing teacher data.

### **Measures**

**Parent and teacher characteristics.** Parent demographic questionnaires included: primary caregivers' age, level of education, employment status, marital and residence status, household size, birth order of target child, primary language spoken in the home, mother's and father's racial and ethnic group identification, country of origin, and number of years in the U.S. In addition, teachers filled out a similar questionnaire regarding their gender, age, ethnicity, race, years teaching, their country of origin, number of years in the U.S., and classroom characteristics (e.g., number of children in the classroom, the language spoken in the classroom, and their education level, see Appendix B).

**Cultural match.** To determine the cultural match between teachers and parents, demographic data was utilized including: immigration status (e.g., whether the parent was first generation or second generation and if teachers identified the same), whether the teacher was Latino or not (e.g., if the teacher identified as Latino or not, not based on country of origin), and the language spoken in the home as compared to the language spoken in the classroom (e.g., parents speaking Spanish in the home and teachers using Spanish in the classroom). First, cultural match was measured using the three

aforementioned variables separately and entered into statistical models as three dummy-coded variables (match = 1, mismatch = 0). For instance, when parents spoke Spanish in the home and the teacher spoke Spanish in the classroom, this was considered a language match (1). To determine immigration status, an individual's age at immigration (i.e., those who came before age 16 were considered acculturated to U.S. culture and those coming after 16 were not) determined if they were coded as a 1 or a 0. Given a lack of research on how to measure cultural match with an early childhood sample, our goal was to identify which of the three measures had the greatest predictive validity, and was, thus, the most appropriate to include in the statistical models.

**School sense of community.** Parents' sense of community was measured using the Parent Satisfaction with Educational Experiences Scale (PSEE; Fantuzzo, Perry, & Childs, 2006). Parents provided their responses to this 12-item parent-report measure of satisfaction with their early childhood program (See Appendix B). Items were created through focus groups with parents who had children in early childhood care. The focus groups were transcribed and parent responses were utilized to create items that represented areas of parent satisfaction within the school settings. The resulting items include reports of satisfaction with: volunteering in the classroom, planning classroom activities, teachers sending notes home, having conferences and telephone conversations with the teacher regarding children's educational progress, attending parent workshops offered at the program, and having contact with school administrators. Items were rated on a four-point Likert-type scale (Very Dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Satisfied, and Very Satisfied). With a previous sample, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis identified a 3-factor structure: Teacher contact experiences ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ), classroom contact

experiences ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ), and school contact experiences ( $\alpha = 0.75$ ; Fantuzzo et al., 2006). Principle component factor analysis of the current sample revealed only one factor ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ). The factor loading accounted for 54% of the variance (factor loadings ranged from .431 to .630). Given the loading onto one factor and how much variance it accounted for, statistical models used the means of all the items as one scale.

**School-based parent engagement.** Each teacher responded to a 4-item Likert-type scale regarding each family's level of school-based engagement (See Appendix B). Ratings included school-based academic activities, school-based social activities, out of school activities, and initiation of contact about their child's academic progress (i.e., how involved is/are the parent(s) in school-based academic activities such as, school/parents meetings, volunteering in classroom, reading to class? As well as out-of-school activities like helping with homework and projects?). The measure was developed for this study as a way to determine parent engagement levels as rated by teachers. The mean of the scores on this scale were utilized as a composite score of parent engagement. The measure was created for the study and, thus, no previous reliability and validity information was available. Preliminary reliability testing was done for the measure of parent engagement. The global rating of parent engagement had appropriate reliability ( $\alpha = .79$ ).

**Missing data.** Efforts were made during the data collection process to recover any data from parents if they had missed an item. Initial descriptive statistics indicated that one teacher did not provide her age at immigration to the United States. Therefore, there was missing data for that classroom and the four parents who were served by that teacher. Ultimately, the variable, immigration match, was not used in the analysis;

therefore those parents did not have to be removed from the sample. No other missing data were present in the independent or dependent variables.

### **Data Analytic Plan**

Descriptive statistics were examined using means, ranges, and standard deviations. Pearson correlations assessed the relationship between each of the dependent and independent variables.

**Hierarchical linear modeling.** There was nesting in the data, given that teachers were grouped in centers and parents were grouped in teachers' classrooms. Due to the presence of nesting within the sample, Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) was required to examine the relationships among teacher and parent variables while accounting for the grouping of parents in teachers' classrooms (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Given the small sample of centers, and thus a lack of statistical power, a three level analysis was not possible. Instead, HLM analyses were done with a two level model with teachers at level 2 and parents at level 1.

HLM models were examined to determine the proportion of variance accounted for at the classroom or teacher (level 2) and at the parent (level 1). First, the unconditional model in HLM was examined. The unconditional model is a two level model with only teacher ratings of parent engagement as the outcome variable without predictors or controls at either level. From this model, the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was calculated, or the proportion of between teacher variance (i.e.,  $\sigma^2_{u0}$ ) to the total variance (i.e.,  $\sigma^2_{u0} + \sigma^2_u$ ). Then, following Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediational steps, the relationships between cultural match, sense of community, and

parent engagement were examined to determine if sense of community mediated the relationship between cultural match and parent engagement (See Figure 2).

To examine if a significant relationship between cultural match and sense of community existed, both were entered into HLM models (Model 1, Pathway A, Figure 2). Specifically, first an unconditional HLM model was run with sense of community as the outcome variable. Next, cultural match was included as a predictor of parent-reported sense of community at level 1. Finally, once all of these relationships were examined, cultural match and sense of community were entered together as predictors of parent engagement (Model 2). Mediation would have been present if the relationship between cultural match and parent engagement was non-significant, after sense of community was also entered into the model as a predictor (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

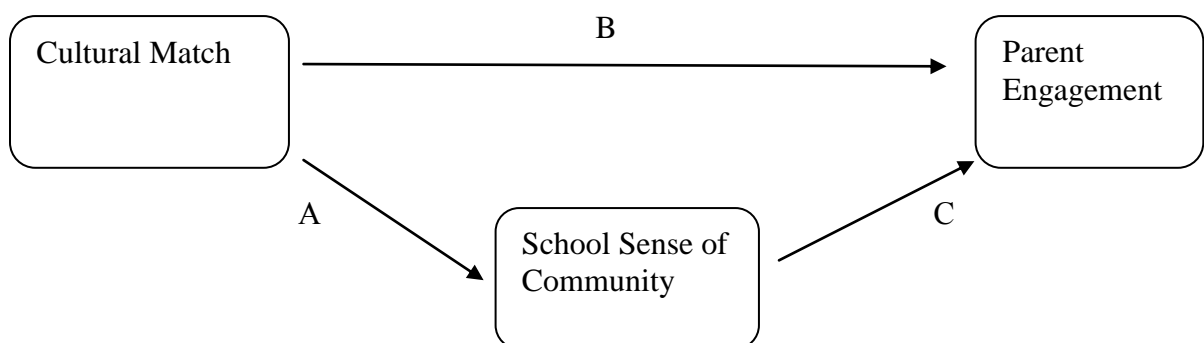


Figure 2. Mediation Model

Model 3 tested the unconditional model of the analysis including teacher ratings of parent engagement as the outcome variable without any predictors or controls present. Next, model 4 tested the pathway from cultural match to parent engagement (Pathway B, Figure 2). Model 5 was run to test the link between parent-reported sense of community and teacher report of parent engagement (Pathway C, Figure 2). Specifically, the HLM

model included parent-reported sense of community as a predictor of teacher report of parent engagement at level 1.

Level 2 in all conditional models included teachers' formal education as a control variable. Previous studies have demonstrated that teachers with more formal education rate parent engagement differently than those with less, therefore, teacher education was controlled for in all the analyses (Garinger & McBride, 1995; McBride & Lin, 1996). In addition, the unconditional model and the conditional models were compared to determine the proportion of variance that was explained, which provides a measure of effect size. The analyses utilized fixed effects for level 1 predictors. It was anticipated that the relationship between sense of community (level 1), cultural match (level 1), and parent engagement would not vary by classroom given no prior theory or research supported such variation.

Preliminary testing determined the best variables to measure cultural match. Upon initial analysis, it was discovered that both immigration match (similarity in immigration status), and language match were not significant when predicting parent engagement. In contrast, Latino match, or the teacher's identification as Latino, was the only match variable that was a significant predictor of parent engagement. When Latino match and language match were included as predictors of parent engagement, Latino match was reduced to a trend ( $p = .09$ ). Therefore, for the sake of parsimony, Latino match was kept in the final models and the other two cultural match variables were removed.

The final model predicting teacher-reported parent engagement is as follows:

Level 1 model: Parent Engagement =  $\beta_{0j} + \beta_{2j}(\text{Parent Education}) + \beta_{3j}(\text{Sense of$

$$\text{Community}_{ij}) + \beta_{ij}(\text{Latino Match}_{ij})$$

Level 2 model:  $\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} * (\text{Teacher Education level}) + u_{0j}$

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics of Parents' Behavior and Center Experience

On average, teachers rated parents as somewhat engaged in their child's schooling ( $M = 2.35$ ,  $SD = .82$ ). Parents rated each Head Start centers' sense of community by responding to a 12-item scale. The scale ascertained how satisfied parents were with certain aspects of the center on a 4-point scale (1 = Very Dissatisfied, 4 = Very Satisfied). Overall, parents reported that they were *satisfied* with sense of community at their center ( $M = 3.37$ ,  $SD = .52$ ).

Table 1.

#### *Parent engagement and sense of community*

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Parent Engagement:				
Teacher-report	2.35	.82	1.00	4.00
Sense of Community	3.37	.52	1.00	4.00

The means of parent engagement and sense of community variables by center are presented in Table 2, indicating some variability by center. There was greater variability between centers on their ratings of parent engagement (range = 2.00 – 3.07,  $SD = .37$ ) than between center ratings of sense of community (range = 3.22 – 3.54,  $SD = .11$ ).



Table 2.

*Parent engagement and sense of community means by center*

Site	Sense of Community Mean	Parent Engagement Mean
Center 1	3.48	2.00
Center 2	3.42	2.43
Center 4	3.22	3.07
Center 5	3.54	2.56
Center 6	3.35	2.78
Center 7	3.38	2.34
Center 8	3.33	2.11

Descriptive statistics for both parent and teacher characteristics are presented in Table 3. Fifty one percent of parents spoke the same language at home as the language spoken in their child's classroom. Forty five percent of parents reported arriving in the United States within the same time period as their teachers reported arriving in the country. Finally, 65% of teachers identified as Latino, which means 65% of parents matched on ethnicity with their teachers. Of the complete teacher sample, 8% had completed some college, 49% had their bachelor's degree, and 43% had received a graduate or professional degree. The parent sample was 100% Latino, however, Latinos are a heterogeneous group. The majority of our sample (52%) originated in Mexico. The next largest countries of origin were the United States (16%) and the Dominican Republic (15%).

Table 3.

*Cultural match, parent characteristics, and teacher characteristics*

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Cultural Match Between Teacher and Parent</b>		
Language Match <sup>a</sup>	149	51
No Language Match	145	49
Immigration Match	131	45
No Immigration Match	159	55
Latino Match	191	65
No Latino Match	103	35
<b>Parent Characteristics</b>		
Country of Origin		
Mexico	151	52
U.S.A.	47	16
Dominican Republic	45	15
Ecuador	27	9
Puerto Rico	14	5
El Salvador	4	1
Other	6	2
Parent Education		
Less than Elementary School	31	10
Less than High School	130	44
High School Diploma or GED	64	22
More than High School	69	24
<b>Teacher Characteristics</b>		
Teacher Education		
Some College, or 2-year college degree	3	8
Bachelor's Degree	18	49
Post-College Graduate or Professional Degree	16	43

Note. <sup>a</sup> Language match = When parents spoke the same language at home that teachers spoke in class; Immigration Match = When teachers identified as the same generational status or not; Latino Match = When teachers Identified as Latino or not.

## Correlations

Pearson correlations among the variables of interest are presented in Table 4.

Sense of community was not correlated with the teachers' report of parent engagement ( $r = .08$ ;  $p = .16$ ). In fact, sense of community was not significantly correlated with any of the independent variables. In contrast, when teachers spoke the parents' primary language ( $r = .15$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and identified as Latino ( $r = .23$ ;  $p < .01$ ) they were more likely to rate parents as being highly engaged. In addition, teachers who had attained more education were more likely to report parents as having greater engagement ( $r = .15$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and more likely to speak the same language as the parents they served ( $r = .15$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Parents who had attained more education were more likely to be rated by their teachers as being more engaged ( $r = .21$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Finally, teachers with more education were less likely to be Latino than teachers with less education ( $r = -.20$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

Table 4.

### *Intercorrelations among parent and teacher variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Parent Engagement	--						
2. Sense of Community	.08	--					
3. Language Match	.15*	.05	--				
4. Immigration Match	.02	-.01	-.09	--			
5. Latino Match	.23**	-.32	.36**	-.42	--		
6. Teacher Education	.15*	-.05	.15**	-.04	-.20**	--	
7. Parent Education	.21**	.12	.10	.12*	-.02	.10	--

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ ,

### Findings from Hierarchical Linear Modeling

**Sense of community.** In order to first determine if Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediational model would be appropriate for this analysis, the relationship between cultural match and sense of community was examined (pathway A, Figure 2). The unconditional model showed that less than 1% of variance for sense of community could be attributed to teachers or a classroom effect ( $ICC = 0.00$ ; See Table 5, model 1). In other words, parents did not significantly vary in their reported sense of community across teachers.

In model 2, parent level of education was significantly related to parent ratings of sense of community ( $\beta_{1j} = .06, p = .02$ ). In model 3, parent level of education remained significantly related to parent ratings of sense of community ( $\beta_{1j} = .06, p = .03$ ). Parent and teacher Latino match (e.g., Latino or not) was not significantly related to parent-reported sense of community ( $\beta_{1j} = -.05, p = .47$ ). Teachers' level of education was also not significantly related to parents' report of sense of community ( $\gamma_{01} = -.05, p = .25$ ). Moreover, there was no reduction in unexplained variance from model 1 to model 3. Therefore, the mediational model was not supported by the analyses and the next analytic steps to test mediation were no longer warranted.

Table 5.

*HLM analysis with parent-reported sense of community as the level 1 outcome*

Measure	Model 1 Estimate (SE)	Model 2 Estimate (SE)	Model 3 Estimate (SE)
Teacher-level predictors			
Teacher Education $\gamma_{01}$		-.05(.04)	-.06(.05)
Parent-level predictors <sup>a</sup>			
Latino Match $\beta_{2j}$			-.05(.06)
Parent Education $\beta_{1j}$		.06*(.02)	.06*(.03)
Random effects			
Teacher level $\sigma^2$	.00	.00	.00
Parent level $\sigma^2$	.27	.27	.27
Reduced variance between teachers	--	0%	0%
Reduced variance within classrooms	--	0%	0%

Note. <sup>a</sup> Parents nested in teachers' classrooms\*  $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Parent engagement.** HLM was also conducted using the outcome variable of teachers' reports of parent engagement in school. In the unconditional model, between teacher variation in ratings of parent engagement accounted for 25% of the total variance in parent engagement ( $ICC = .25$ , See table 6, model 4). In model 5, teacher education and parent education were entered as covariates. Together, they accounted for 2% of variance in between-teacher parent engagement. Neither parent education nor teacher education were significantly related to parent engagement ( $\beta_{1j} = .09$ ,  $p = .08$ ;  $\gamma_{01} = -.16$ ,  $p = .21$ ).

In model 6, sense of community was added as a predictor of parent engagement. Adding sense of community to the model accounted for 1% less of the between teacher variance in teachers' ratings of parent engagement when taking into account teacher education and parent education. In addition, sense of community was significantly related to parent engagement ( $\beta_{2j} = .15, p = .02$ ). In other words, parents who were more likely to rate the center as having high sense of community were served by teachers' who rated them as more engaged, compared to parents who reported a lower sense of community.

In the final model, model 7, Latino match was added as a predictor of parent engagement. Including this in the model accounted for 4% of the between teacher variance in teachers' ratings of parent engagement when taking into account teacher education, parent education, and sense of community. Latino match was significantly related to parent engagement ( $\beta_{3j} = .37, p = .03$ ). When Latino parents had a Latino teacher, they tended to be seen by the teacher as more engaged. In addition, the significant positive correlation between sense of community ratings and teachers' ratings of parent engagement remained when accounting for Latino match, parent education, and teacher education ( $\beta_{1j} = .16, p = .02$ ).

Table 6.  
*HLM analysis with teacher-reported parent engagement as the level 1 outcome*

Measure	Model 4 Estimate (SE)	Model 5 Estimate (SE)	Model 6 Estimate (SE)	Model 7 Estimate (SE)
Teacher-level predictors				
Teacher Education $\gamma_{01}$		.16(.14)	.16 (.12)	.22(.13)
Parent-level predictors <sup>a</sup>				
Latino Match $\beta_{3j}$				.37*(.17)
Sense of Community $\beta_{2j}$			.15*(.07)	.16*(.07)
Parent Education $\beta_{1j}$		.09(.04)	.08(.04)	.08(.05)
Random effects				
Teacher level $\sigma^2$	.25***	.23***	.24***	.21***
Parent level $\sigma^2$	.41	.41	.41	.41
Reduced variance between teachers	--	2%	1%	4%
Reduced variance within classrooms	--	0%	0%	0%

Note. <sup>a</sup> Parents nested in teachers' classrooms

$p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

## Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine whether teacher and parent cultural match and parent sense of community related to teacher ratings of parent engagement. Specifically, the study aimed to determine if parent-reported sense of community was related to parent engagement, and if this relationship mediated the relationship between cultural match and parent engagement. The mediational hypothesis

was not supported entirely by the analyses, but several interesting findings emerged. First, teacher report of parent engagement varied a great deal across classroom (i.e., 25% of the variance in parental engagement was between teachers). Understanding why teachers rate parents differently is a worthy area of further study because it may relate to how teachers view parents based on ethnicity and cultural match, and may relate to how they create a welcoming atmosphere for their parents. Greater knowledge of this phenomenon may help increase educator awareness about what they bring to interactions with parents. Second, both Latino match and parent-reported sense of community were positively and significantly related to parent involvement, as rated by teachers above and beyond the effect of parent education. This means that when Latino parents had Latino teachers for their children and when Latino parents reported a greater sense of community, teachers tended to see them as more engaged regardless of parent education levels. The measurement of sense of community and parent engagement utilized different informants (i.e. parents and teachers), which increases the rigor of the findings by reducing shared method variance. Third, when the child's teacher was Latino (Latino match), significant, albeit modest, variance in parent engagement (by classroom) was explained (4%). Finally, descriptive statistics also revealed some interesting trends related to teacher and parent language use and teacher ratings of parent engagement.

### **Latino Match and Parent Engagement**

The HLM analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between teacher ratings of parent engagement and their Latino match with those parents. A number of questions can be raised about the significant relationship between ethnic match and parent engagement. Is it possible that Latino teachers are seeing more forms of parent



engagement than their non-Latino counterparts? Or, could it be possible that Latino teachers have positive expectations related to parents with a similar ethnic background, whereas non-Latino teachers have lower expectations? Are recently immigrated Latino parents expanding their social identity to all Latinos (despite differences in country of origin)? Does this expanded social identity then lead parents to feel an affinity with the Latino teachers and, thus, engage more in their children's classrooms? Finally, are Latino teachers simply better at engaging Latino parents than other teachers?

One way of understanding these findings is to consider teachers' personal cultural schemata and how this influences their approach to parents (Plata, 2011). Some teachers may have limited knowledge of other cultures and thus view and/or rate parent engagement behaviors differently. Furthermore, Latino teachers may feel more efficacious serving Latino parents due to a better understanding of the context in which parents live as well as to greater exposure and proficiency in Spanish (Irizarry & Raible, 2011). In other words, teachers' cultural competence as a result of being Latino may help them facilitate parent engagement in their children's schooling. Moreover, Latino teachers who possess greater cultural competence may build greater rapport and comfort among parents. A recent study has demonstrated that the level of comfort between teachers and parents is related to parent engagement (Mendez, Westerberg, & Thibeault, 2013). Social Identity theory may also explain why Latino teachers rated parents as more engaged (Tajfel & Turner, 1987). Teachers and parents may view each other as part of the same in-group because of their identification as Latino, and thus lead to more comfort and less perceived racism and marginalization (Martinez, De Garmo, & Eddy, 2004). Finally, in this study teachers rated aspects of parent engagement that may leave room for

interpretation (i.e., volunteering in the classroom, teacher-parent meetings). For instance, some teachers may have viewed parent volunteering as solely comprised of helping educate the children, while other teachers may have viewed a wider range of activities as “volunteering.” To some teachers, assistance in cleaning and maintaining the classroom could be viewed as a form of volunteering, instead of engagement in their child’s schooling. Future studies could examine if engagement is comprised of varying activities, depending on the cultural lens of the teacher. In addition, further studies should build on the recent work of McWayne and colleagues (in press) to clarify the specific in school activities Latino parents endorse as key to their school engagement.

Latino match was determined when a teacher identified as Latino or not. Sixty-five percent of the sample had teachers who identified as Latino. Of the three variables measuring cultural match, Latino match had the most predictive power with regard to parent engagement. Furthermore, when language match was included in the statistical model, Latino match remained in the expected direction but at a trend level ( $p = .09$ ). This may indicate that while language is salient for communication and engagement (Wong & Hughes, 2006), it is important to recognize the cultural competence goes beyond language match. A teacher may speak Spanish to their Spanish-speaking parents, but not demonstrate cultural competence.

In addition, the correlational analysis revealed that teacher education was significantly *negatively* related to Latino match ( $r = -.20, p = <.01$ ); however, teacher education was also significantly *positively* correlated to parent engagement ( $r = .15; p < .05$ ). In other words, Latino teachers were less likely to be educated. In contrast, those with more education were more likely to rate parents as highly engaged. This raises an

interesting dilemma for hiring decisions within Head Start. Clearly, both education and identifying as Latino are valuable with regard to parent engagement. In this sample, Latino teachers compared to non-Latino teachers had less education. Head Start currently offers loan forgiveness and other programs that aid current teachers in gaining more education. Further efforts should be made to develop structures within high Latino areas to educate and promote Latino teachers in order to have more highly educated, culturally competent, Latino teachers to help engage the Latino parents of the community.

### **School Sense of Community and Parent Engagement**

Research suggests that when schools make efforts to involve parents it is predictive of parent engagement within that school (Walker et al., 2011). Involving schools may actively foster sense of community. The current study showed that sense of community had a positive and significant relationship with parent engagement. This is notable because previous research has examined observable behaviors (i.e. invitations, teacher-parent relationship; McBride et al., 2009; Walker et al., 2011) versus the current study's method utilizing a measure of parent ratings of sense of community. This study captured parents' sense of community related to a broad spectrum of school-based experiences (How satisfied parents were with: workshops and training opportunities, telephone conversations with the teacher, contact with school principals or administrators, involvement in classroom activities, etc.). This provides insight into the broad scope of activities that may foster sense of community and relate to parent engagement. Is it possible that parents simply need to feel more satisfied with the school in order to become engaged? Recent research has corroborated this concept, finding that

when Latino parents are comfortable communicating with the school, they become more involved (Mendez et al., 2013). Future research might also explore whether parents and teachers respond positively to stronger and more collaborative leadership from administrators who build sense of community. Previous research has indicated that administrators who report greater challenges when working with Latino populations, also report fewer strategies for engaging their parents (Buysse et al., 2005). This highlights the value of having a strong and strategic administrator to foster engagement practices among parents and staff. Endsley and colleagues (1993) showed that administrators who support engagement by stressing it among staff, employed staff who demonstrated improved interaction with parents and increased parental engagement. Another area of future research is a close examination of the quality of parent-teacher relationships and how that affects sense of community and parent engagement. The quality of the parent-teacher relationship may be relevant to sense of community due to its link with how teachers view parental effort in becoming engaged at school (Nzinga-Johnson et al., 2009) as well as its contribution to younger children's readiness and achievement (McBride et al., 2009; Tan & Goldberg, 2009).

Finally, an additional unexpected finding emerged related to sense of community. Whether the teacher reported themselves as Latino or not, did not impact parent ratings of sense of community. More specifically, teachers did not systematically vary in their parent reported sense of community, as no classroom effect was found. It may be that parents' experience of community is related to other factors, beyond the cultural or ethnic make-up of the teachers of their children. Sense of community extends beyond the classroom, and this may have accounted for the lack of variation between teachers for

each center. Measurement of sense of *classroom* community would have brought more precision to the study in its closer alignment with the classroom measure of cultural match. Future research should identify what characteristics of teachers and centers influence parent ratings of sense of community within their child's school.

### **Cultural Match and Sense of Community**

The study intended to determine if sense of community mediated the relationship between cultural match and parent engagement. In order to establish this relationship it would have been necessary to first determine if there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Analyses revealed that neither related to one another, which limited our analyses but also yielded some interesting results. The study hypothesized that sense of community would mediate the relationship between cultural match and parent engagement. The findings did not support the hypothesized link. It may be the case that the measure of "sense of community" was not culturally valid with a Latino population. Previous studies that determined the scales reliability and validity were conducted using a sample of African American Head Start parents (Fantuzzo, Perry, and Childs, 2006). Moreover, the construct of sense of community might itself be culturally laden. For example, membership on the basis of beliefs, religion, socioeconomic status, may affect how people conceptualize and develop a sense of community. It is open to question whether Latino and non-Latino parents might interpret the following items differently: How satisfied are you with: level of parent participation in decision making for the school or program, parent involvement in planning classroom activities, and parent workshops or training opportunities offered at my child's school. Parents who are recent immigrants to the United States, may respond to and interpret these questions very

differently than fully acculturated Latino parents in the U.S. For example, they may view their opportunities to be involved in the school as meeting their expectations or not, based on the cultural norms relating to the amount of participation they should engage in.

Future research might use culturally competent methods in measurement development through ground-up development of what comprises sense of community for Latino parents (e.g., focus groups).

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Limitations of the study include the small sample of centers used for the analysis. With only seven centers contributing to the study, it was not possible to do a 3-level HLM model to test between-center differences. Understanding a between-center difference may help identify center characteristics that contribute to variation in ratings of parent engagement and sense of community. Descriptive statistics indicated that sense of community was relatively similar across centers (range = 3.22 – 3.54,  $SD = .11$ ) while parent engagement had a much wider range (range = 2.00 – 3.07,  $SD = .37$ ). One possible explanation for the difference between center ratings of parent engagement may be differences in administrator attitudes towards parent engagement as a whole. The administrative leadership may promote staff's parent-friendly views and result in improved parent engagement (Endsley et al., 1993). Another possible explanation to explore relates to possible center differences among teachers' affective relationships with parents. For example, some teachers, more than others, may have higher expectations for their parents or they may more skillfully communicate in a respectful and warm manner with their parents. These teacher characteristics have been demonstrated as improving student achievement and engagement and may provide a useful avenue of inquiry into

affective teacher characteristics related to parent engagement (Pianta, Hamre, Hayes, Mintz, & LaParo, 2008)

The study was also limited by the way in which sense of community was measured and how it was applied in the analyses. The sense of community measure was originally designed to obtain a global understanding of the sense of community within the *center* versus within the *classroom*. It is possible that variability in ratings of sense of community may not reflect between-teacher effects but reflect between-center effects. Sense of community also has varying definitions and can be measured many ways. For instance, much of the research focuses on invitations to participate, and parent-teacher relationships (McBride et al., 2009; Walker et al., 2011). The current study examined sense of community derived from parent ratings of a variety of characteristics including: the parents' feelings that they are being asked to be involved in classroom activities, being treated in a culturally sensitive way, and being allowed to engage in decisions affecting the school. Future research needs to further refine and develop the construct within education settings in order to more accurately and precisely evaluate the link between sense of community in the classroom and parent engagement.

The measurement of Latino match also had limitations in the current study. Latino match is descriptive of teacher and parent ethnicity without identifying underlying cultural processes. Therefore, it is not clear exactly what about parents and teachers being Latino is influencing teacher ratings of parent engagement. This may require further inquiry into the aspects that make a person identify as being a part of one ethnic group, whether it be related to immigration experience, class in the sending country, or internalized experiences of racism and discrimination. Further research would do well to

conduct more qualitative interviews and focus groups with parents to derive a stronger sense of what being Latino means to all people labeled as such, and thus provide social science with a better understanding of how to measure this experience. In addition, research should be cautious given that the heterogeneity of the Latino population in the United States lends itself to oversimplification of a very diverse group for the sake of statistical analyses. Continued research in this area should strive to accurately and precisely measure cultural variations, while accounting for the richness of all Latino cultures.

Finally, despite a reduction in variance in our HLM model when including Latino match and ratings of sense of community, 96% of the variance in teacher report of parent engagement remained unexplained. It is possible that there are predictors of engagement that this study did not measure that could better explain why some parents were more engaged than others. Some parents in Head Start may be employed during school hours and thus unable to engage in school activities. Some may also struggle with other socio-cultural factors, which make them less available, such as stressors related to poverty. It may also be possible that teachers' expectations of engagement are simply too high considering the current economic issues that influence low-income families. In sum, there is a lot more to understand about why teachers are rating parent engagement differently across Head Start classrooms.

### **Summary and Implications**

Parent engagement is a crucial mechanism by which low-income minority parents can improve the academic achievement of their children (Jeynes, 2003, 2005, 2007). Recent longitudinal studies have demonstrated how parent engagement, and resulting



student motivation, in preschool and Head Start can account for over 50% of the variance in academic achievement by the 6<sup>th</sup> grade (Hayakawa, Englund, Warner-Richter, & Reynolds, 2013). This emphasizes the value of developing a better understanding of how to engage parents in early childhood education and most importantly, in Head Start. Moreover, research has focused on home-based engagement among Latinos, while the studies that have examined school-based engagement highlight how Latinos are less engaged in school without explaining why this occurs. The current study hoped to identify mechanisms that influence school-based parent engagement for Latino parents. Findings provided some evidence that the Latino match between a teacher and parent is particularly salient for how teachers rate parents' engagement in their child's education. In addition, the study found that sense of community was positively related to teacher ratings of parent engagement. While these two variables did not account for a great deal of the variance in parent engagement at the classroom level, they still provide insight into how practitioners may promote and develop parent engagement in early childhood settings.

Head Start is a unique institution that provides a number of opportunities to parents that are otherwise unavailable in traditional public school. One of the strengths of Head Start is its focus on promoting parent engagement through workshops for parents as well as invitations for them to participate in class activities with their children. Head Start has been shown to improve engagement among parents when compared to other preschool settings (Marcon, 1999). Head Start also aims to promote parent learning about home-based activities to provide strong educational environments for their

children. Latino Head Start parents, however, continue to be engaged less than others, particularly those who speak a language other than English (McWayne et al., 2008).

The current study provides a rationale for considering Latino match and sense of community, as possible levers to promote parent engagement. Administrators might promote sense of community among parents through outreach programs, in school activities for parents, and through focus on parent-teacher relationships. These efforts may help offer a sense of inclusion and ownership, which will then foster a positive frame from which to view schools overtures for participation in the future. With regard to cultural match, it should be stressed that Head Start and public schools in general should do more to develop a pipeline of Latino teachers who serve the growing Latino population. Moreover, as Head Start continues efforts to educate their staff, they might also include training to help their educators become adept at facilitating Latino parent engagement in school. This is especially imperative given the shifting demographics of our nation, with Latinos being the fastest growing population in our nation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

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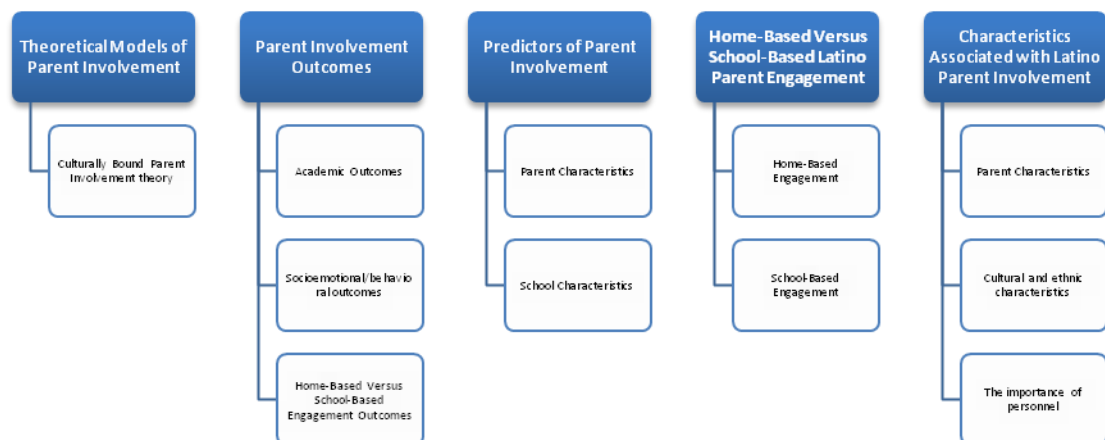
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## Appendix A

### Parent Engagement

#### Introduction

Parents support their children's education through their engagement in their children's academic development. Research highlights that parent engagement is related to improved outcomes for children no matter their age or socioeconomic status. (Barnard, 2004; Farver, Xu, Eppe, & Lonigan, 2006; Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, Cox, & Bradley, 2003). Parent engagement is divided into two areas in the literature, home engagement, and school engagement (McWayne, Campos, & Owsianik, 2008; Meidel & Reynolds, 1999). When parents are involved in both the home setting and school setting children demonstrate greater academic success, measured as school attendance, motivation toward learning, and overall academic performance (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2003), including reading and writing skills (Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards, & Marvin, 2011). The current literature review synthesizes literature through its examination of a) theoretical models of parent engagement, b) outcomes related to parent engagement, c) predictors of parent engagement, d) and characteristics associated with Latino parent engagement. The figure below illustrates the areas reviewed.



### **Theoretical Models of Parent Engagement**

There is no universally agreed upon definition of parent engagement; however, over time scholars have developed a more unified theoretical model. Research has been examining parent engagement since the late 1960s and early 1970s. The primary goal of early parent engagement research was to identify ways to increase engagement for parents with special needs children. Specifically, early studies were concerned with ways to teach individual parents engagement skills. Although, the early approach was limited because it did not address the range of contextual factors that could enhance parent engagement skills (Foster, Berger, & McLean, 1981; Valentine & Stark, 1979).

As more comprehensive theories evolved, interactional approaches to parent engagement took hold. Many of these approaches utilized Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner's theory emphasizes the influence of ecological systems like family and school including the interaction of those systems (the mesosystem) on children's development. Joyce Epstein, one of the most influential authors and theorists in the parent engagement field, first focused on the overlapping spheres of school and home in relation to parent engagement (Epstein, 1987). In her foundational work, Epstein (1987) identified four important aspects of parent engagement in schools: basic obligations (e.g., providing school supplies, supervision at home, and care), school-to-home communications, parent engagement at school, and engagement in learning activities at home. The most recent model put forward by Epstein and colleagues (2009) expanded the original to include six types of parent engagement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Some have argued that this model is euro-centric and



does not emphasize parents' culture and the congruence between the parents and the school (Smith, Wohlsetter, Kuzin, & DePedro, 2011). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1997, 1995) model was one of the first to incorporate the congruence between parents' engagement in activities and school expectations. This model examined the outcome of the child due to successful parent engagement, though failed to consider how to involve parents more effectively. Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues (2005) added to their model school, teacher, and child invitations for parents to be more involved in the school. This addition emphasizes a bidirectional relationship between the parent and the school, an agreed upon characteristic of parent engagement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

**Culturally bound parent engagement theory.** During the 1990s and 2000s, much of research examined parent engagement in relation to various outcomes for children; however little inquiry shed light on the actual mechanisms for engagement of specific groups. Hiatt-Michael (2008) proposed one of the first models that considered the reasons for gaps in parental engagement of certain less involved groups. The four forces identified as relating to barriers for parental engagement were cultural beliefs of families, social structure of families, economic influences, and political pressures—all forces, which may have a significant impact on ethnic and language minority groups (Hiatt-Michael, 2008). Despite this new model, the majority of parent engagement studies do not document the differential efficacy of engagement activities for ethnically, linguistically and culturally heterogeneous groups (Hall & Schaverien, 2001; McBride, Bae, & Wright, 2002). This is particularly problematic since studies suggest that Latino parent engagement practices manifest in culturally specific ways and are distinct from those of other cultural groups (Delgado-Gaitán, 1991; Hill & Torres, 2010; McWayne,

Manz, & Ginsburg-Block, 2007; Niemeyer, Wong, & Westerhaus, 2009; Okagaki & Bingham, 2010).

### **Parent Engagement Outcomes**

**Academic achievement outcomes.** A large body of literature supports the claim that parent engagement is related to academic achievement through various means. Meta-analyses have examined aspects of parent engagement as they relate to child outcomes. For example, an early meta-analysis conducted by Fan and Chen (2001) compiled 25 studies that examined parent engagement and academic achievement and found an overall medium effect size ( $r = .25$ ) between academic achievement and parental engagement. Parental aspirations for success were more strongly related to achievement than any other measures of parent engagement. Additionally, the relationship was strongest when achievement was measured as a global indicator like GPA (Fan & Chen, 2001). A later meta-analysis conducted by Hill and Tyson (2009) confirmed the findings discussed above with results indicating that overall, parent engagement was strongly related to academic achievement. Moreover, the meta-analysis also found that academic socialization (an expansion of parental aspirations for success that includes discussions of education and schooling) was again the most strongly associated form of engagement with academic achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009). A particular strength of this study is that the researchers included unpublished datasets in their sample in order to control for bias in the publication of only significant findings. Moreover, intervention studies confirm the link between parent engagement and increased achievement. Jeynes (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of 51 studies that demonstrated that parent engagement programs are associated higher academic

achievement across age groups. In addition, individual programs that focused on shared reading, checking homework, emphasized partnership, and communication between parents and teachers all had statistically significant effect sizes at the .05 level (Jeynes, 2010).

Jeynes (2003, 2005, 2007, 2012) has conducted various meta analyses that have yielded informative findings on the nature of parent engagement for at risk groups. Jeynes (2003) identified parent engagement as relating to academic achievement across 21 studies examining minority groups. Findings showed greater effect sizes for African American and Latino groups than their White and Asian American counterparts (Jeynes, 2003). These findings were similar to those done in two meta-analyses that examined the relationship between parent engagement and academic achievement in urban elementary school and secondary school respectively (Jeynes, 2005, 2007). The same trend emerged—both studies supported greater effect sizes for minority children (Jeynes, 2005; Jeynes 2007).

**Social-emotional and behavioral outcomes.** Parent engagement is related to social/emotional health and behavior among primary school children (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Izzo, Weissberg, Kasrow, & Fendrich, 1999; McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004; Reynolds, 1989; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2003; Supplee, Shaw, Hailstones, & Hartman, 2004). The quality of parent-teacher contact has been found to predict improvements in children's behavior along with their academic improvement (Izzo et al., 1999). More specifically, Brody, Flor, and Gibson (1999) found that parental sense of competence and certain parenting practices (e.g., predictable family routines, parents' engagement with their children, and

affectively positive parent-child relationships) were related to increases in children's ability to self-regulate. Examining urban kindergarten children, McWayne and colleagues (2004) found that supportive home learning environments were significantly correlated with general social skills at the .0001 level. Specifically, they found more supportive learning environments in the home were linked to children's cooperation, self-control, and prosocial engagement with other students (McWayne et al., 2004). One study followed children and their parents over time to further strengthen the claim that engagement improves behavior. El Nokali and colleagues (2010) utilized data of over 1,000 children from 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grades from the National Institute of Child Health and Developments (NICHD) Study of Early Childcare and Youth Development. Overall, their findings demonstrated that higher levels of parent reported engagement were significantly associated with higher levels of social functioning across elementary school (El Nokali et al., 2010).

**Home-based versus school-based engagement outcomes.** As mentioned previously, parent engagement is divided into home-based engagement and school-based engagement in the literature (McWayne, Campos, & Owsianik, 2008; Miedel & Reynolds, 1999). Both home and school-based engagement are related to increased academic achievement; however, home-based involvement has been shown to be the weakest link in two separate meta-analyses when compared to academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009). While these studies emphasized the greater impact that school-based involvement has on academic achievement, both forms of parent engagement behaviors positively relate to both academic and social outcomes (Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry, & Childs, 2004).

Parental home-based engagement is conceptualized in a variety of ways. Home-based engagement is often thought of as helping children with homework, shared reading, and creating learning environments in the home (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Home-based engagement, such as engaging in activities at home, has been shown to relate positively to academic achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Interestingly, one study showed that helping a child with homework was negatively related to academic outcomes ( $r = -.11$ ; Hill & Tyson, 2009). The study occurred during the middle school years. In contrast, with early elementary and preschool aged children when mothers provide structure and educational activities at home, their children tend to make positive gains in social and academic outcomes (Englund et al., 2004; McWayne, et al., 2004). Thus, varying parent behaviors related to engaging in their students' schooling may yield developmentally-specific outcomes across the years of schooling.

School-based parent engagement, such as volunteering and visiting within the school, and attending conferences is more strongly related to student academic achievement than home-based engagement (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Parents may gain knowledge about engaging at home and being more effective as educators due to interacting with their child's school on a frequent basis (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Jeynes' (2007) meta-analysis further identified that specifically; communication between parents and teachers is related to academic achievement.

### **Predictors of Parent Engagement**

Environment (e.g., school characteristics and neighborhood characteristics) and individual characteristics that influence engagement behaviors may shed light on why certain parents are more involved than others. Dauber and Epstein (1993) studied

demographics of families and the school environments they engage with to understand why disadvantaged middle and elementary school students were more or less involved both at school and at home. Findings showed that higher parental education level predicted parents' engagement activities while employment predicted fewer engagement activities. Within the school environment, the strongest predictors of engagement were schools that had established practices that focused on involving parents (Dauber & Epstein, 1993).

**Parent characteristics.** Studies have demonstrated that demographic factors are associated with engagement levels among parents. McWayne and colleagues (2008) found that mothers with less than a high school education reported significantly lower levels of interaction with school employees. Moreover, single parents are often less involved in activities within school because they do not have the time to engage in such activities (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, & Apostoleris, 1997). Role construction, how parents approach their role in relation to the school (i.e., parents are primarily responsible vs. the school is primarily responsible), has been identified as a contributor to parent levels of engagement (Sheldon, 2002; Walker et al., 2011). Moreover, parents who view their role as that of "teacher" and feel efficacious in this role are more likely to be involved in school; conversely those parents who have behaviorally difficult children are less likely to be involved (Grolnick et al., 1997). In addition, parents' amount of social capital (e.g. understanding of the school, education) and the size of their social network have been found to be directly related to the frequency of parent engagement both in school and out of school (Durand, 2011; Sheldon, 2002).

**School characteristics.** Dauber and Epstein (1993) and Grolnick and colleagues (1997) found that a difficult school context, poor teacher relationships and lack of social support predicted less engagement in school. More recently, Overstreet, Devine, Bevans, and Efreom (2005) conducted a study to identify predictors of parent engagement among African American parents. Their findings showed that consistent employment, higher educational aspirations, and perceptions of greater school reception predicted higher rates of engagement. Again, similar to Dauber and Epstein (1993) school receptivity was found to be the strongest predictor of parent engagement above all other variables (Overstreet et al., 2005). Furthermore, the more parents report that teachers value their engagement and their sense of school invitations; the more likely they are involved (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011).

### **Home-Based Versus School-Based Latino Parent Engagement**

**Home-based engagement.** Latino parents have been found to be less likely to provide cognitively stimulating materials or involve their kids in organized activities (Cooper, Crosnoe, Suizzo, & Pituch, 2010). Another contributing factor to lower levels of home engagement among Latinos is difficulty with traditional home learning activities. That is, immigrant parents who have limited English ability or low educational attainment are less likely to take part in homework and home-literacy activities (Cooper et al., 2010; Farver et al., 2006). A lack of home-literacy activities results in poorer language and literacy outcomes for the child (Lopez, Scribner, & Mahitvanichcha, 2001; McWayne et al., 2008; Sosa, 1997). The majority of Latino parents read less frequently with their children than their English-speaking counterparts and they also possess less reading material in the home than other groups (Raikes et al., 2006).

**School-based engagement.** While there is not an extensive amount of work on Latino school-based parent engagement, what exists shows considerable differences between Latino parents and other ethnic minorities (Wong & Hughes, 2006). Latino parents report having less communication with schools than both Black and White parents. In addition, within Latino populations, parents who have limited English proficiency report less shared responsibility with the teacher in relation to their child's education than parents of other ethnicities including their Latino English-speaking counterparts (Wong & Hughes, 2006).

Comfort with home-school collaboration is very important to consider when working with a population encountering a language barrier such as Latinos (Sosa, 1997). Pyle, Bates, Grief, and Furlong (2005) found that while Latino parents genuinely want to help their children, only half know how to find educational services for their children. Moreover, despite the majority expressing comfort in the school setting, about half actually attended workshops and communicated with teachers, pointing to a potential conflicted perception of their relationship with school (Pyle et al., 2005). In Head Start settings when parents feel that their relationships with teachers are not satisfying, they show declines in school activities like conferencing (McWayne, et al., 2008).

Being Latino is associated with several factors that result in problems interfacing with school staff or finding time to participate in school events. Logistical barriers, such as lack of childcare and lower incomes, limit the parent's opportunities to engage in learning activities, as they are often forced to sacrifice this time for the sake of providing for their children (Sosa, 1997). There is also uncertainty felt by Latino parents when approaching school personnel, such as many do not feel entitled or able to express their



needs to teachers (Sosa, 1997). Parents may also feel judged or alienated from the school system due to language and education differences that can negatively influence communication with teachers (Sosa, 1997). Parents who come to the United States from a foreign country are at a disadvantage because many experience a very new school structure as a significant barrier to their engagement. Ramirez (2003) identified many of these barriers by conducting interviews with Latino immigrant parents. Parents reported that they had no supports in the community and felt that the information they received about their school was limited. Parents also reported feeling ostracized for not balancing work and expectations of school and stated that teachers were less accountable than in their home countries (Ramirez, 2003).

### **Characteristics Associated with Latino Parent Involvement**

**Cultural and ethnic characteristics.** While particular ethnic groups may benefit from parent engagement, teachers do not report similar levels of engagement for groups that are ethnically different than themselves (Cooper et al., 2010; Wong & Hughes, 2006). Research indicates that teachers play a major role in parents' engagement behaviors yet they have low levels of alliance with parents who are ethnically different (Wong & Hughes, 2006). Poor quality parent-teacher relationships that influence school based engagement may partially explain differences in academic achievement, GPA, and standardized tests for minority children when compared with White children (Jeynes, 2003). A possible cause may be that linguistic and sociocultural differences often exist between educators and low-income families (Fuller, Eggers-Pierola, Holloway, Liang, & Rambaud, 1996; Slaughter-Defoe & Brown, 1998). Research has shown that conflict between Latino parents and school over language differences, shared conceptions in

socialization, and divergent opinions of school success resulted in parents reporting less welcoming experiences at their child's school (Fuller et al., 1996; Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004).

Stereotypes associated with certain groups may influence the degree to which parents decide to become involved, as the cultural worlds of the school and families collide. To elaborate, parent engagement may have varying impacts for ethnic groups because teachers' perception of the parents' engagement may influence their treatment of the child and the behavior of the parent. Stereotypes that teachers hold of certain ethnic groups may result in a self-fulfilling prophecy wherein minority parents engagement behavior begin to conform to the low expectations that teachers have for them (Jussim & Harber, 2005).

The disconnect between parents and teachers may be a result of their evolving relationships being shaped by varying cultural standards that exist regarding what constitutes appropriate engagement. First, parents of ethnic minority groups come to schools with different engagement behaviors than majority White populations. Second, White teachers who ascribe to a majority culture identity may view culturally bound parenting behaviors negatively (Graves & Wright, 2011). Third, misalignment between parent culture and the parental expectations of the school environment influence the comfort level of parents when interacting with the school, resulting in more dissatisfaction with the child's education and lower levels of school engagement for immigrant parents (Valenzuela, 1999; Villanueva, 1996). Effective communication between both the school and the parent is necessary to develop the skills parents need to improve home education. The relationship between the parents and the teacher is a very

important contributor to readiness and achievement (Tan & Goldberg, 2009; McBride, Dyer, Liu, Brown, & Hong, 2009; Jeynes, 2003; Miedel & Reynolds, 1999).

**A lack of personnel.** In the United States, few teachers are Latino, which may result in cultural incongruence between schools and Latino parents. In 2003, only 6.2% of full-time teachers in the U.S. were Latino (NCES, 2007). Not only do we not have enough culturally sensitive Latino staff, there is also a lack of training given to school staff regarding Latino families' culture and how it differs from majority White culture (Carreon, Drake, & Barton, 2005; Winter, Zurcher, Hernandez, & Zenong, 2007). There is a lack of documented intervention designed to educate and inform school personnel regarding culturally sensitive methods and approaches with parents (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, & Hernandez, 2003). Unfortunately, this has been a much-neglected area of intervention and collaboration research.

### **Involving Latino Parents**

Research shows that when we *are* able to involve Latino parents and increase school identification then students tend to participate, pay attention, and follow directions (Ruiz, 2009). The question is then, how do we increase the levels of parent engagement among Latino populations in early childhood? First, we must understand that the term Latino is not all encompassing. Many researchers have pointed to the importance of looking at within-group differences among Latino populations (e.g., Hill & Torres, 2010; Suizzo & Stapleton, 2007). The goal of taking this into account would be to improve cultural sensitivity among practitioners interacting with Latino populations of varying countries of origin and immigrant status. Second, we need more longitudinal research on the educational achievement of all immigrant children to provide more insight into the

effects of country of origin and culture on parent engagement styles (Hill & Torres, 2010; Lahaie, 2008). Avoiding thinking of people as a homogenous group, and instead considering various perspectives and nationalities within groups may lead to more effective engagement plans for all children while promoting cultural sensitivity. Research focusing on the varying styles of people from different countries must be developed in order to better involve Latino parents (Hill & Torres, 2010; Lahaie, 2008).

Early childhood education should focus on including parents as much as possible, but doing so in a culturally sensitive way. It is important for schools to understand the demographics of their parents and to emphasize the importance of the culture and language of Latino parents. Unfortunately, in many cases, these aspects of parent's culture are ignored or diminished (De Gaetano, 2007). The importance of understanding and respecting the parents culture and language may encourage them to become more involved in schools and more willing to believe that what the school offers will indeed benefit their children (De Gaetano, 2007). While there is discussion of the importance of the family in Head Start policies, no current theories of family-school collaboration emphasize the importance of cultural beliefs or tactics regarding their engagement in schools (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Outreach may be a key strategy to improve parental engagement among Latino immigrant parents in schools. Research has suggested that if educators can put aside negative perceptions of low-income families, they will help increase parent engagement (Mariñez-Lora & Quintana, 2009). Ramirez (2003) summed up some of the areas where we are lacking in cultural sensitivity through the voice of those who feel rejected by the schools. In this study, Latino parents felt that teachers had lower expectations for their

children and assumed all of the families were from Mexico. They also noted that translators were not often provided (Ramirez, 2003). It is reasonable to assume that this message, involuntarily sent by the school, nonetheless caused parents to want to distance themselves from schools.

In the future, we must move away from identifying deficiencies and associating it with a particular group. Rather, we should draw on a strength-based approach. One must work to remove or become aware of preconceived notions about a group and work instead to seamlessly include the community's culture in order to foster parent engagement. It should be no shock that parental school and home engagement is often reported overall as highest among White Americans. It is clear, however, that the majority culture's core values influence our conception of how parent engagement appears and research suggests that majority culture beliefs do not mesh well with Latino and other diverse cultural beliefs (Calzada, Fernandez, & Cortes, 2010).

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## Appendix B

### CUESTIONARIO DEMOGRÁFICO: INFORMACIÓN SOBRE LA FAMILIA

1. **Fecha de nacimiento del niño/a en Head Start:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mes\Día\Año)
2. **Sexo del Niño/a:** ☐ Masculino ☐ Femenino
3. **Su relación con el niño o la niña:** ☐ Padre/Madre ☐ Padrastro/Madrastra ☐ Abuelo/a  
☐ Tío/a ☐ Guardián Legal ☐ Otro \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Su edad:** \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Su sexo:** ☐ Masculino ☐ Femenino
6. **El número total de adultos que viven en su casa (incluyendo a usted.):** \_\_\_\_\_
7. **La relación de los adultos con el niño de Head Start:**  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. **El número de niños (0-17 años) que viven en su casa (incluyendo al niño/a de HS):** \_\_\_\_\_
9. **Educación Formal (Marque el nivel más alto que usted haya completado):**
  - ☐ No asistió a ninguna escuela ☐ Completó algunos años de primaria:  
¿Cuántos? \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Completó la escuela primaria ☐ Completó algunos años de secundaria:  
Cuántos? \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Terminó la secundaria o equivalente ☐ Cursó algunos años de estudios superiores:  
¿Cuántos? \_\_\_\_\_
10. **Estructura Familiar:**
  - ☐ Vivo sólo con el/los niño(s)
  - ☐ Vivo con el padre de el/los niño(s)
  - ☐ Vivo con familiares pero no con el padre de el/los niños
  - ☐ No vivo con el niño/los niños
11. **¿Usted Trabaja?:** ☐ Sí ☐ No **Si Trabaja:** ☐ Tiempo Completo  
☐ Tiempo Parcial
12. **Categoría Étnica:** ☐ Latino/Hispano ☐ No soy Latino/Hispano
13. **Categoría Racial (Indique todas las necesarias):** ☐ Negra ☐ Blanca ☐  
Mezcla (Indígena/Europea)
14. **Idioma que se habla en casa:** ☐ Español ☐ Inglés ☐ Ambos ☐ Otro(especificar) \_\_\_\_\_
15. **País de origen:** \_\_\_\_\_ **¿Años en los Estados Unidos?** \_\_\_\_\_
16. **¿Quién más en su hogar trabaja y aporta para la manutención del niño/a de Head Start?**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
17. **¿Hay alguien de su familia o de su pueblo o país que vive en Nueva York a quien usted le pueda pedir ayuda o consejo si lo necesita? (No queremos saber el nombre de la persona, sólo indique si es familiar o amistad. Si es un familiar indique la relación tiene con usted)**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE: FAMILY INFORMATION**

1. **Head Start child's date of birth:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month\Day\Year)
  2. **Child's Sex:** ☐ Male ☐ Female
  3. **Your relationship to child:** ☐ Parent ☐ Step-Parent ☐ Grandparent  
☐ Aunt/Uncle ☐ Foster Parent ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
  4. **Your age:** \_\_\_\_\_
  5. **Your sex:** ☐ Male ☐ Female
  6. **Total number of adults in your household (including you):** \_\_\_\_\_
- The relationships of the adults in your home with your Head Start Child:** \_\_\_\_\_
7. **Number of children (0-17 years old) in your household (including Head Start child):** \_\_\_\_\_
  8. **Formal Education (Please check the highest level you have completed):**  
☐ No formal schoolin ☐ Some elementary school ( # of years): \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Completed elementary school ☐ Some middle and high school( # of years): \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ High school diploma or GED ☐ Some college, or 2-year college degree(years): \_\_\_\_\_
  10. **Family Structure:** ☐ I live alone with the child(ren)  
☐ I live with the father of the child(ren)  
☐ I live with family members but not with the father of the child(ren)  
☐ I don't live with the child(ren)
  11. **Do you work?** ☐ Yes ☐ No **If yes, do you work?:** ☐ Full time ☐ Part Time
  12. **Ethnicity:** ☐ Latino/Hispanic ☐ Not Latino/Hispanic
  13. **Race (please circle all that apply):** ☐ Black ☐ White ☐ Multiracial
  14. **Primary language spoken in the home:** ☐ Spanish ☐ English ☐ Both ☐ Other(specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  15. **Country of origin:** \_\_\_\_\_ **How many years in the U.S.?** \_\_\_\_\_
  16. **Who else in your home works and provides financial support for the Head Start child?:** \_\_\_\_\_
  17. **Is there a family member or someone from your town/country in New York who you can turn to for advice if you need it. (We do not want the name of the person just state if they are family or friend. If it is a family member please indicate the relationship they have with you.)**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS****TEACHER INFORMATION**

1. **Your Sex:** ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. **Your age:** \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Your Ethnicity:** ☐ Latino/Hispanic ☐ Black ☐ White ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Your Race (please check all that apply):** ☐ Black ☐ Indigenous American ☐ Mestizo  
☐ White ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Where you born in the United States?** ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. **If you answered “No” to Question 6:**  
Country of origin: \_\_\_\_\_ Years living in the U.S.: \_\_\_\_\_
7. **Formal Education (Please check the highest level you have completed):**  
☐ High school diploma or GED ☐ Some college, or 2-year college degree  
☐ Bachelor’s degree (4 years or more) ☐ Post-college graduate or professional school
8. **For how many years have you been teaching as a:**  
Lead Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Assistant Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_
9. **Classroom Type:** ☐ Full-day ☐ Half-day
10. **Total number of children in your classroom:**  
Full-day: \_\_\_\_\_ Morning Session: \_\_\_\_\_ Afternoon Session: \_\_\_\_\_
11. **What language(s) do you use most in the classroom?** ☐ English ☐ Spanish  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**APOYO Y CONTACTO ENTRE LA ESCUELA Y LOS PADRES DE FAMILIA  
(PARA PADRES DE FAMILIA O GUARDIANES)**

**¿Qué tan satisfecho o satisfecha está usted con lo siguiente? Por favor llene el círculo que corresponda a su respuesta.**

	MUY INSATISFECHO ○	INSATISFECHO	SATISFECHO	MUY SATISFECHO ○
1. Con la participación familiar en la planificación de las actividades del salón de clase.	○	○	○	○
2. Con la participación voluntaria de los padres en el salón de clase.	○	○	○	○
3. Con las conversaciones telefónicas o en persona con la maestra (o el maestro) de mi niño.	○	○	○	○
4. Con el apoyo que se da a la participación activa de los padres en la escuela.	○	○	○	○
5. Con el nivel de participación de los padres en tomar de decisiones relacionadas con la escuela o el programa de mi niño.	○	○	○	○
6. Con la comunicación escrita que los maestros envían a los padres.	○	○	○	○
7. Con el contacto que he tenido con los padres de los compañeros de clase de mi niño.	○	○	○	○
8. Con los talleres u oportunidades de preparación ofrecidas por la escuela de mi niño para los padres de familia.	○	○	○	○
9. Con las reuniones con la maestra (o el maestro) de mi niño sobre su aprendizaje y comportamiento.	○	○	○	○
10. Con el contacto que he tenido con la Directora (o el Director) u otros administradores de la escuela.	○	○	○	○
11. Con las tareas escolares enviadas al hogar para que mi niño y yo las hagamos juntos.	○	○	○	○
12. Con el apoyo y el respeto a nuestra cultura y lenguaje por parte de la escuela.	○	○	○	○

**PARENT-SCHOOL CONTACT & SUPPORT**

(for Parents or Primary Caregivers)

**How satisfied are you with the following? Fill in the appropriate circle.**

	VERY DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	SATISFIED	VERY SATISFIED
1. Parent engagement in planning classroom activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Volunteering in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Telephone conversations with my child's teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Support and encouragement given for my child's learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Level of parent participation in decision making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Notes sent home from the teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Contact I have had at school with other parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Parent workshops or training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Conferences with the teacher about my child's learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Contact I have had with the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. School work sent home for me to work on	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Support and encouragement at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## LFIP-NYU Global Involvement Checklist

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

How involved is/are the parent(s) in \_\_\_\_\_

	school-based academic activities (e.g. school/parent meetings, volunteering in classroom, reading to class)?				school-based social activities (e.g. birthday parties, plays, events, fundraising activities)?				out-of-school academic activities (e.g. assisting with homework and school projects)?				initiating contact about their child's academic progress (e.g. phone calls, notes, e-mail)			
Student	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	Greatly	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	Greatly	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	Greatly	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	Greatly
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

## End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix C

**Table 1. Percent Participation of Latino Parents per Center**

Brooklyn	
Center 8	60%
Manhattan	
Center 6	65%
Center 4	68%
Center 7	65%
Bronx	
Center 1	61%
Center 2	65%
Center 5	69%