Data Source and Methodology

The 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) is a set of four nationally representative surveys designed to describe the early care and education landscape of the United States from the supply and demand perspectives. The data presented in this brief are drawn from the NSECE public use household survey, which collects parent-reported information about child care utilization and costs for a nationally representative sample of households with children under age 13. The NSECE oversampled in economically disadvantaged communities, resulting in large numbers of low-income families.

This brief focuses on children younger than age 3 living in low-income households (defined as those with annual income below 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold) where all members are identified by the respondent as being Hispanic (regardless of racial classification).[d] In the NSECE, these selection criteria apply to 1,122 children, 1,037 children (or 92 percent) of whom had complete data on the demographic and child care utilization variables included in the analysis.

Most analytic variables had less than 1 percent of missing data, with the exception of single-parent status, presence of a teenager in the household, receipt of public assistance, and parent nonstandard work hours, each of which had less than 4 percent missingness. Tests of mean differences between those included and excluded from the analytic sample indicated that children with missing data were more likely to be from an immigrant household and to live in an urban community, and less likely to have two working parents in the home (with fewer total parental work hours), to be in a household receiving public assistance, and to live in a community with moderate poverty density. Table 2 provides descriptive information for this sample.

A logistic regression model is used to examine which child, household, and community characteristics are associated with a higher or lower likelihood that a low-income Hispanic infant and toddler child will be in any nonparental care. All analyses were conducted in STATA 16.0 and were weighted to be nationally representative of children living in U.S. households in 2012.[e]

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[d] For the purposes of this brief, we focused on the experiences of low-income Hispanic households; multi-ethnic households which contain both Hispanic and non-Hispanic members are excluded from the analysis.

[e] Tests evaluating multicollinearity among the predictors did not reveal notable issues. In addition, sensitivity analyses that included potentially overlapping indicators (e.g., immigrant status and limited English skills) one at a time (rather than including both in the model simultaneously) did not yield different results.

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Definitions

- **Nonparental care.** Parents reported on all of the individuals or organizations that care for the child on a regular basis (i.e., five or more hours per week), both in the week prior to the survey, as well as any regular providers not used in the past week. Children were identified as being in nonparental care if they had at least one nonparental care arrangement for five or more hours per week. This brief uses nonparental care, child care and ECE as interchangeable terms inclusive of a range of nonparental providers, including home- and center-based care providers.

- **Child disability/special needs status** indicates children identified by parents as having a physical, emotional, developmental, or behavioral condition that has an impact on the care they need.

- **Household composition.** Several variables were used to capture the types of individuals who co-reside with the child in the home. These included indicators for the presence of one (as opposed to two) biological/step/adoptive parent of the child, and the presence of other children younger than 5, children ages 5 to 12, and/or teenagers ages 13 to 17. In addition, we created an indicator to identify households with a grandparent in the home and/or a relative living nearby who could provide child care.

- **Immigrant household** identifies households where at least one member is foreign-born (versus the comparison group of nonimmigrant households, where all members are U.S.-born).

- **Limited English household** identifies those households in which English is not regularly spoken.

- **Parent work status and number of hours.** To capture aspects of parents' employment, we include indicators of whether no parent, one parent, or two or more parents in the household reported work hours in the week prior to the survey. We also include a continuous variable of the total hours of work reported for the child's parents living in the household.

- **Nonstandard work hours** are identified by an indicator of whether any of the child's parents worked during times beyond 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

- **Household income-to-poverty ratio** represents the ratio of the household's annual income to the federal poverty threshold for 2011.

- **Household receipt of public assistance** identifies households that report receiving public assistance or welfare payments.

- **Community poverty density** is represented by three indicators of low, moderate and high poverty density that identify whether the household is located in a community where less than 13.9 percent (low), 13.9 percent to 20 percent (moderate), or more than 20 percent (high) of the population has incomes below the federal poverty threshold.

- **Community urbanicity** is represented by three indicators of whether the household is in a community classified as: 1) urban, with high urban density (.85 to 1.00 ratio of urban to total population), 2) suburban, with moderate urban density (.30 to .84 ratio), or 3) rural, with low urban density (.29 or less ratio).

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Table 1. Child, Household, and Community Predictors of Any Regular Nonparental Care for Infants and Toddlers in Low-Income Hispanic Households

	Any Regular Nonparental Care (n=1037)		
	OR		95% CI
Child age in months	0.99		0.97 – 1.02
Child has a disability	1.26		0.49 – 3.23
One-parent household	4.55	***	2.60 – 7.98
At least one other child <5 in home	0.58	**	0.39 – 0.85
No. of children ages 5–12 in home	0.75	*	0.59 – 0.95
No. of children ages 13–17 in home	1.41	†	0.99 – 1.99
Co-resident grandparent or relative nearby	1.75	*	1.05 – 2.92
Immigrant household	0.61	†	0.36 – 1.02
No English spoken in home	1.26		0.74 – 2.13
No working parent in home	0.84		0.39 – 1.80
Two working parents in home	3.38	***	1.80 – 6.35
Weekly parental work hours	1.02	**	1.00 – 1.03
Parent works nonstandard hours	1.32		0.59 – 2.98
Household income-to-poverty ratio	1.53		0.92 – 2.53
Household receives cash assistance	0.93		0.63 – 1.40
Community poverty density	0.93		0.74 – 1.17
Household in suburban community	0.66		0.35 – 1.24
Household in rural community	0.89		0.22 – 3.70

Source: Authors' analysis of 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education, household survey public use files
Note. † p<.10, * p<.05, **p<.01, *** p<.001

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Table 2. Descriptive Characteristics of Children < Age 3 in Low-Income Hispanic Households

	Overall	Immigrant household	Nonimmigrant household
	n=1037	n=737	n=300
Child age in months	18	19	18
Child has a disability or special need	4%	3%	6%
Child lives in one-parent household	51%	50%	54%
At least one other child in home is 0–5	57%	62%	47%
At least one child in home is ages 6–12	57%	62%	46%
At least one child in home is ages 13–17	18%	18%	20%
Co-resident grandparent or relative lives nearby who can provide child care	69%	67%	73%
Immigrant household	68%	100%	0%
Language(s) usually spoken in household			
English only	21%	5%	53%
English and other language	33%	34%	31%
Non-English language only	46%	60%	17%
No parent with work hours, prior week	35%	30%	46%
One parent with work hours, prior week	47%	50%	41%
Two parents with work hours, prior week	18%	20%	13%
Number of weekly parental work hours	31	33	27
Any parent works nonstandard hours	51%	55%	45%
Household income-to-poverty ratio	0.81	0.82	0.79
Household receives cash assistance	34%	28%	46%
Poverty density of community			
High	44%	41%	49%
Moderate	29%	29%	27%
Low	28%	29%	24%
Urban density of community			
High	89%	89%	91%
Moderate/Suburban	8%	8%	6%
Low/Rural	3%	3%	3%
Child in any regular nonparental care	40%	38%	46%

Source: Authors' analysis of 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education, household survey public use files

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About the Center

The National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families (Center) is a hub of research to help programs and policy better serve low-income Hispanics across three priority areas: poverty reduction and economic self-sufficiency, healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood, and early care and education. The Center is led by Child Trends, in partnership with Duke University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and University of Maryland, College Park. The Center is supported by grant #90PH0028 from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation within the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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