

Summary of Current Hispanic Center Research Projects

Below, we provide a summary of the research projects underway at the National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families across our priority areas.

Fatherhood, family structure, and family dynamics

The work in this area seeks to improve the field's understanding of the diversity and quality of family life—marriages and relationships, fatherhood, parenting, and family functioning—of low-income Latinos in ways that inform policy development and programmatic responses.

1. The context of Hispanic couples in the Supporting Healthy Marriage (SHM) evaluation.

This project uses data from the Supporting Healthy Marriage (SHM) evaluation, an evaluation of marriage strengthening programs, to describe the family context of Hispanic couples seeking out healthy marriage and relationship education (HMRE) services. Specifically, we seek to describe the complexities that families bring across a wide range of domains that can shape their need for services (e.g., prior marital relationships and stepchildren), couples' attitudes and values around marriage and gender, couples' levels of distress in their lives (e.g., related to mental health, a lack of social support, or high levels of marital or financial distress). The answer to these questions can provide important context about Hispanic families who are seeking out services and provide some high-level insight into common challenges Hispanic couples may be facing as they seek to build more stable relationships.

2. (SHM) HMRE program engagement among Hispanics. In this brief, we use the SHM evaluation dataset to answer questions about Hispanic couples' level of engagement in healthy marriage and relationship education (HMRE) programs in terms of dosage, number of topics exposed to, participation in supplemental activities, and receipt of referrals. We will explore what factors are linked to increased program engagement (e.g., nativity, family complexity, values and attitudes, level of distress, employment, and income). The answer to this question will provide important detail on the types of factors that may promote or limit program engagement. This, in turn, may help programs identify more effective strategies to target the populations that are hardest to engage .

3. Rural Hispanic Families. The context of rural communities is changing rapidly, and the Hispanic population is a critical part of this change. Hispanics in the U.S. are increasingly moving to rural areas, and this may present both opportunities and challenges. In rural areas, particularly those with aging populations, new Hispanic residents can help meet labor demands and stave off population declines. At the same time, a community with a new Hispanic population may lack the infrastructure to provide culturally appropriate/sensitive human and social services, such as Spanish-speaking capabilities or translation services. This research brief will use secondary data (e.g., the American

Community Survey, Current Population Survey) to describe the sociodemographic and family characteristics of Hispanic families in rural communities.

- 4. Latino parents' self-sufficiency, marital and co-parenting relationships, and parenting: Evidence from the SHM evaluation dataset.** This project uses data from the Supporting Healthy Marriage (SHM) evaluation dataset to produce a profile of Latino parents' levels of self-sufficiency, quality of their marital and co-parenting and parenting relationships, and their psychological functioning.

Poverty and Self-Sufficiency

The objectives of this research area are to better understand: 1) the role of policy and practice in shaping use of social services, 2) dependency on government assistance and economic self-sufficiency, and 3) implications for child well-being.

- 1. Profile of state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) policies in states with high populations of low-income Hispanic children.** This project is examining state-level variation in TANF policy/practice dimensions that are particularly salient for Hispanic families and may facilitate or hinder access to TANF, such as: eligibility requirements around English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and work hours; household and work documentation requirements; recertification requirements including the treatment of seasonal work; the availability of program information and/or application online in Spanish; and others. Earlier work documented [variations in Child Care and Development Fund \(CCDF\) policy](#) in 13 states, where collectively 80% of low-income Hispanic children live. We found substantial state variations suggesting that families residing in these states experience different access barriers based on the state-level implementation of CCDF subsidy receipt.
- 2. The education trajectories and economic mobility of Hispanic Parents.** This project uses data from the 2004, '08, and '14 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) to document completed education and changes in, or accumulation of education or related certification or training across these SIPP panels, among Hispanic parent-respondents.

Early Care and Education (ECE)

This research area seeks to: 1) advance understanding of ECE issues for the heterogeneous population of low-income Hispanic families; 2) promote informed ECE choices among Hispanic parents and identify mechanisms to increase access across diverse communities; and 3) improve the quality of ECE services and coordination across systems to better support early learning among Hispanic children.

- 1. A closer look at variation in Hispanic families' out-of-pocket child care expenses.** This project extends our previous work on [child care affordability](#) for low-income Hispanic households by examining associations between child, household and community characteristics and different levels of child care spending (i.e., zero out-of-pocket costs vs. affordable costs vs. high costs).

2. **Study of “on-the-ground” CCDF implementation practices in new and established Hispanic communities: A view from two states.** This build on a previous [policy scan](#) that examined variation in CCDF policies and practices to gather in-depth information about how CCDF policies are being implemented “on the ground” in two strategically-selected states. The project aims to provide useful insights for effectively reaching and serving eligible Hispanic families.

Cross-Cutting Topics

The goal of the cross-cutting area is to examine cross-cutting, emerging research issues related to the Administration for Children and Families’ (ACF) programmatic and policy priorities.

1. **Statistical portrait series.** Descriptive profiles on topics to better understand the characteristics and experiences of low-income Hispanics. Potential topics include: 1) education of low-income Hispanic parents, 2) poverty, 3) housing costs and stability, and 4) mental health of Latino youth and parents of Latino children.
2. **The employment experiences of mixed-status Hispanic families.** Building on the work of Jim Bachmeier, we will use the SIPP to identify parents who are likely unauthorized immigrant Hispanic parents to examine how their employment patterns differ from those of their authorized immigrant counterparts. In addition to basic measures such as employment status, number of hours and jobs, wages, etc., we will examine job characteristics of likely unauthorized immigrants (extending our earlier work to this sample).