

Dimensions of Early Childhood

Volume 47
Number 2, 2019

**Sand Play:
Bringing the Best
of the Beach to Your
Classroom**

**El Juego con Arena
Llevando lo Mejor de la Playa
a tu Salón de Clases**

**Engaging Latino Families
in Early Childhood Education Programs:
Barriers, Misconceptions and
Recommendations**

**Literacy Growth for
Children in Poverty**

**Co-producing Culturally
Relevant Services with Families of
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**Southern
Early Childhood
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Editor: Mari Riojas-Cortez, Ph.D.
Dimensions of Early Childhood

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Setting Goals for Your Professional, Personal Development

JO CARROLL, SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA

Summer is a good time to reflect on the previous year within an early childhood setting. We often reflect on how the children in our care are doing or progressing, but how often do we take time to reflect on our progress as professionals? Do you have short term and long-term goals for yourself both professionally and personally? I have said for a long time that if I go a day without learning then it is a wasted day. Our learning can take on many formats from reading to journaling to the formal classroom setting. What do you do to stay fresh in your profession? One of the best ways I know is to belong to a professional organization, which allows you to read current information, engage with other professionals, and learn from other professionals.

This issue of *Dimensions* has some very pertinent topics within the field of early childhood. Let me encourage you to read the articles in this journal with some questions in mind. How can I apply the information I read to my day-to-day job? Will what I read change how I approach children in my care? How can I share this information with other Early Childhood professionals as well as families within my program? How can I use the information I read to advocate for better opportunities for myself and others in this field? How can I advocate for better opportunities for the children in my city or town?

Be on the lookout in the near future for our new website! The personnel in the

SECA office have worked very diligently to make our website more user friendly, as well as provide much more information for our members!

Finally, I want to let you know that our next SECA conference will be held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, February 27-29, 2020. I look forward to the conference and seeing many of you there. Plan now to attend this conference.

*In memory of
Barbara Christine Crouch
by Pam Schiller*

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DR. MARI RIOJAS-CORTEZ, EDITOR

How do people react when you mention that you're an early childhood educator? Not too long ago I was having a lively conversation with someone when all of the sudden she asked what I taught at the university and after I said "early childhood" she said "oh...how fun" (as if with some disappointment perhaps she was waiting to hear something different). I said, "Yes! It

is a lot of fun and also very important for young children and their families." In our society there are individuals who may not understand the importance of early childhood education, but it is our responsibility to advocate and educate particularly because of the need to provide high quality early childhood programs for all children. Different ways that we can do this include (but not

limited to) creating strong partnerships with families, creating community partnerships, maintaining a strong voice in all different levels of government, and engaging in teacher research. I hope that you enjoy this issue of *Dimensions of Early Childhood* and that it inspires you to continue advocating and educating the public on the importance of early childhood education.

¿Cómo reacciona la gente cuando mencionas que eres un educador de la primera infancia? No hace mucho tiempo, estaba teniendo una conversación animada con alguien cuando de repente me preguntó qué enseñaba en la universidad y después de decir "educación de la primera infancia", dijo "oh ... qué divertido" (como si con alguna decepción tal vez esperaba escuchar algo diferente). Dije, ¡Sí es muy divertido!

Pero también muy importante para los niños pequeños y sus familias". En nuestra sociedad hay personas que pueden no entender la importancia de la educación de la primera infancia, pero es nuestra responsabilidad defender y educar, especialmente debido a la necesidad de proporcionar a todos los niños programas de alta calidad en la primera infancia. Las diferentes formas en que podemos hacer esto incluyen (pero no se

limitan a) la creación de asociaciones sólidas con las familias, la creación de asociaciones con la comunidad, el mantenimiento de una voz fuerte en todos los diferentes niveles de gobierno y la participación de los docentes en la investigación. Espero que disfruten este número de *Dimensions of Early Childhood* y que los inspire a continuar abogando y educando al público sobre la importancia de la educación de la primera infancia.

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Sand Play:

BRINGING THE BEST OF THE BEACH TO YOUR CLASSROOM

BY REBECCA M. GILES AND KARYN W. TUNKS

“Sand is elemental. Like fire or water, a small bit is still part of the whole. A handful of sand holds promise the same way a sand table does and the same way a beach does.”

– Rusty Keeler (2014, p. 84)

Of the 14 states that make up the membership of the Southern Early Childhood Association, nine have a coastline along either the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico. The remaining five states are fortunate to have an abundance of other water sources including lakes and rivers. The geographical benefit for many of the children living in these states is access to sand. Lots and lots of sand! In this article, we will explore how to capitalize on children’s familiarity with sand play to enhance learning. Teachers can build on children’s prior experiences and what they already know to take sand play to the next level.

Sand play invites children to explore and

Alex is developing physical abilities through the repetitive action of scooping sand into her bucket while also making cognitive connections about the shovel’s effect on the sand.



manipulate materials in their environment. According to cognitive constructivist learning theory (Piaget, 1977), basic experiences provide a conceptual understanding that gradually becomes more complex through continued interactions. While children are the active learners as they experiment with sand, teachers play a valuable role in supplying a variety of accompanying materials, challenging children’s thinking, providing needed support for new learning to occur, and integrating meaningful opportunities to use language.

Appropriate Accessories

Similar to children playing at the beach, those engaged in sand play in the classroom are also exploring ways to manipulate the material. Providing a balance of useful accessories to enhance their experimentation builds on what they already learned about the properties of sand. A bucket and shovel provide a means for scooping sand into a container and pouring it out again. A sifter offers a new experience of watching sand fall through small holes, perhaps to reveal natural elements such as pebbles, shells, or acorns that remain. Offering a spray bottle of

water also offers a variety of experiences as children observe changes in the property of sand that allow it to be manipulated, shaped and sculpted in new ways.

The goal of introducing accessories should be to enhance children’s imaginations and their play. Common objects and household discards can spark ideas when paired with sand (Crosser, 2008). Open-ended materials that can be used in a variety of ways are preferable to those that have a single or built-in use. For example, an empty, plastic berry basket can be used with dry sand as a large-holed sieve or to press patterns into smooth, wet sand. In her book, *The Importance of Being Little: What Preschoolers Really Need from Grownups*, Christakis (2016) criticizes accessories that rob children of the opportunity to use their own ingenuity. She reminds us that “process not product” is what brings children joy as they play and learn. Keeler (2014) responds to adult concerns that sand

Abby explores the fluid properties of sand as she discovers that sand will travel through a straw and flow from the holes of a sieve.



play is too messy by reminding us that the goal is for children to be engaged, happy, and creative in their sand play.

The number of accessories offered at one time also needs careful consideration. “Materials should be rotated periodically to maintain interest and, perhaps, coordinate with a current theme of study” (Tunks & Giles, 2007, p. 25). Too many accessories all with different purposes can cause confusion (Wellhousen & Crowther, 2004) and become the focus over the main attraction—sand! **Textbox 1** lists a variety of appropriate accessories to promote imaginative play. Offering no more than 3–5 items at a time per child keeps sand the center of attention.

Initiate Inquiry

Prior exposure to various experiences enhances imaginative play scenarios and can inspire spontaneous queries from children. Children use their imaginations when choosing how to play and what to play (Ahiaba, 2007) often relying on their emotions, thoughts, and their external world (Lindqvist, 2001). From family outings to memorable read alouds, children draw on personal experiences to frame their play and explore new ideas. The teacher’s role is to invite deeper investigation.

Referred to as provocations in the famed approach from Reggio Emilia, Italy, unexpected discoveries within the environment, such as glitter sprinkled throughout the sand, use the element of surprise to begin conversations (Strong-Wilson, & Ellis, 2007). This leads to self-directed or authentic scientific inquiry. Defined as a line



Michael discovers that moist sand has different properties, making it more cohesive.

of questioning and developing process that belongs to the individual (Llewellyn, 2011), this type of inquiry allows children the freedom to explore, create, adapt, modify, and play with ideas (Stone, 2016). Such inquiries encourage a simplified scientific method as a process for experimentation as children are encouraged to use their senses to make meaningful observations. This, then, leads to curiosity and asking questions, resulting in the forming and testing of hypotheses.

In a classroom setting, teachers can closely observe children at sand play and listen to conversations to help identify topics of interest. By making suggestions, teachers help children form ideas that may become an investigation with meaningful outcomes.



The consistency of wet sand makes it perfect for Kade’s building project.

From initial sensory exploration to sharing the results, children are involved in thinking, planning, and communicating.

Possible actions that may occur when children are engaged in sand play:

- constructing roadways,
- digging tunnels and/or building bridges,
- creating a zoo or natural habitat,
- hunting for buried treasure using magnets,
- making and using filters and sieves, and
- experimenting with water.

Scaffolded Support

After establishing a challenging and intriguing setting, adults further support children’s sand play by being available to enrich their learning. Teachers must strive to provide the stimulating environment to

Textbox 1: Sand Play Accessories

Containers

- small pails and buckets
- plastic cups and mugs
- bowls and saucers
- ice trays and muffin tins
- jars with lids
- small, sturdy cardboard boxes
- refrigerator containers
- clear, sealing storage bags

Tools for Filling and Digging

- hand-held shovels
- spoons and scoops
- ladles
- measuring cups and spoons

Dry Sand Tools

- sieves, sifters, strainers and colanders
- latch hook canvas
- net bags from potatoes, onions or citrus fruit
- funnels
- shakers or empty plastic, spice bottles
- cardboard tubes, plastic pipes, and pieces of bamboo
- straws
- paintbrushes

Wet Sand Tools

- forks, spatulas, and potato mashers
- rolling pins

- backscratchers, small rakes or large plastic combs
- molds
- plastic trowel or pie server
- pipe cleaners (chenille sticks)
- toothpicks, tongue depressors, craft/popsicle sticks, and Dowell rods

Embellishments

- shells, stones, seeds, and acorns
- small plastic animals or figures
- toy cars, trucks and road signs
- model railroad accessories
- jewels, marbles, beads, glitter, and sequins
- yarn and string

Sand Play

enhance concept development and skill building, while also ensuring that the activities retain the characteristics inherent in organic play, most notably that they are self-initiated and child-directed. One way to do this is with probing questions, possibilities include:

- “What do you think might happen if _____?”
- “What happens when _____?”
- “What else could you do?”
- “What tools could you use to _____?”
- “What do you need to _____?”
- “What do you think/feel about _____?”

Knowing when and how to ask appropriate questions is a highly desirable and beneficial skill (Tunks & Giles, 2007). By asking open-ended questions, the teacher is extending children’s learning through a process Vygotsky (1933) called scaffolding. Teacher’s verbal prompts broaden the children’s abilities beyond what they could accomplish independently (Crosser, 2008). As opposed to providing children with information, scaffolding helps children access prior knowledge and conceptual abilities to solve problems on their own (Anderson, Spainhower, & Sharp, 2014).

Language Learning

Similarly, sensitive teacher guidance can be an especially effective means of supporting language development. Asking children to describe what’s happening within a sand structure conveys the expectation that there is meaning behind the finished product, thus, sending the message that there is a story to be shared (Tunks & Giles, 2007). Adults who model and support literacy during play

prompt children’s reading and writing activity (Tsao, 2008; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). Listening to and recording the child’s oral account introduces the purpose of writing and the functions of printed language (Tunks & Giles, 2007; 2009). When adults serve as scribe by taking dictation, children become aware of the speech-to-text connection, gain basic knowledge of sound-symbol relationships, and are introduced to the conventions of print (Tunks & Giles, 2009).

Roskos and Christie (2013) identified play in classroom learning centers as providing excellent opportunities for young children to acquire and practice a variety of literacy skills. The goal for integrating literacy learning into any play setting should be to balance active support with respect for a child’s level of interest, skill, and conceptual understanding (Bergen & Mauer, 2000; Einarsdottir, 2000, Roskos & Christie, 2007). Simply displaying related literature nearby may spark children’s interest in reading about sand. **Textbox 2** provides a list of suggested books. Further recommendations for creating unobtrusive opportunities for further incorporating language and print during sand play appear below:

- Incorporate precise vocabulary, such as colander and sieve, into verbal exchanges.
- Invite children to write messages in moist sand.
- Encourage children tell a story about their play.
- Assist children in labeling their sand creations.
- Move traffic signs from the block center to the sand box.

- Play background music and encourage singing along during sand play.
- Help children find answers to their questions about sand and its properties through books, websites, and other resources.
- Document sand play experiences through photographs, pictures, dictation, and kid-writing.

Conclusion

Sand is a part of the natural environment for many young children and an invaluable learning material. It is a familiar medium for children with prior exposure in a sandbox or at the beach and an inviting, often relaxing, encounter for children whom sand play is a novel experience. Sand play provides an enjoyable foundation for children’s further learning. Children who are familiar with the properties of sand and how to manipulate it will benefit from experiences that promote higher order thinking. Rotating access to a variety of materials during sand play will enhance their encounters. Posing non-intimidating, open-ended questions encourages children to talk about their play and explore beyond their initial range of possibilities. Providing the support needed to go beyond children’s independent abilities builds confidence as they gain new skills and increased understanding in various areas including language and literacy proficiency. Families who may have cultural or health concerns regarding sand play, can be reassured that age-appropriate precautions are being taken to ensure safety and that children choosing not to participate will receive many of the same social and cognitive benefits in other areas of unstructured play. Sand play poses endless opportunities for children to learn!

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KARYNW. TUNKS is Professor of Early Childhood and Elementary Education at the University of South Alabama in Mobile, Alabama where she teaches courses in Literacy, Children’s Literature, and Early Childhood Education. Dr. Tunks has published four books and numerous articles on topics related to teaching in the early grades.

Textbox 2: Sand Related Children’s Literature

- *Sand* by Ellen J. Prager (author) and Nancy Woodman (illustrator)
- *The Sandcastle Contest*, by Robert Munsch
- *Sea, Sand, Me!* Patricia Hubbell (author) and Lisa Campbell Ernst (illustrator)
- *Beach* by Elisha Cooper
- *Beach Day* by Karen Roosa (author) and Maggie Smith (illustrator)
- *At the Beach* by Anne Rockwell
- *Sand Cake* by Frank Asch
- *Super Sand Castle Saturday: Measuring* by Stuart J. Murphy (author) and Julia Gorton (illustrator)
- *Sand to Stone: And Back Again* by Nancy Bo Flood
- *A Grain of Sand: Nature’s Secret Wonder* by Gary Greenberg

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El Juego con Arena:

LLEVANDO LO MEJOR DE LA PLAYA A TU SALÓN DE CLASES

POR REBECCA M. GILES Y KARYN W. TUNKS

La arena es elemental. Al igual que el fuego o el agua, una pequeña porción todavía es parte del todo. Un puñado de arena promete lo mismo que una mesa de arena y la playa.

— Rusty Keeler (2014, p. 84)

De los catorce estados que conforman la membresía de la Asociación de Educación Temprana del Sur (Southern Early Childhood Association), nueve cuentan con un borde costero que se extiende por el Océano Atlántico o el Golfo de México. Los cinco estados restantes son afortunados de tener abundancia de recursos hídricos que contemplan lagos y ríos. El beneficio geográfico para muchos de los niños que habitan en estos estados es el acceso a la arena. ¡Montones de arena! En el presente artículo, vamos a examinar cómo capitalizar la familiaridad de los niños con el juego

Alex desarrolla habilidades físicas a través de la acción repetitiva de echar arena dentro de su balde mientras realiza conexiones cognitivas respecto al efecto de la pala en la arena.

con arena para mejorar el aprendizaje. Los maestros pueden emplear las experiencias previas de los niños y lo que ya saben para llevar el juego con arena al próximo nivel.

El juego con arena incita a los niños a explorar y manipular los materiales en su entorno. De acuerdo con la teoría de aprendizaje constructivista cognitiva (Piaget, 1977), las experiencias básicas proporcionan un entendimiento conceptual que adquiere gradualmente mayor complejidad a través de las interacciones continuas. Si bien los niños son los aprendices activos mientras experimentan con la arena, los maestros desempeñan un papel valioso en el suministro de una variedad de materiales de acompañamiento, desafían el pensamiento de los niños, brindan el apoyo necesario para que se produzca un nuevo aprendizaje e integran oportunidades significativas para utilizar el lenguaje.

Accesorios adecuados

Al igual que los niños que juegan en la playa, los que participan en juegos de arena en el aula también están explorando formas

de manipular el material. Proporcionar un equilibrio de accesorios útiles para mejorar su experimentación se basa en lo que ya aprendieron sobre las propiedades de la arena. Un cubo y una pala proporcionan un medio para recoger arena en un recipiente y vaciarla nuevamente. Un tamiz ofrece una nueva experiencia de ver caer la arena a través de pequeños agujeros, tal vez para revelar elementos naturales como piedras, conchas o bellotas que permanecen. Ofrecer una botella de agua con rociador también ofrece una variedad de experiencias a medida que los niños observan cambios en la propiedad de la arena que permiten manipularla, moldearla y esculpirla de nuevas maneras.

El objetivo de presentar accesorios debe ser el de aumentar la imaginación de los niños a medida que juegan. Los objetos comunes y aquellos que desechamos de

Abby explora las propiedades de fluido de la arena mientras descubre que la arena viajará a través de un sorbete y fluirá desde los agujeros de un colador.



nuestro hogar pueden motivar ideas al combinarse con la arena (Crosser, 2008). Los materiales de uso indefinido que pueden usarse en una variedad de formas tienen preferencia por sobre aquellos perfilados para un uso simple o incorporado. Por ejemplo, una cesta de bayas plástica vacía puede usarse con arena seca como un colador con agujero grande o para imprimir patrones en arena suave y húmeda. Christakis (2016) en su libro, *La Importancia de ser Pequeño: Lo que los Niños en Edad Preescolar Realmente Necesitan de los Adultos* [The Importance of Being Little: What Preschoolers Really Need from Grownups] crítica a los accesorios que privan a los niños de la oportunidad de emplear su propia ingenuidad. Ella nos recuerda que es “el proceso y no el producto” lo que trae alegría a los niños mientras juegan y aprenden. Keeler (2014) responde a las preocupaciones adultas respecto a que el juego con arena es demasiado desordenado recordándonos que el objetivo es que los niños se entretengan, sean felices y muestren creatividad en su juego con arena.

La cantidad de accesorios ofrecidos en una ocasión también requieren de una consideración cuidadosa. “Los materiales deben rotarse de manera periódica para mantener el interés y quizás, coordinar con un tema actual de estudio” (Tunks & Giles, 2007, p. 25). Demasiados accesorios con diferentes propósitos pueden crear confusión (Wellhousen & Crowther, 2004) y convertirse en

el enfoque detrás de la atracción principal: ¡la arena! El cuadro de **texto 1** enumera una variedad de accesorios oportunos para incentivar el juego imaginativo. Ofrecer no más de 3 a 5 elementos a la vez garantiza que la arena siga siendo el centro de la atención.

Iniciar la investigación

La exposición previa a diversas experiencias realiza las situaciones de juego imaginativo y puede inspirar dudas espontáneas de los niños. Los niños utilizan su imaginación al escoger cómo jugar y a qué jugar (Ahiaba, 2007) a menudo confiando en sus emociones, ideas y su mundo exterior (Lindqvist, 2001). Desde excursiones familiares a lecturas memorables en voz alta, los niños se apoyan en experiencias personales para dar forma a su juego y explorar nuevas ideas. El rol del maestro es incentivar a realizar investigaciones más profundas.

Denominado como provocaciones en el afamado enfoque de Reggio Emilia, Italia, los descubrimientos dentro del entorno, tales como el lustre rociado a lo largo de la arena, emplean el elemento sorpresa para comenzar conversaciones (Strong-Wilson, & Ellis, 2007). Esto conduce a un proceso inquisitivo autodirigido o científico auténtico. Definido como un tipo de cuestionamiento y proceso de desarrollo que pertenece al sujeto (Llewellyn, 2011), este tipo de investigación permite a los niños la libertad de explorar, crear, adaptar, modificar y jugar con ideas (Stone, 2016). Tales investigaciones



Michael descubre que la arena húmeda tiene diferentes propiedades, que la hace más cohesiva.

fomentan un método científico simplificado como un proceso para la experimentación a medida que se incentiva a los niños a emplear sus sentidos para realizar observaciones significativas. Conduce a la curiosidad y a la formulación de preguntas, lo que se traduce en la generación y prueba de hipótesis.

En un aula, los maestros pueden observar de cerca a los niños en juegos de arena y escuchar conversaciones para ayudar a identificar temas de interés. Al hacer sugerencias, los maestros ayudan a los niños a formar ideas que pueden convertirse en una

Cuadro de texto 1: Accesorios de juego con arena

Contenedores

- pequeñas cubetas y baldes
- tasas y vasos plásticos
- cuencos y platillos
- bandejas de hielo y latas de muffin
- jarros con tapas
- cajas de cartón resistentes y pequeñas
- neveras
- bolsas de almacenamiento selladas transparentes

Herramientas para rellenar y excavar

- palas manuales
- cucharas y cucharones
- cucharones
- tasas y cucharas para medir

Herramientas de arena seca

- coladores, separadores, escurridores y tamizadores
- lienzos con gancho de pestillo bolsas con red para papas, cebollas o embudos de frutas cítricas
- agitadores o botellas plásticas de especias vacías tubos de cartón, tuberías plásticas y trozos de bambú pajitas
- brochas para pintar

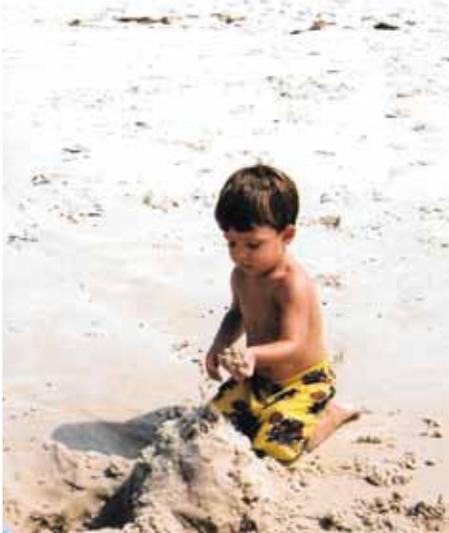
Herramientas de arena húmeda

- tenedores, espátulas y moledores de papas
- rodillos
- rascaespaldas, rastrillos pequeños o peines de plástico grandes

- moldes
- espátula plástica o cucharón de pastel
- limpiadores de tubería (palos de felpilla)
- mondadientes, depresores linguales, paletas o palitos de helado y espigas

Decoraciones

- conchas, piedras, semillas y bellotas
- figuras o animales plásticos pequeños
- autos de juguete, camiones y señales de tránsito
- accesorios de carretera de modelo
- joyas, canicas, cuentas, brillo y lentejuelas
- hilo y cuerda



investigación con resultados significativos. Desde la exploración sensorial inicial hasta compartir los resultados, los niños participan en el pensamiento, la planificación y la comunicación.

Posibles acciones que pueden suceder cuando los niños participan en juegos de arena:

- construcción de carreteras,
- excavación de túneles y/o construcción de puentes,
- creación de un zoológico o hábitat natural,
- búsqueda de tesoros enterrados utilizando imanes,
- creación y uso de filtros y coladores,
- experimentación con agua.

Apoyo con andamios

Después de establecer un entorno desafiante e intrigante, los adultos apoyan aún más los juegos de arena de los niños al estar disponibles para enriquecer su aprendizaje. Los maestros deben esforzarse en proporcionar un entorno estimulante para mejorar el desarrollo de conceptos y el desarrollo de habilidades, al mismo tiempo que se aseguran de que las actividades conserven las características inherentes al juego orgánico, sobre todo que sean autoiniciadas y dirigidas por los niños. Una forma de hacer esto es con preguntas de sondeo, las posibilidades incluyen:

- “¿Qué piensas que podría ocurrir si _____?”
- “¿Qué sucede cuando _____?”
- “¿Qué más pudiste hacer?”
- “¿Qué herramientas pudiste utilizar para _____?”
- “¿Qué es lo que necesitas para _____?”

La consistencia de la arena mojada es perfecta para el proyecto de construcción de Kade.

- “¿Qué es lo que piensas/sientes respecto a _____?”

Saber cuándo y cómo hacer las preguntas apropiadas es una habilidad altamente deseable y beneficiosa (Tunks & Giles, 2007). Al hacer preguntas abiertas, la maestra está extendiendo el aprendizaje de los niños a través de un proceso que Vygotsky (1933) llamó andamios. Las indicaciones verbales de los maestros amplían las habilidades de los niños más allá de lo que podrían lograr de manera independiente (Crosser, 2008). A diferencia de proporcionar información a los niños, el andamiaje ayuda a los niños a acceder a conocimientos previos y habilidades conceptuales para resolver problemas por su cuenta (Anderson, Spainhower, & Sharp, 2014).

Aprendizaje del lenguaje

De manera similar, la guía sensible del profesor puede ser un medio especialmente eficaz para apoyar el desarrollo del lenguaje. Pedir a los niños que describan lo que sucede dentro de una estructura de arena transmite la expectativa de que hay un significado detrás del producto terminado, por lo tanto, enviando el mensaje de que hay una historia para compartir (Tunks & Giles, 2007). Los adultos que modelan y apoyan la alfabetización durante el juego impulsan la actividad de lectura y escritura de los niños (Tsao, 2008; Verhoeven & Snow, 2001). Escuchar y grabar la cuenta oral del niño presenta el propósito de la escritura y

las funciones del lenguaje impreso (Tunks & Giles, 2007; 2009). Cuando los adultos actúan como escribas al tomar dictados, los niños se dan cuenta de la conexión de voz a texto, obtienen conocimientos básicos sobre las relaciones entre el sonido y los símbolos y son introducidos en las convenciones de la impresión (Tunks y Giles, 2009).

Roskos and Christie (2013) identificaron que el juego en los centros de aprendizaje del aula ofrece excelentes oportunidades para que los jóvenes aprendices adquieran y pongan en práctica una variedad de habilidades de alfabetización. El objetivo de integrar el aprendizaje de alfabetización en cualquier entorno de juego debe ser el de equilibrar el apoyo activo con respecto al nivel de interés, habilidad y entendimiento conceptual de un niño (Bergen & Mauer, 2000; Einarsdottir, 2000, Roskos & Christie, 2007). El solo hecho de exhibir literatura asociada en el entorno podría despertar el interés de los niños en leer algo sobre la arena. El cuadro de texto 2 ofrece una lista de libros sugeridos. A continuación, se exhiben más recomendaciones para crear oportunidades discretas para incorporar el lenguaje y letras durante el juego con arena:

- Incorporar un vocabulario preciso, como coladero y escurridos, en intercambios verbales.
- Incitar a que los niños escriban mensajes en la arena mojada.
- Motivar a que los niños cuenten una historia sobre su juego.
- Ayudar a los niños a etiquetar sus creaciones con arena.
- Pasar señales de tránsito del centro de bloques a la caja de arena.

Cuadro de texto 2: Literatura asociada al juego con arena infantil

- *Sand* by Ellen J. Prager (author) and Nancy Woodman (illustrator)
- *The Sandcastle Contest*, by Robert Munsch
- *Sea, Sand, Me!* Patricia Hubbell (author) and Lisa Campbell Ernst (illustrator)
- *Beach* by Elisha Cooper
- *Beach Day* by Karen Roosa (author) and Maggie Smith (illustrator)
- *At the Beach* by Anne Rockwell
- *Sand Cake* by Frank Asch
- *Super Sand Castle Saturday: Measuring* by Stuart J. Murphy (author) and Julia Gorton (Illustrator)
- *Sand to Stone: And Back Again* by Nancy Bo Flood
- *A Grain of Sand: Nature's Secret Wonder* by Gary Greenberg

- Poner música de fondo y fomentar el canto durante el juego con arena.
- Ayudar a los niños a encontrar respuestas a sus preguntas respecto a la arena y sus propiedades a través de libros, sitios web y otros recursos.
- Documentar las experiencias de juego con arena a través de fotografías, imágenes, dictados y caligrafía infantil.

Conclusión

La arena es parte del entorno natural para muchos niños pequeños y un material de aprendizaje invaluable. Es un medio familiar para que los niños con experiencia previa en un arenero o en la playa y a menudo un encuentro relajante e incitante para niños que desconocen el juego con arena. El juego con arena ofrece un cimiento entretenido para el aprendizaje complementario de los niños. Los niños que están familiarizados con las propiedades de la arena y saben cómo manipularla se beneficiarán de las experiencias que fomenten un pensamiento de mayor orden. El acceso rotativo a una variedad de materiales durante el juego en la arena mejorará sus encuentros. El plantear preguntas abiertas no intimidantes anima a los niños a hablar sobre su juego y a explorar más allá de su rango de posibilidades inicial. Es necesario ofrecer apoyo para ir más allá de las habilidades de los niños ya que desarrolla la confianza a medida que obtienen nuevas habilidades y aumentan su comprensión en diversas áreas que contemplan el lenguaje y la competencia alfabética. Las familias que puedan tener inquietudes culturales o de salud con respecto al juego de arena, pueden estar seguras de que se están tomando las precauciones apropiadas para su edad para garantizar la seguridad y que los niños que elijan no participar recibirán muchos de los mismos beneficios sociales y cognitivos en otras áreas del juego no estructurado. ¡El juego con arena supone oportunidades infinitas para que los niños aprendan!

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Engaging Latino Families in Early Childhood Education Programs:

BARRIERS, MISCONCEPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BY RUTH ANDRADE-GUIRGUIS AND RAQUEL PLOTKA



Our nation's changing demographics have important implications for how educators prepare to engage and work with families particularly those with young children. Latinos are the fastest growing population of children in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Specifically, one in every five children in kindergarten is of Latino descent (McCabe et al., 2013). Latinos are considered people who live in the U.S. and whose origins are traced to Spanish-speaking regions of Latin America, including the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and South America (Flores, Abreu, Olivar, & Kastner, 1998; Turner-Trujillo, Del Toro, & Ramos, 2017), but also include groups such as Mexican Americans who have been in the U.S. for generations and may not have direct connections to Mexico.

While Latino groups from different areas vary in the unique traditions of their respective home countries, Latinos as a whole tend to share similar qualities in regards to cultural values. One of the strongest and most evident commonalities among all

Latino groups is the idea of collectivism in the household and in Latino culture in and of itself.

Latinos demonstrate a strong connection to their immediate and extended families, often making individual sacrifices for the betterment of the larger whole (Rinderle & Montoya, 2008). Cultural collectivism and the sense of sacrifice for the greater good is a key factor in how students of Latino descent and their respective families engage not only in the household, but in the American educational system as well. Because Latino families follow a collectivist culture, student performance is interpreted not as a child's individual achievement, but a reflection of family values, implications, and engagement (Hofstede, 2011).

Family engagement has been found to be predictive of children's academic achievement, as well as social and emotional development. During preschool, family engagement can have a positive effect on future grades (McWayne, Melzi, Limlingan, & Schick, 2016). Moody and Ramos (2014)

note that it is more challenging to engage Latino families in schools and programs than non-minority families for different reasons. Certain cultural beliefs contribute to "barriers" that impact the level of family engagement in the education of young children. Such "barriers" could range from families' unfamiliarity with the American school system, family educational levels, and level of English proficiency (Flores, et al., 1998) to a desire to encourage educational values that may vary from those instilled in the classroom.

Families who do not speak English may feel a sense of insecurity or intimidation about their ability or inability to help their children academically. Because the American classroom is student-centered, the Latino culture tends to rely on a teacher-centered classroom (Hofstede, 2011). This leads to a disparity in the manner in which the relations between parent/teacher is interpreted.

Many Latino families view teachers as authoritative figures who have the knowledge and experience to guide students in the classroom, subsequently it is considered a sign of disrespect if families question such knowledge. Lastly, an unwelcoming school environment, socioeconomic background, and family structure are factors that often influence family engagement.

Öztürk (2013) indicates that there is a dissonance in the way Latino families engage in education and the way educators expect families to engage. Thus, it is important to identify key beliefs not just in the Latino culture, but in other minorities as well, which can help educators support engagement (Mendez Smith & Vega, 2015). With adequate teacher preparation programs, future educators can develop ways to facilitate understanding of the families' cultural values that can inform recommendations to assist them in engaging early on in students' education.

Family Engagement

Family engagement refers to the active participation of significant caregivers and school staff working together to improve the education process of the child in the home, early education program, and the community (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). According to Epstein's typology, family engagement includes: (a) parenting, providing basic needs, emotional support; (b) communication with educators; (c) supporting learning at home, (d) attending school/center events; (e) participating in community connections, such as a parent collaborating with community institutions and agencies to facilitate development and learning; and (f) decision making and parent participation in center or school governance (Epstein, 1996, p.14).

Early childhood studies have associated family engagement with academic motivation and positive outcomes such as better grades, social skills, and emotional development (McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004). Family engagement fosters the development and acquisition of language as the interactions between primary caregivers and their children account for 77% of the language used by the young child (Song, Tamis-Lemonda, Yoshikawa, Kahana-Kalman, & Wu, 2012). Similarly, family engagement influences functions of behavior, explicitly young learners' attitudes toward school (Sibley & Dearing, 2014). Additionally, it enhances parent-child and parent-school relationships supporting emotional and behavioral development, self-regulatory skills, and academics (De Gaetano, 2007; Cruz, 2016). This is attributed to Latino families' practice of oral stories of encouragement, behavioral guidance, and narratives describing hardships and life experiences (McWayne et al., 2016).

Understanding Barriers to Latino Family Engagement

Family engagement is a complex process that requires families to enter a dyadic partnership with their early education educators. Hence, it is important to understand the engagement barriers as faced by Latino families to better promote family engagement (Zarate, 2008). Barriers vary from language, cultural, socioeconomic, immigration status, and an unwelcome feeling in the classroom (Moody & Ramos, 2014). These varied barriers are multifaceted and interrelated and



can hinder the family engagement process. Some families fear that their unstable status in the U.S. will affect their child's access to an education, thus choosing to refrain from participating in school events. Latino children sometimes sense this family concern, affecting early on the child's feelings of safety, stability, and confidence.

In order to understand barriers to Latino family engagement, it is critical for educators to address the cultural values that Latino families deem important. While the typical American families may engage more comfortably and more openly with educators, teachers may need to consider ways to foster relationships with Latino families in order to encourage engagement. Relationships will develop from understanding Latino cultural values and how they play a role in both families as well as in the education of Latino students.

Understanding the Effects of Latino Cultural Values on Family Engagement

Family goals and beliefs are powerful guides in how families fulfill their roles and responsibilities in schools (Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006). Despite the unique characteristics of each culture, there are common Latino values such as *educación*, *familismo*, *respeto*, and *sacrificio*. These values are rooted in the ideals of interdependence and influence Latino family decisions (Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006; Rangel, 2013).

Educación (education) is a term that considers not just academics, but also encompasses good manners, high morals, honesty, politeness, respectfulness, and re-

sponsibility. Cultivating values of morality and responsibility are central objectives in the childrearing goals of Latino families (Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006). This is highly informative in the context of family engagement as many of the activities that Latino families do are broader than academics alone, as they incorporate social skills and positive interactions.

Familismo (family ties) values maintaining close family ties with immediate and extended family members. Also, it includes the expectation that family is the primary source of emotional support. Loyalty and the commitment to the family over individual needs is taught to young children (Rangel, 2013). *Familismo* includes the notion that problems, issues, and concerns should be resolved within the family, and that outsiders should not be included in decisions related to a family member's well-being, social and emotional development, or psychological states. This factor guides the way Latino families interact and understand educators' efforts to make recommendations or assist in realms traditionally assumed to belong to *the family*.

Respeto (respect) is the maintenance of harmonious interpersonal relationships through respect for others and the roles each person in the family holds. From a young age, children are taught to greet elders politely, not to challenge an elder's point of view, and not to interrupt an adult's conversation (Rinderle & Montoya, 2008). Similarly, the value of *respeto* proposes to treat professionals and experts with deference. Families transmit cultural values, as well as beliefs, traditions and regulatory

skills, that they practice as well (Calzada, Fernandez, & Cortes, 2010). Hence, Latinos treat educators with great respect and thus, yield the power of decision making, suggesting curriculum ideas, or program services to schools/educators (Calzada, Fernandez, & Cortes, 2010). Latino families reserve questioning a school's authority, as it goes against their belief of *respeto* (Smith, Stern, & Shratrova, 2008). As this value contradicts the American definition of engagement and speaking on behalf of the child, Latino families may be identified as disengaged.

Latino families value *sacrificio* (sacrifice). That is sacrificing one's own comfort to provide for one's children (Mendez Smith & Vega, 2015). One way in which Latino families define part of engagement is by making sacrifices and highlighting the results of their efforts to their children. These sacrifices constitute large financial investments to smaller items that are not considered within the basic needs. The Latino collectivist ideology incorporates *sacrificio* as an embodiment of Hispanic cultural values; the concept of giving up what benefits one individual in order to improve the greater whole – for example, a family member working harder in order to provide the means for their child's education in the hopes that their child will use said education to bring success to the family and general community – is the essence of *sacrificio* as it pertains to education.

How Do Latino Families Engage in their Children's Education?

Latinos are often misjudged as being less engaged and that they do not express deep concern and interest in their children's education (Floyd, 2005). The traditional American expectations of engagement have led to many misinterpretations of how Latino families actually collaborate in their children's education (Gregg, Rugg, & Stoneman, 2012). According to Gregg, Rugg, and Stoneman (2012) Latino families hold practices for engagement based on their native country and heritage. As a result, Latinos hold a different cultural definition of family engagement (McWayne, et al., 2016). For example, Latinos view their role in school engagement as a home-based activity, and they are likely to do more of the activities that are unseen by educators (McWayne et al., 2016). Latino families for example consider being engaged by talking to their children about future goals, telling

stories about others to motivate them to succeed, and stories about how difficult life is without an education (McWayne, Melzi, Schick, Kennedy, & Mundt, 2013).

Latinos have been shown to consider training in morality, responsibility, and interpersonal relationships as family engagement activities (McWayne, et al., 2013). Trainings in these areas have been linked to forms of involvement in the Latino culture (Espino, 2016). These trainings are supported by Latino families at home, highlight the expectations that Latino students are required to meet and, therefore, place these values at the forefront of their children's education (Auerbach, 2006; Quiñones, & Marquez, 2014).

Specifically, these forms of engagement in education are described as a four-dimensional form of parental involvement. The first-dimension entails efforts to teach children the basic social interaction, academic knowledge, and their family's culture. The second-dimension is providing experiences regarding encouragement and involvement of other family members. In the third-dimension, families strive to socialize their children around a positive life and the significance of education. Finally, the fourth-dimension is school participation. Nevertheless, the engagement enacted by Latino families in the first three areas is not accounted for as it is not observable nor measurable. Hence, family engagement becomes a single dimension of measurement.

Implications and Recommendations for Educators

Despite the differing cultural views and the many barriers to engagement, educators can put forward a set of research-based strategies in order to engage Latino families in their young children's education. The next section proposes concrete recommendations for practice that can help educators achieve this goal based on an understanding of Latino cultural values.

Welcoming Families' Culture into the Classroom

To encourage participation, a program has to create an environment that is inviting and honors the family presence. Ice and Hoover-Dempsey (2011) have found that one of the most important indicators of family engagement is based on how welcoming the environment is to the attendees. Some

general suggestions for creating a welcoming environment are greeting families at the door, hanging signs in the families' home languages so that families can feel welcome and can navigate the building more easily, and establishing a family-room where families can mingle (Halguseth & Peterson, 2009). An environment is welcoming when families can see their home language and culture represented in the classroom. One way of achieving this is by inviting families to label the classroom in Spanish. Labels can be color-coded so that children can recognize the English and Spanish version of the words. This practice has an effect on family engagement and creates an inviting environment for families and children (Plotka & Kim, 2016).

Additionally, educators can involve families' cultures by collecting information at the start of the school year. One effective activity at reassuring families that their cultures and values will be respected is asking families questions about their family and children's names (Dixon, Zhao, Quiroz, & Shin, 2012). It is recommended that teachers build a book with each child's name, a picture of the child, and a short narrative describing the child's name and meaning both in English and in Spanish. This activity gives educators insight into cultural values and practices, as well as serve as a way of welcoming young learners in the classroom (Plotka & Kim, 2016). It is very important that teachers learn to pronounce the child's name appropriately before the year starts, as this makes children and families feel their culture is respected.

Similarly, it is a good idea to invite families to bring cultural artifacts, recipes, and traditional celebrations to the classrooms. Teachers can encourage families to sing songs and read books in Spanish to the class. Spanish language and culture often focus on oral interactive narratives as a way of supporting education and many traditional tales are likely to be transmitted orally rather than through books. Thus, families can help teachers identify and invite storytellers from the community to tell stories in the child's dominant language (Dixon, Zhao, Quiroz, & Shin, 2012). It is also important to encourage families to see the value in continuing to enrich children with the home culture, in order to allow engagement and development to continue (Sibley & Dearing, 2014).

Understanding Families and Being Flexible

Many families have to work multiple jobs to meet the financial needs of the family, so finding the time to become engaged in the traditional school base setting can be challenging. Engagement is not prioritized when having to work to provide the basic necessities. For these reasons, providing flexible schedules and different opportunities and formats for Latino families to participate is critical. It is important to support families with the time management aspect of family engagement by providing information about the yearly functions at the beginning of the school year and allowing them to request dates for school visits if they cannot come to any set event.

It is important to get family feedback on when many events could be held to allow for more engagement, and to develop an inclusive system for all families. Teachers can plan events by sending letters home in the native language and requesting participation via letters, or scheduling phone calls and in-person meetings. Both communication and flexibility are key in engaging families as it allows for families to more easily reach and feel connected to their child's school. While many teachers hesitate to plan events and meetings or make phone calls, making the additional effort to contact families will ultimately increase family engagement. Furthermore, varied communication and presentation methods can support the engagement of Latino families in early childhood. An effective way of engaging families to visit school centers is by sending traditional mail outreach as well as electronic outreach. For example, teachers can post electronic information about all class events, class news, projects, invitations to workshops, and how to contact the teacher via phone or email. Having teacher websites can allow access to classroom information from outside of the classroom, thus engaging families in a multifaceted way. Latino values of *educación* and *respeto* dictate that it is not polite to decline such invitation, and when flexibility is provided, most families will make the effort to attend the event (Mendez Smith & Vega, 2015). In addition to extending formal invitations, providing visuals, active workshops, and the opportunity to discuss and communicate needs or questions would engage families in the multimodal approach required for active family engagement.

Adult Education

One recommendation for family engagement in early childhood education programs is to offer parenting classes and adult classes at early learning centers and schools. Such programs provide families with networking opportunities as well as valuable knowledge and skills. Programs addressing parenting skills have been shown to be successful at helping families shift parenting styles, change discipline methods, and improve communication between families and teachers in a group of Latino immigrant families (Gregg, Rugg, & Stoneman, 2012). Latino families tend to become more engaged in early learning centers and schools when they meet other families who speak their native language and with whom they can feel comfortable (McWayne et al., 2013). Adult classes, especially ones offered in the families' native language(s), can help build groups and friendships among families which, in turn, enhance family engagement. One way of making sure that Latino families have the opportunity to build relationships with other families is by structuring family meetings to meet this need (Keyser, 2006).

Organizing events where families can meet and communicate with each other will indeed foster increased family engagement at school events; having a connection to their child's teacher will further increase a family's engagement in their student's learning by creating a more open outlet for communication. Because cultures are constantly changing with the times (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012) it would be beneficial to maintain dynamic connections with families that are both flexible and accessible by various means (in-person events, phone meetings, and even online/social media groups).

In also thinking about the collectivist culture that many Latino families share, it would behoove educators to coordinate time to discuss cultural traditions and ideas with Latino families in any way possible. One way to do this is by creating a welcoming environment by hosting events such as parent engagement nights; during events like this, parents can visit the classroom to discuss their child's interests, traditions in the home, or even the origins of their child's name as well as its pronunciation. In addition, having an open forum for families to be able to engage in their child's education allows for Latino families to feel that their values are being respected. It is

imperative that, in current times, educators are taught how to validate families on becoming advocates for their children so they can feel empowered. Through supportive environments, common ground between educators and families can be established and create room for family engagement.

Conducting Home Visits

Home visits are a hallmark of Head Start, Early Head Start, and many other early childhood education programs (Stark, 2016). Most schools or educational programs maintain connections with families via scheduled conferences or planned family outreach. These home visits are important because, as the early childhood setting is the first educational setting, it is often the first opportunity families have to actively engage in their child's education. Home visits can provide educators with a better understanding of the home environment, family dynamics, and culture. Similarly, this is an informal way to connect with families in a manner that might feel less threatening and more comfortable. Home visits can prevent communication problems or help resolve them in an efficient manner. For example, something as simple as teachers introducing themselves and the curriculum for the upcoming year may seem less intimidating in a face-to-face conversation rather than in an impersonal school conference presentation or phone call. Allowing families to meet a teacher and ask questions with their child and family alongside them allows members of the Latino family household to be involved. Collective family involvement is a key part in the decision-making process (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012), especially when considering the concept of *familismo* and how important decisions must be made within the family.

Establishing the opportunity to interact with families in a way they are comfortable increases respect and rapport and, in turn, engagement. Salimbene (2000) states that when early childhood teachers conduct home visits, teachers experience improved relationships with families and children as well as stronger family-teacher communication. Correspondingly, Latinos tend to connect and engage more effectively via in-person communication (Salimbene, 2000; Smith, 2000), fostering interpersonal relationships with families will most likely increase family engagement. Similarly, home



visits are related to improvements in literacy skills, math skills, and children's participation in class activities (Logan & Feiler, 2006).

Latino families respond well to home visits because of the value of *familismo*, the idea that the home and the family are the center of the child's life and that important decisions should be made in the home. In addition, when educators visit the home they are showing respect to the role of family and to the family's culture. As previously mentioned, the Latino collectivist culture places a large emphasis on leveraging family opinions in the decision-making process (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). By engaging Latino families in the family as a whole rather than as individuals, educators pay homage to their [the families] cultural values.

Sharing the Decision-Making Process

Shared decision-making responsibilities are a very important aspect in family engagement. Latino families abide by *respeto*, a concept of cultural importance in which families hold autonomy over their children and the decisions made for them (Calzada et al., 2010). Early childhood programs need to encourage families to be integral parts of classroom decisions and to participate in leadership roles; in doing so, these programs reflect cultural values within the Latino household – a key element to optimizing family engagement. Because these families know that their opinions are valued and that they have an ownership stake in the program, they will be more eager to be involved. Flaughter (2006) found, however, that despite the awareness of the importance of taking part in decision-making, the opportunities to do so are limited, and minority families are still likely to feel that

the decision-making power is not shared. A main tenet in Latino collectivist culture, which parallels the *respeto* that children must have for their elders, is that the classroom is the educator's domain. While the decision-making process regarding programs or curriculum might be a challenge because Latino families may feel they are overstepping their boundaries, it is critical for Latino families to be part of it. Currently, Latino families are not always part of the decision making. Hence, one way to start is by asking families about their priorities and goals in the education process as well as their child's strengths and interests. To promote this, programs can have families select services and activities provided by the center or school (Halgunseth & Peterson, 2009). It is helpful for educators to encourage families to help make decisions as a group, thus helping Latino families overcome their fear to violate the value of *respeto* and the function it has in family-child relationships within the Latino household. In order to optimize family engagement, educators should reflect the decision-making process used in the household within the school setting, as well.

Optimizing Respeto and Educación and Aligning it to Self-Regulation Skills

Understanding the concepts of *respeto*, *educación*, and the cultural relationship to developing regulatory skills, can serve as a form of support to help shape the educational environments and engagement of both Latino students and families. Experiences that support cognitive, behavioral, and emotional experiences differ across cultures (Denham, Bassett, Way, Mincic, Zinsler, & Graling, 2012; Guirguis, 2015; Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, &

Cox, 2000). The central role that cognitive, emotional, and behavioral self-regulation plays in early childhood development and education has prompted academics and educators to question current curricula, especially when it comes to engaging Latino children and families (Raikes, Robinson, Bradley, Raikes, & Ayoub, 2007). Introducing self-regulatory skills that align with the components of *respeto* can take place through the curricula that is implemented. Specifically, since the cultural value of *respeto* emphasizes obedience and respect, *respeto* relates to showing courtesy; this value can ultimately serve as a means of supporting a relationship within the child's family.

Emotional and behavioral regulation skills underlie cultural differences and take place through the promotion of situations and appraisals that are consistent with culturally valued relationships within a given curriculum. While the regulatory processes depend on cultural tendencies and values, it can be co-regulated by educators and the way curriculum is set forth. Aforementioned values within the terms of *respeto*, *educación*, and skills such as emotional/behavioral and cognitive regulation can better extend the relationship between Latino families' teaching at home and teachers at school.

Consequently, in considering traditional Latino cultural values like *respeto* and *educación*, however, the general priority of Latino families is for their children to be disciplined and obedient rather than confident and outspoken (Calzada, et al., 2010); this corroborates the theory that elders uphold authority and ultimate respect within the household and, subsequently, in the classroom. In linking the importance of independence as a vehicle for student advocacy and engagement in their learning, educators can help Latino families understand and identify the importance of self-regulation.

Using Culturally and Linguistically Sensitive Assessments to Promote Awareness and Engagement

Another way of engaging families in the process of academic decision making, is by providing culturally relevant feedback of their children's development and progress. Contextualizing assessments with information about standards and understanding that public education is not the same in all countries, can posi-

tively support the family/teacher relationship. Information presented to families need to be contextualized within the current educational system; this happens first by explaining what academic standards are and why they matter, and then by linking them to how assessments help teachers and families determine how well students are progressing. The second step is sharing with families results from assessments in a culturally sensitive and linguistically valid manner. It is the responsibility of educators to find assessments that are authentic and have these transparent discussions with families to promote awareness and engagement (McWayne, et al., 2016).

In order to better serve young Latino learners and engage families in decisions regarding their children's education, educators should utilize culturally and linguistic appropriate assessments for young children (McWayne et al., 2016). While teachers are part of a team who will select assessment measures and analyze information, families need to be included in the process of interpreting assessment results in order to support relevant determinations of service needs and generate intervention strategies. Inclusion in these decisions creates more family engagement as both teachers and families work as co-partners. Having families involved in academic decisions entails showing families what and how students are being assessed and listening to their concerns regarding these assessments. In the case of Spanish-speaking Latino children, when there is a limited amount of bilingual assessments, the process of assessing and communicating goals to the families becomes yet another challenge in the process of family engagement.

Conclusion

Many of the barriers that challenge family engagement can be addressed through the recommendations presented before. These recommendations can have implications not just for teacher preparation programs but for policy changes in the field that can be made to better engage families. Higher education programs should strive to prepare future educators to become culturally responsive and sensitive to needs of different cultural groups such as Latinos. It is key for higher education programs to prepare teachers who can engage in culturally responsive interactions. This preparation specifically involves understanding families' cultures, being flexible, conducting home visits, and sharing the

decision-making process regarding culturally and linguistically sensitive assessments to promote awareness and engagement.

The U.S. Census shows that 50.4% of children born in the U.S. were minorities (2015). As such, the importance of understanding and implementing cultural responsiveness must be implemented in teaching and learning environments so that specific subcultures do not fall behind. Consequently, for Latinos, by learning to acknowledge and support concepts of *educación*, *familismo*, *respeto*, and *sacrificio*, educators can better prepare for students and families that have a different perception of educational system and expectations.

Whereas teacher preparation programs may not always explicitly teach cultural values of specific ethnic groups, said programs should provide the means for teachers to engage families in a way they feel comfortable enough to discuss or share these types of values with their children's teachers. In order for all students to succeed, the learning environment must be representative of the students in the class by finding culturally responsive and relevant connections between students and subject matter in order. Similarly, early childhood education program administrators can make sure to provide workshops about cultural sensitivity and competency in early childhood. In order for minority students to be successful, they need educators that can create a stigma-free, emotionally safe, and supportive early learning environment with high expectations for all students.

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Literacy Growth for Children in Poverty

BY JENNIFER DYER SENNETTE, DAVID L. BROWN, DONNA MCCRARY, & TAMI MORTON



Adults, primarily teachers and parents, and caregivers, play an important role in providing children's subsequent literacy development starting at a very early age. Many researchers – Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, & Shapiro (2006), Dodici, Draper, & Peterson (2003), Whitehurst & Longian (1998), Teale & Sulzby, (1986) – have described how young children's personal relationships with others influence their literacy development. Bowlby's (1979) classic research found that young children's attachment with caregivers and adults effects their self-concept and ability to relate to others. Additionally, van IJzendoorn (1995) found that children who are more securely attached to their mothers are read to more often than those with less attachment. Neumann (2016) and Dyson (2015) indicate that young children's social relationships play a significant role in their writing process and their written products. In addition, Miller (2011) and Beeghly and Cicchetti (1987) also found that there are significant connections between securely attached children and their language production.

While there is ample evidence for building these strong connections, unfortunately, some adults may not understand the immense importance to build robust relationships with children. As an example, Jensen

(2013) explains that many teachers who are assigned to schools in low socioeconomic communities may not have the experience or the knowledge necessary to create these secure relationships. This could be attributed to a cultural incongruity between adult caregivers and children (Paris & Alim, 2017). Therefore, there is a need to identify ways that will foster the development of positive relationships between children who live in poverty and significant adults in their lives particularly to enhance literacy experiences. Several suggestions are provided in the succeeding paragraphs.

First, we must create opportunities for engagement between the child, the school and the child's home. For instance, teachers can provide opportunities for parents to connect with the school through programs such as LiteracyConnexus where community volunteers, teachers, and parents build bookcases for home use. Parents help build and paint the bookshelves while the community or school provides books. Teachers follow by offering information about ways to use the books in the home (LiteracyConnexus, 2017).

Second, adults can discuss shared literacy practices between the home and school. This can be done when adults highlight common

school/home experiences such as reading school lunch menus, grocery shopping lists, labels and prices at local stores, print and numbers on the school bus and/or public transportation, billboards and street signs (U. S. Department of Education, 2017). When adults focus on these types of shared practices, children see relationships among adults, they feel included and, consequently, want to be part of the literacy interchange.

Third, adults can build relationships through embracing the linguistic or cultural differences of the children by using appropriate instructional materials or resources. As an illustration, dramatic play center resources should include props that represent the ethnicities or neighborhood of children in the classroom (dolls, furniture, food, etc.). Additionally, children who have special needs should be represented in classroom visuals and with appropriate classroom modifications. Finally, books portraying authentic characters from varied cultures must be included in the classroom and school library for children to internalize a feeling of connection between themselves and the important adults in their lives.

Fourth, schools should refrain from thinking that families living in poverty are uncaring about their children's school lives. Educator preparation programs can play a role in this by preparing teachers to work with children from various socioeconomic groups (Ullucci & Howard, 2015). One way to ensure this may be done is through valuing the family's strengths and using those strengths in the classroom (carpentry skills for math and measurement or mechanic skills for physics). Such strengths can be referred to as funds of knowledge (Moll, 1922). This represents a strength's-based approach to involve families (Fenton, Walsh, Wong & Cumming, 2015).

Fifth, adults must become strong models of language when conversing with children. Adults who model appropriate syntax, use descriptive words for feelings, and help increase the child's vocabulary create a context for growth that will alleviate the frustration of being unable to communicate effectively.

In summary, the routine language used day-to-day by significant adults in the lives of young children plays an important role in creating healthy relationships between adults and young children in poverty (Neuman, 2016). Words or teacher talk serve as an important factor in promoting secure relationships between the adult and child. Further, “words matter” when attempting to create positive relationships between teachers and young children in poverty.

Children who trust teachers and feel attached to them feel safe to explore their classroom environment including literacy experiences. Children’s literature can be a powerful vehicle for helping young children into literacy and developing oral language while at the same time feeling safe in their classroom. The following section describes several books that can be used to promote literacy in young children in poverty in the home and the school.

Developing Oral Language Through Read Alouds

There are many strategies teachers and parents can use to help students who need to practice oral language skills, especially children who live in poverty (Hoff, 2013). One strategy is reading aloud authentic

literature (McClure & Fullerton, 2017). Adults can read authentic books to children to expose them to a variety of words, to increase their vocabulary, and to improve their understanding on a variety of topics.

Considering the challenges of children in poverty, it is important that we keep in mind the idea that literature can be powerful. Bishop (1990) states that “books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange... Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience.” (para 1).

Adults can provide books that help children in poverty by not only offering windows to different experiences, but to also see their own lives and realize that they are not alone. The following are a few examples of books that can be used to stimulate discussions to help provide personal connections for children in poverty.

Malaika’s Costume by Nadia L. Hohn. It’s Carnival time and this is the first carnival since Malaika’s mom moved to Canada to find a good job. Her mother promised her that she would send money for a costume, but the money has not arrived. This story

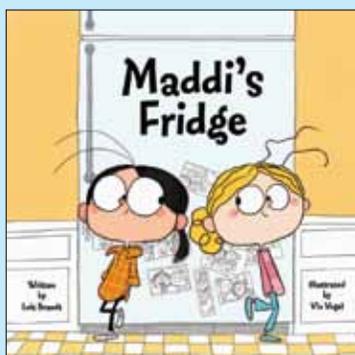
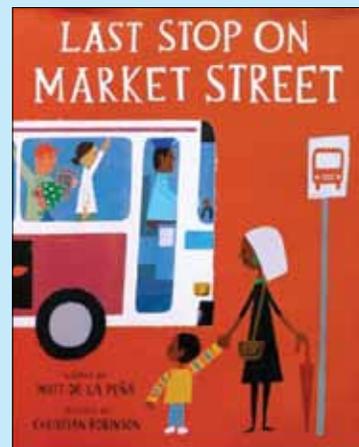
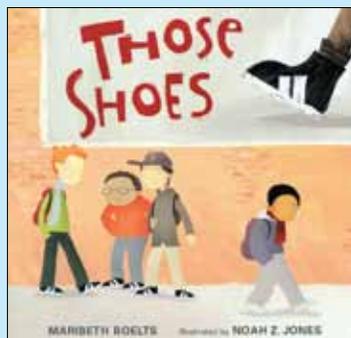
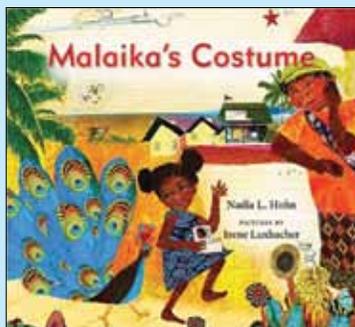
tells how her grandmother and the community come together to help Malaika get ready to dance in the parade.

Maddi’s Fridge by Lois Brandt. With humor and warmth, this book tells the story of childhood hunger. Maddie lives in the same neighborhood, goes the same school, and plays in the park as Sophia, so Sophia is surprised when her friend Maddi did not have a snack in her fridge. Maddi explains that her mother did not have money to get the food yet.

Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Peña. In this 2016 Newberry Award winning book, CJ could not understand why his family did not have a car, and had to wait on the city bus, especially on this rainy day. His nana answers all of his questions in a warm and accepting manner, which helps CJ understand.

Fly Away Home by Eve Bunting. In this story, a homeless boy and his father move from terminal to terminal to avoid any airport guards. While this can’t happen now, with the great amount of security at airports, the vision of this young boy and his father moving from terminal to terminal, provides a glimpse of being homeless.

Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts. All Jeremy wants is a pair of the trendy shoes



that all of his friends are wearing, but his grandmother explains to him that there is a difference between wants and needs. He ends up receiving a pair of shoes from the thrift store that fit too tight. When he is able to help a friend in need he feels much better about not having those shoes.

While these books are created for readers of several different age groups, they all have qualities that would help children in poverty connect with their personal experiences through relationships with important people in their lives. For example, in *Malaiika's Costume* and in *Those Shoes*, the main characters had a wonderful relationship with their grandmothers. The characters both dealt with the challenge of not receiving money and finding alternative resources.

Books are one important resource that can be used to promote literacy development in children. Parents will be able to find these books, or others, at the public libraries, school libraries, or through nonprofit organizations like First Book National. First Book National book banks (<https://www.firstbook.org/about-first-book/our-approach/national-book-bank>) has book banks which take books to churches, schools, and organizations serving children with special needs. Not only does First Book provide books to children and families, through the First Book Marketplace they also have personal hygiene materials as well as clothing items available.

Home Resources Increase Literacy Development

Schools with high poverty rates often find it difficult to purchase needed resources for the classroom. Likewise, families often find it difficult to support classroom instruction thinking that they also do not have the appropriate resources, education, or experiences (Nwokah, Hsu & Gulker, 2013). Moreover, access to literacy facilities such as libraries, bookstores, or other book lending sources may not be accessible to children and families of poverty (Neuman & Moland, 2019). However, families possess many resources within their home that can be used to increase their child's literacy skills. These include oral story telling of family histories, family experiences, and materials in the home.

The home-prop box is one avenue for accessing resources available in families and help families organize materials to use with

literacy experiences. Prop boxes have long been regarded as helpful tools that enable teachers to provide hands-on teaching materials in the classroom. For example, they may center on a fire fighter theme, a restaurant theme, or a woodworking theme (Desjean-Perrotta, & Barbour, 2001; Sluss, 2018) a science theme (Hommerding, 2007) or a standards based goal (Hanvey, 2010). etc. Materials that relate to the theme are placed in the box, stored for the appropriate time, and then used to enhance the classroom activities. The benefits of a prop box are that materials are easily available and ready to use.

Teachers can encourage parents to create their own boxes from household items and then use those items to enhance language skills when children are at home. This type of prop box can be valuable for the parent with limited resources as they seek ways to use items available in their home. The prop boxes can be updated with new items as children grow and develop. Suggested ideas for home-prop box items may include various colors of cloth-swatches, old socks, milk jugs, cereal boxes, paper towel rolls, plastic bags, food coloring, empty baby wipe boxes, paper plates, etc. Families may choose which items to place in the box.

These items can be adapted for several activities that can increase early learning skills and enhance oral language and literacy skills. For instance, empty baby wipe boxes or milk jugs can be used to create drop toys (Smith, 2012). By cutting rectangles, squares, or circles on the sides of the milk jug or box, the child can place like objects in the correct hole. Three dimensional shapes made from aluminum foil could be used for spheres or rectangles. For example, the family member might say, Ashley, find the sphere and place it in the round circle on the milk jug. What color is the sphere? Do you see anything in our room that looks like this sphere? How many things do you see in the room that are round like the sphere? Let's count them. This activity helps to build fine motor skills, teaches the names of geometric shapes, and exposes children to print by reading the label on the milk jug.

The challenge of the home-prop box is to increase the family member's skill in using the items within the prop box to extend literacy concepts with their child (Sosa, 2016). Developing this skill is essential for this tool to become a conduit for learning between the classroom and the home. Embracing

principles of adult learning and cultural relevancy may be helpful in achieving this goal. Some families may respond to a workshop where the items and accompanying activities are presented. Other families may require a visit to the home to receive one to one instruction or coaching on the use of materials. Still others may respond better to written instructions.

Technology and Literacy

Technology has become increasingly available to children and families who live below the poverty threshold through the use of tablets and smartphones. In fact, families of poverty report a higher incidence of smartphones in their homes than the use of personal computers (Smith, 2015). Mobile applications (Apps) on smartphones such as Nick, Jr., PBS Kids video, PBS Kids games, and ABC Mouse can be used by families to increase oral language and literacy among their children. Further, schools can build upon this new literacy avenue by planning technology nights where parents and children examine free literacy-based Apps and receive guidance on their appropriate use. This is an example of how parents and schools can collaborate and use technology to enhance relationships, bridge the digital divide, and increase literacy among children.

Summary

In summary, this article has described several home and school based suggestions to address educational needs of young children in poverty particularly as it relates to literacy development. Poverty is indeed a complex phenomenon that can be caused by a number of systemic and individual factors including single family households (Rector, Johnson, & Fagan, 2007), father absence (Wilson, 2007), incarcerated parents (Bahr, 2007) are known to be highly associated with poverty. Ideas that support literacy growth that can be incorporated by the classroom teacher are critical to the child's development. Building relationships with children and families of poverty is an important part of the child's literacy development. Children's literature can be an effective vehicle for building literacy development among children in poverty. In addition, the child's home represents a large fund of resources that can be used to support the teacher's classroom efforts in developing literacy.

Poverty is wide-spread among children and families who live in the southeastern regions of the United States. With such a high rate of poverty it is imperative that teachers of these children are equipped with tools and strategies to minimize the effects of poverty on their literacy development.

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Co-producing Culturally Relevant Services with Families of Young Children with Disabilities

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To effectively serve young children with special needs, it is essential that early childhood service providers infuse cross cultural competencies into child and family services. Children benefit when services are culturally and linguistically meaningful (Mendoza, Argus-Calvo, & Tafoya, 2006; World Health Organization (WHO) & United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2012). Language and cultural considerations are needed to co-create culturally relevant services for young children with disabilities and their families (Lynch & Hanson, 2011; Pierson, Myck-Wayne, Stang, & Basinska, 2015).

Approximately 22% of children in the U.S. speak a language other than English in the home (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2018). Urban, suburban, and rural areas are increasingly more ethnically and racially diverse. For example, the Hispanic population in the U.S. has grown from approximately 4% in 1970 to over 17% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Young children are one of the largest percentages of the population of

Hispanic origin in the U.S., and growing. American population studies predict that one in three children will be from a Hispanic family by 2050 (Patten, 2016; Stepler & Brown, 2016). Therefore, it is crucial that early childhood programs are equipped to address the needs of young children and their families from diverse backgrounds, as well as those with special needs.

Importance of Research for Family Services

Longitudinal seminal studies such as the Carolina Abecedarian project (Campbell & Ramey, 1995; Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Miller-Johnson, & Burchinal, 2001), the Syracuse Family Research Program, and Project CARE (Burchinal, Campbell, Bryant, Wasik, & Ramey, 1997) show the positive impact that early childhood programs can have on culturally and linguistically young children and their families, particularly those with special needs. These studies have shown the importance of collaborating with families to

create positive learning outcomes for young children. Early childhood programs like the ones mentioned above are based on socio-cultural theory, which supports the necessity of creating an environment for children that focuses on the family (Vygotsky, 1978). The family is the most important relationship in a child's life. For example, newborns are biologically wired to seek out adult faces and mimic caregivers' facial expressions while toddlers copy familiar and unfamiliar motor behaviors of caregivers' when they play a game of peekaboo. Preschoolers learn acceptable behavior from their caregivers such as when taking turns during a conversation at story time. Children's growth and development are contingent upon the people in their life (Guttentag et al., 2014; Harry, Rueda, & Kalyanpur, 1999).

The Need for Family Services

When service providers deliver family-centered practices they are addressing the varied and complex needs of young children and their immediate family members (Grisham-Brown, Hemmeter, & Pretti-Frontczak, 2005; Harry, 1997; Turner, Guzman, Wildsmith, & Scott, 2015). Determining the priorities and concerns of the family are ways to serve the child. Practices that are family-centered build on family strengths. Listening to what the family needs and responding effectively are ways to co-create useful services. Cultural reciprocity and encouraging interactions with families can be informed by degrees of mutual cooperation to empower families. Partnerships are enhanced when professionals and families have the tools to co-produce positive experiences (Bagnato, 2007; Dennis & Stockall, 2015). Cross cultural competency is critical in building rapport and effective collaborative relationships with families from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Collazo,

2013; Guttentag et al., 2014; Harry, 2008). Before service delivery, service providers should consider antecedents that will foster effective collaboration.

Co-production. We define co-production as the process used by professionals and families for coming together to create services to support young children. Co-production is a strategy for collaboration among individuals seeking a common goal (Jakobsen & Andersen, 2013; Haumann, Güntürkün, Schons, & Wieseke, 2015; Ledger & Slade, 2015). Other sectors use co-production to co-produce a service. For example, many people use co-production when getting a haircut. The hair stylist and client talk about desired outcome, customer concerns and priorities. The final result is dependent upon both entities. Language and cultural barriers must be overcome in order to co-create optimal outcomes. For instance, if the hairstylist and client are unable to communicate effectively, it will be difficult to achieve what they want.

Professionals and families can co-produce services because one knows the child intimately (i.e., the family), and the other is skilled at service delivery (i.e., professionals). Professionals and families need one another and can work in collaboration to provide the child what he or she needs. Communication with one another needs to be clear and understandable for co-production to be a successful service delivery strategy. In order to co-produce meaningful services for young children with disabilities, at least two elements should be considered: antecedents and role expectations.

Antecedents. Cross cultural competency is critical in building rapport and effective collaborative relationships with families (Collazo, 2013; Guttentag et al., 2014; Harry, 2008). Before service delivery, service providers should consider antecedents that will foster effective collaboration. Collaboration is a purposeful activity (Bricker, Macy, Squires, & Marks, 2013). Some antecedents may include, but are not limited to: (a) understanding individual family differences (e.g., demographics, needs/attitudes, abilities, and knowledge), (b) service related expectations (e.g., time, effort of investment, reliability, predictability, speed of service delivery, access to services, enjoyment, outcomes desired), (c) family-provider relationship (e.g., length, atmosphere, and family's social supports), (d) service characteristics (e.g., complexity, organizational requirements

of participation), and (e) service provider behavior (e.g., participation encouragement, investment in family socialization and education). Professionals may individualize practices to reflect the cultural and linguistic needs of children and families.

Role expectations. Another important activity prior to early childhood services, or during, is to determine the family's expectations for roles. Engaging families to co-produce service experiences requires a clear understanding, as well as communication around service delivery (Haumann, Güntürkün, Schons, & Wieseke, 2015; Lynch & Hanson, 2011). Clarity of roles and respect for family preferences will foster understanding needed for effective collaboration. Parental perceptions are integral in co-producing services (Alvira-Hammond, & Gennetian, 2015; Hunton, 1996; Ledger, & Slade, 2015; Troye & Supphellen, 2012). The aim is to develop congruency between actual and perceived expectations. Collaborative efforts can be mapped onto a variety of services which may include on home visits, natural environments, or clinical settings. The next section of this paper shows how these themes and quality indicators are illustrated with two families who both have a child with Down syndrome.

Examples of Families

Theoretical underpinnings like socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), as well as longitudinal studies support the co-production framework. Co-production of early childhood services occurs when professionals and families collaborate. Positive early childhood outcomes may be possible when culture and language are considered when co-producing services and programs with children's families. Co-production can take place anywhere. We present an example of co-producing services with two families both with young children who have Down syndrome. Rico's family lives in the U.S. while Karen Daniela's family lives in Mexico. Each family has their own service provider and co-produce services for their respective child. These are only samples and not meant to be a standard approach to follow. Both show an example of co-producing services with families in different contexts.

Rico. Rico was born with Down syndrome. He is 18-months and lives with his mother, father, and 5-year-old sister Maria in the Pacific Northwest. The family speaks Spanish at

home. Jessica, the service provider, facilitated the development of Rico's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Mealtimes are a priority for his parents and as such oral motor goals and objectives were created.

On the day of the home visit, Jessica joins the family for dinner. Rico's parents asked her previously if she could focus on ways to support the family during meal times. Rico has a sensitive gag reflex, and an enlarged tongue which sometimes makes it difficult for him to talk and eat. Jessica gathered prior information about antecedents and learned the family's expectations for service delivery. Jessica prepared for the home visit by gathering support materials in Spanish from *Colorín Colorado*, a bilingual website with resources for parents and professionals.

Mr. and Mrs. Garcia set a plate at the table for Jessica. Rico sat between Mrs. Garcia and Jessica at the circular table. After saying grace, everyone ate dinner. Jessica asked if they could start the meal doing their usual routine. Mrs. Garcia fed Rico using a spoon. Jessica noticed the spoon was presented in front of Rico's face at eye level. He would look at each spoonful and then start to gag as the food entered his mouth.

Jessica debriefed with Rico's parents about all the strengths she had been observing during meal time including the benefits of knowing two languages. She also discussed how to best help Rico with his meal when eating with a spoon. Jessica suggested to try presenting the spoon to the side of Rico's mouth instead of the front. She started by presenting the spoon of food from the side. The first attempt resulted in no gagging. Subsequent bites were taken by Rico without any gagging. Jessica handed the spoon to Rico's parents who also fed him without Rico gagging on his food. "Muy bien," [very good] said Mrs. Garcia. Role release occurred when Rico's parents implemented the intervention rather than Jessica. When a professional exchanges and/or shares expertise with another (e.g., parent, another professional, etc.) about an intervention strategy role release can occur where the professional is no longer the only person who can implement the intervention (Johnson, Rahn, & Bricker, 2015). The simple adjustment of spoon placement seemed successful that night, but Mrs. Garcia was concerned about what would happen with other foods with different textures. Jessica and Mrs. Garcia planned to check with each

other in the next day by phone to see how things progressed, as well as later in the week.

Karen Daniela. Living in a small community called Sisoguichi, located in the region of the Copper Canyon in the state of Chihuahua (in Northern Mexico) Karen Daniela is a preschooler born with Down syndrome. Her family is Tarahumara (also known as Raramuri) who are the indigenous population native to the region. Luz Maria has been Karen Daniela's primary caregiver and interested in her well-being and education since she was 2-years-old as her biological mother suffers from substance abuse. Karen Daniela is not legally adopted. However, Karen Daniela considers Luz Maria to be her mother.

Karen Daniela's parents visit her when they are able, especially the father. They live alone in a home that has been "loaned" to them on the outskirts of the City of Chihuahua. Their economic situation is very limited. Luz Maria works as a housekeeper when able and she mostly lives on donations that are given to her by people who know her. She does get some government support monthly for basic goods, and Karen Daniela receives a scholarship to pay for her school.

Karen Daniela has an intellectual disability and physical attributes characterized by Down syndrome that include maxillofacial hypoplasia, a heart condition, and poor vision. Luz Maria reported that Karen Daniela is enrolled in a private school that only serves students with Down syndrome, which she has attended since she was 3-years-old. Only for a short period of time she transferred to a public school that serves children with varying disabilities. But Luz Maria preferred the private school due to the limited attention that Karen Daniela received.

Luz Maria indicated that she is pleased with the attention that Karen Daniela gets at school in terms of the educational structure that is provided and the progress she has observed in the development of her social skills and work habits that have helped Karen Daniela tend to daily life skills. Karen is able to care for herself, is developing independence, and the foundations for future work skills.

Reflection

The examples show co-production of services for children with Down syndrome in the U.S. and Mexico. Noteworthy is that each child had a family member who was



co-producing early childhood services with an early childhood professional. For example, in the case of Rico, Jessica individualized her practices to tailor services that reflected his home culture and dual language household. Karen Daniela, like Rico, was able to experience home and school connection. Positive child outcomes may be possible when families and professionals co-produce culturally and linguistically relevant services. Familiarity with global perspectives is an advantage for serving children and their families.

Conclusion

This article shared information about co-producing culturally and linguistically relevant services with families. The main point of our article was to define co-production, demonstrate how to co-produce services with families, and then show how it can be used in varied contexts. The two examples show different ways to co-produce services that provide optimal opportunities to meet the child and family needs. The practices may need to be tailored to reflect the cultural and linguistic needs of children and families, as well as professionals. Children will benefit when families are supported. Families deserve high quality services that are culturally and linguistically relevant.

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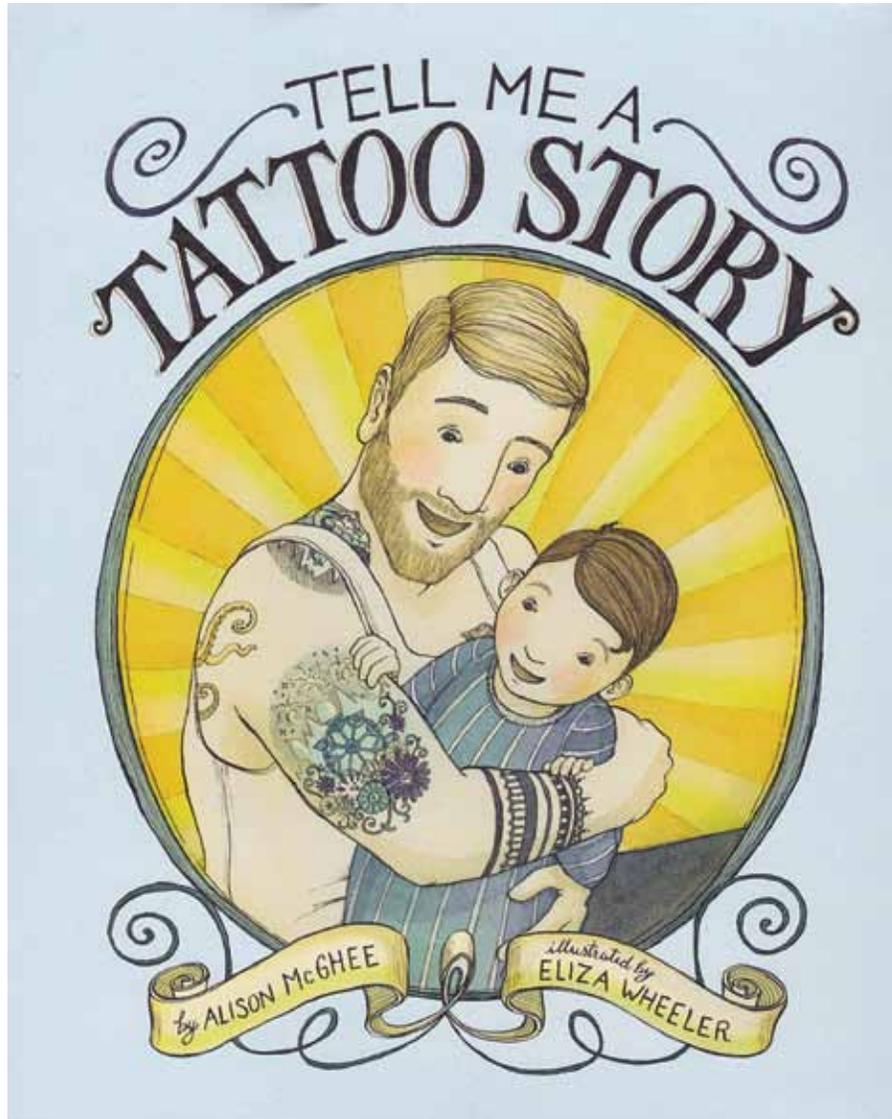
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Children's Book Review

BY DINA COSTA TREFF



Alison McGhee's *Tell Me a Tattoo Story* presents the special moments made possible through tattoos. This heartwarming story shows the connection made between life and a father's tattoos. The book unfolds with the son asking the father about his tattoos. The father narrates the book and tells his own story portrayed through the ink in his skin. The son explores his father's history and life experiences, providing significance to the ink. Eliza Wheeler's illustrations share the beautiful stories being told, both in the moment and at the time the tattoos were inked, while also providing a venue to soften the stigma associated with tattoos. As tattoos become more acceptable and mainstream, children often see them on parents as well as teachers. McGhee does a wonderful job of explaining the meaning behind the ink and that each has a story to tell while dispelling the myth that tattoos are meaningless pictures on skin.

Reseña del libro para niños

POR DINA COSTA TREFF

El libro *Cuéntame un Tatuaje* por Alison McGhee presenta los momentos especiales posibles a través de los tatuajes. Esta conmovedora historia muestra la conexión entre la vida y los tatuajes de un padre. El libro se desarrolla con el hijo preguntándole al padre acerca de sus tatuajes. El padre narra el libro y cuenta su propia historia representada a través de la tinta en su piel. El hijo explora la historia y las experiencias de la vida de su padre, dando importancia a la tinta. Las ilustraciones de Eliza Wheeler comparten las hermosas historias

que se cuentan, tanto en el momento como en el momento en que se tatuaron los tatuajes, a la vez que proporcionan un lugar para suavizar el estigma asociado con los tatuajes. A medida que los tatuajes se vuelven más aceptables y comunes, los niños los ven a menudo tanto en los padres como en los maestros. McGhee hace un trabajo maravilloso al explicar el significado detrás de la tinta y que cada uno tiene una historia que contar al tiempo que disipa el mito de que los tatuajes son imágenes sin significado en la piel.



CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

Dimensions of Early Childhood Special Issue 2020

It's All about Relationships!

Guest Editor: Dr. Wilma Robles-Melendez

Quality relationships in early childhood are very important for children's healthy socioemotional development (Séguin & MacDonald, 2018). Vygotsky believed that children learn from adults and peers and that learning occurs through the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Parents help build strong relationships by modeling and teaching (O'Connor, Nolan, Bergmeier, Hooley, Olsson, & Cann, 2016) often through funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzales, 1992) as families value such relationships. Furthermore, the nature of teacher-child relationships is important for quality learning experiences in the early childhood classroom (Albin-Clark, Shirley, Webster, & Woolhouse, 2018). We are looking for manuscripts that focus on different aspects of relationships in early childhood. The following include possible topics but it is not an exclusive list:

- Peer relations
- Relationships and children with special needs
- Relationships in play
- Child-child relationships
- Adult-child relationships (teacher or parent)
- Parent-teacher relationships
- Intergenerational relationships
- Quality interactions
- Diversity in relationships (including same sex families, immigrants families, one parent families, families in poverty)
- Social competence
- Problem-solving
- Classroom environment
- Temperament
- Behavior
- Emotions
- Self-control
- Trust
- Trauma, separation, loss
- Influence of technology
- Relationships vs. friendships
- Friendship

**Please send your submission by September 1, 2019 to
editor@southernearlychildhood.org.**

Mari Riojas-Cortez, Ph.D.
Editor

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