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*“¿Crees que él pueda, con su autismo?”:*

Cultural Values, Parenting Practices, and Expectations of  
Mexican Heritage Mothers Raising Autistic Children

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Education

by

Fernanda Anahí Castellón

2024

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2024

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“¿Crees que él pueda, con su autismo?”: Cultural Values, Parenting Practices, and Expectations  
of Mexican Heritage Mothers Raising Autistic Children

by

Fernanda Anahí Castellón

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2024

Professor Connie L. Kasari, Chair

This study delves into the underexplored realm of parenting practices among Latinx mothers of autistic children aged 10-16, focusing specifically on 10 Mexican heritage mothers. Through a Community-Based Participatory Research approach 10 mothers were recruited in partnership with a Latinx autism community agency and developed a culturally relevant and appropriate two-part semi-structured interview protocol. The research illuminates key insights into the nexus of expectations and parenting practices. The findings reveal a dual influence on parenting practices: first, the profound impact of cultural values such as *familismo* and *respeto*, which shape maternal approaches as noted by other researchers; however, these cultural values are complicated when considering the influences of their child's autistic characteristics. Secondly, the study underscores mothers' reliance on the service system as a crucial avenue for preparing their children for the future, leading mothers to ask “Do you think he can do it, with his autism?”. These insights advocate for culturally adapted interventions which align support services with Latinx parents' personal cultural values which may deviate from the traditional forms. By integrating these findings into future intervention strategies, practitioners can ensure the

relevance and effectiveness of support systems for this demographic, fostering improved outcomes for both parents and autistic children within Latinx communities.

The dissertation of Fernanda Anahí Castellón is approved.

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*Para mi mamá y mi papá, gracias por darnos todo. Para mis hermanos y hermanas, que nuestra historia valga la pena. Para mi tío Chito, gracias por siempre subir la barra y por enseñarme cosas que apenas estoy entendiendo.*

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## **Introduction**

As both the Latinx and autistic population continues to grow in the United States (Guerrero & Sobotka, 2022), understanding the parenting practices and expectations that parents have as they raise their children on the autism spectrum is increasingly important. Research around neurotypical children shows that parental expectations directly impact parenting practices (Fox et al., 1995) with parents engaging in practices which promote positive academic and employment outcomes. Among Latinx parents of children with physical disabilities, their cultural ideas around developmental outcomes and expectations drive their parenting practices such that parents will resist change to their parenting practices if the change will result in life outcomes which are not culturally aligned (Kolobe, 2004). This documentation of the connection between expectations and parenting practices is needed amongst Latinx parents of children with autism as they receive an abundance of information that may change their expectations and practices from teachers, pediatricians, and therapists. The literature that has included Latinx autistic children and their caregivers has mainly focused on their intervention experiences, which shows to have mixed results and ultimately calls for the cultural adaptation of interventions (Rodriguez & Dueñas, 2023). Addressing the previous research gap is imperative to document the current parental expectations, practices, and highlight areas where practitioners and families may work together to promote positive long-term outcomes for Latinx autistic individuals.

### **Latinx Parents**

The responsibility of parents across the world is to socialize their children, to teach them the ways to live and be part of their home society (Holden, 2021). Parental socialization practices, also known as parenting practices, can be defined as a specific set of behaviors that parents use to socialize their children (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019) which may have more

variability between parents and cultures, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and ability type among others. These parenting practices may also be influenced by family or social norms as is seen among Latinx families (Barber et al., 2005; Livas-Dlott et al., 2010). The literature analyzing Latinx parenting practices has been found to be associated with various child outcomes, including academic achievement, behavioral adjustment, and psychological well-being (De Von Figueroa-Moseley et al., 2006). Latinx parents often place a strong emphasis on *familismo* (family values), *respeto* (respect), obedience, and hard work, which can contribute to high levels of parental involvement and support for children's education (Buriel, R., 1993; Ayon et al., 2018). Guided by these values Latinx parents may engage in behaviors where they provide direct instruction on what would be considered good behavior (being *bien educado*), place expectations and demands on children so that they may show respect for elders, family, and authority, while also instilling the importance of family unity and support (Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1995).

When these parenting practices are used in supportive and involved ways, they may lead to positive academic outcomes for children, such as higher grades and educational attainment (Dumka et al., 2009). Latinx parents parenting practices are characterized by warmth, support, and clear rules and expectations, which can promote prosocial behaviors and positive mental health in children (Zhang et al., 2020). On the other hand, Latinx parenting practices may also be categorized as non-autonomy granting and non-supportive as Latinx parents have been documented to place strict rules and high expectations on their children, which may have negative consequences (Varela et al., 2013). In addition, the emphasis of *familismo* may lead Latinx parents to teach children that the overall well-being of the family is priority, and therefore being self-less is a valuable characteristic (Durand, 2011; Calzada et al., 2012). Latinx parenting practices that have been identified in the literature include physical guidance, direct instruction,

compliance strategies, and unidimensional discipline which through a decontextualized lens are categorized as strict, while a contextualized and culturally grounded lens recognizes the simultaneous warmth and connection (Coll & Pachter, 2002; Carlson & Harwood, 2003; Ispa et al., 2004)

The ethnic group of Latinxs in the United States encompasses a wide range of nationalities and heritages and with such diversity, it is difficult to generalize such findings to all members. Nonetheless Latinx culture can be categorized as being a collectivist culture where parenting practices are propelled by Latinx societal cultural beliefs where group activities are highly valued, responsibility is distributed, and accountability is collective. Because of the emphasis on collectivity, *familismo* represents the harmony and cooperation among the group, again emphasizing the value of selflessness (Gudykunst, 1998).

### **Latinx Parenting of Children with Autism**

The literature on Latinx parents of children with autism has exponentially grown over the past 15 years (Luelmo et al., 2022). Autism is a developmental disability characterized by difficulties in social communication and restricted and repetitive behaviors, which may come with additional challenges that Latinx parents do not expect (APA, 2013). As Latinx parents, specifically Mothers, recall their children's developmental delay as early signs of autism, they often mention being dismissed by pediatricians and family members who often attributed the delay to the child being *chiqueado* (spoiled) or to the child's gender as they were told boys developed slower than girls (Cohen & Miguel, 2018; Dubay et al., 2017; Zuckerman et al., 2014). They also recall feeling helpless due to the strong cultural stigma against disabilities alongside their husband's *machismo* (patriarchal gender roles) as having a child with disability would negatively impact their place in society (Guerrero & Sobotka, 2022). These cultural barriers are

identified as being related to larger systemic challenges such as difficulties in receiving a diagnosis (Guerrero & Sobotka, 2022; Gulsrud et al., 2021; Mandell et al., 2009), barriers in accessing services, language barriers, lack of cultural competence among service providers, financial barriers to accessing necessary care (Rodriguez & Cavendish 2013), and low educational and vocational outcomes (Castellon et al., 2023).

Although they are faced with multiple barriers to accessing autism care, work from Cohen et al., 2018 highlights their resilience as Latinx parents are eager and driven to support their children by seeking out supportive information through parenting classes to better understand their child's autistic characteristics while also advocating for services (Cohen et al 2018). While it has been documented that parents of autistic children experience anxiety, depression, and isolation at higher rates than parents of typically developing children and even other disabilities such as Down Syndrome (DS) (Hayes & Watson, 2012), many Latino parents report a strong sense of pride. This pride may be connected to the cultural value of *familismo* as it is used to justify the integration of the autistic person into the family and serves as insights to the internal experience of raising a child with autism within the Latinx community (Magaña & et al., 2020; Lopez & Magaña, 2020). Familismo has also been used to make the claim that interventions should involve more members of the family to make interventions culturally adapted and relevant (Luna, 2023; Calzada et al., 2010).

Latinx cultural values guide the parenting practices which parents utilize in order to promote children to behave in ways which align with their expectations. The expectations Latinx parents have is based on the meaning they have attached to their child's autistic characteristics and their perceived long-term development (Blanch et al., 2015). Research has shown that in the larger Latinx culture some people may believe that there is little one can do to alter their future (Flores et al., 1999), which



may relate to a parents' decision to pursue different types of interventions and parenting practices (Mandell & Novak, 2005).

### **Latinx Parental Expectations of Children with Autism**

Parental expectations are an integral part of raising a child with autism. Among parents of autistic children, we observe both positive and negative associations between expectations and individual outcomes. Research has found that high parental expectations for their child with autism can lead to improved outcomes in areas such as social skills, communication, and academic performance (Karst, et al., 2012). For example, when parents set high expectations for their child's communication skills, it can lead to greater involvement in speech therapy and other interventions, which can in turn lead to improvements in these areas (Karst, et al., 2012).

Furthermore, children with autism who have parents with high expectations for them have been found to have higher levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy when compared to parents with low expectations, which can lead to improved social and emotional functioning and overall well-being (Rao et al., 2009). Additionally, parental expectations can have a direct impact on a child's motivation and aspirations. Children who have parents who set high expectations for them and believe in their ability to succeed are more likely to strive for and attain academic and career goals (Buchmann et al., 2022), even for those with severe disabilities (Carter, Austin, Traitor, 2011). Parental expectations have been shown to be a strong predictor to success in adulthood and mediate the impact of family background and ability levels among autistic individuals (Kirby, 2016). On the other hand, low parental expectations can lead to lower motivation and a sense of hopelessness, which can have negative impacts on a child's self-esteem and overall functioning. At the same time, expectations that are not paired with supportive and nurturing environments can result in children with autism experiencing significant stress and anxiety, and a

lack of emotional support and understanding from their parents can exacerbate these feelings and lead to negative outcomes (Hendricks & Wehman, 2009).

The strong connection between parental expectations and child outcomes reinforces the impact and strength that parents have on their child's future, even among those with disabilities such as autism. Parental expectations have an impact on the transition to adulthood (Carter, Austin, Traitor, 2011), yet a plethora of research has continued to document the negative outcomes for individuals with ASD. Research has shown that many young adults with autism struggle to find meaningful employment, with only a small percentage able to secure competitive, integrated employment (Shattuck et al., 2012). Additionally, individuals with autism often face difficulties with independent living skills, such as budgeting, cooking, and personal care, which can lead to limited independence and reduced quality of life (Shih et al., 2014). A systematic review by Eilenberg and colleagues (2019) showed that the individuals who struggle the most during this specific transition are those from ethnic and racial minority groups, such as Latinx (Rivera et al., 2015, Argenta et al., 2018). Too little research has documented or investigated the expectations of Latinx parents towards their autistic children, which may be different than the expectations from teachers, doctors, or therapists (Rodriguez & Dueñas, 2023). This clash between systems of support may be one of the reasons Latinx autistic individuals have low rates of success as they transition to adulthood. The need for service systems and families to work together to address the needs of minoritized families such as Latinx has been long documented and may need to expand to the expectations both groups may have towards the individual with autism.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

*Ecocultural Theory.* The eco-cultural theory of development proposes that human development is shaped by the interaction between biology and the physical and social environments in which individuals grow and develop (Super & Harkness, 1986). This theory recognizes that each culture has its own unique set of values, beliefs, and practices that influence the way children are raised and the opportunities they are provided. The cultural context in which a child grows up provides the framework for their experiences and expectations and shapes their sense of self and their understanding of the world around them (Super & Harkness, 1986).

Eco-cultural theory also recognizes the importance of the child's biology in shaping their development, including genetic inheritance and individual differences in temperament, cognition, and physical abilities. The interaction between biology and culture results in a unique developmental trajectory for each individual, with some variations being more common in certain cultural groups (Super & Harkness, 1986). This theory helps us understand how cultural context can influence a child's experiences and opportunities, and how this in turn can impact their long-term outcomes. Ecocultural theory was utilized to analyze and conceptualize the cultural values, parenting practices, and child expectations parents have for their children with autism. A key emphasis of ecocultural theory is the everyday routines and activities which allow for a transfer of knowledge, expectations, and an overall model of community participation that promotes successful community participation (Weisner, 2002). By documenting the ecocultural impacts on children's development, one is able to observe how culture-specific values, goals, resources, relationships, emotions, and culturally defined normative expectation manifests into parental values, practices and expectations for their autistic children.

Autism research has studied the connections between parental factors and intervention success outcomes, with low maternal education being correlated to low autism outcomes (Lung

et al., 2018). This deficit lens does not recognize the funds of knowledge and the experiential knowledge of parents who are part of collectivist families (Abarca et al., 2024). In such collectivist families, parents were active or passive participants in caretaking of younger offspring, cousins, nieces, and/or nephews, and therefore had pre-parenting schemas, ideologies, and beliefs to what one does for the child to embody the desired values of the Latinx culture. The development of such values may not be informed by knowledge of typical development constructs, but they are nonetheless engaging in parenting practices which they believe will yield to their child having such values and behaving according to them.

### **Research Significance**

The previously mentioned research has documented the parenting practices of Latinx parents of autistic children in limited ways. Researchers have attempted to separate child-rearing practices, daily living practices, and cultural practices due to traditional hegemonic beliefs of parenting and childrearing. Although these may appear separate, parents negotiate competing and intersecting practices based on their own beliefs about their child's abilities and their goals for their child. Examples of how expectations impact parent practices have been identified in past research such as parents who expect their children to live independently and assign their children chores at home (Holmes et al., 2018) and therefore highlight the overlapping nature of both parenting expectations and parenting practices. Ultimately, previous research does not capture the complex dynamics that Latinx parents navigate to find a balance between their culturally specific parenting practices, the family, and the needs of their autistic child. The current study aimed to 1) document parenting practices among Latinx parents of autistic children and 2) document Latinx parental expectations of their autistic child.

The current study was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the nature of parenting practices among Mexican heritage mothers of autistic children?
2. How do such parenting practices relate to the expectations mothers have for their autistic children?
  - a. What maternal supports do mothers provide according to their future expectations?

## **Methods**

### **Positionality statement**

Growing up with twin brothers on the Autism Spectrum, I have first handedly experienced how having a family member with autism has a ripple effect on the family as a unit. I was born in México and in search for a better future for my brothers, my parents decided to move us to the United States. I am the middle child of five and even though we were all raised in the same household and have the same parents, the expectations our parents have for us have all been very different. Although my brothers are fraternal twins, they have from a very young age had very different abilities and needs. One of my brothers was diagnosed with ASD at the age of 2 while the other was finally diagnosed at age 23. Nonetheless, both have always needed additional supports from us as a family and my parents always had different expectations for them. These expectations were rooted in the same cultural values, yet the strategies to achieve the desired behaviors differed. My training as a developmental psychologist has given me the privilege to reflect on the way we were raised while also granting my parents grace, as they did the best they could with the information they had. At the same time, we can admit that most of the responsibility has landed on my mother's plate, an immigrant with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education level from a small pueblo called La Capulinsa, Jal, México.

This positionality is a double-edged sword. On one hand, my background allows me to connect with participants as I openly shared that I was a first-generation immigrant and a sibling to two autistic adults. I was also able to carry out the interviews in participants' chosen language either Spanish or English. This allowed for the participants to tap into which ever language they were most comfortable in yielding rich and descriptive data. As a Latina, I also understand the cultural factors that affect the experiences of having family members with ASD. The lack of understanding of our people due to the stigma against mental health is a great force, but a force that we can dismantle through conversation and visibility.

At the same time being an insider in the Latino community, a sibling of two autistic adults, and a mother of a typically developing four-year-old female, my expectations also hindered my objectivity as I had preconceived ideas of the parenting strategies parents engaged in. As a parent myself, I held back from describing the strategies that I utilized to scaffold my daughter's development. I refrained from providing parents with the standard developmental milestones outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and gave them the space to describe their own developmental stages and how these stages looked for their children. When probing mothers to describe the different developmental milestones and to recall examples of how they actively promoted development, mothers brought up sensitive topics such as depression, stigma, isolation, and family issues. When mothers did this, I provided examples of how these same topics manifested in my own life now, how it manifested when my brothers and I were growing up, and the stories my mom told me so that they were aware that they were not alone and felt validated. I believe that my positionality allowed for participants to share about things they otherwise wouldn't have.

## **Procedures**

The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of a large university in southern California. Numerous procedures were followed to follow a community-based participatory research (CBPR) methodology. CBPR is a collaborative research approach that involves partnerships between researchers and members of a specific community. CBPR recognizes that community members have valuable knowledge and experience, and therefore should be actively involved in the research process from start to finish. This approach aims to empower communities and ensure that research findings are relevant and meaningful to their needs and priorities. CBPR is based on the principles of mutual respect, shared decision-making, and the co-creation of knowledge. It has been widely used in various fields, including public health, sociology, environmental science, and is growing in the field of autism (Chen et al., 2024). CBPR has been shown to increase community engagement, improve research quality, and promote health equity (Minkler & Baden, 2008). The key to a successful CBPR project is establishing strong, respectful relationships between researchers and community members that continuously work together to address community-identified problems and concerns (Israel, et al., 1998).

The current study utilized CBPR to ensure high research quality, cultural relevance, and to increase community engagement. To ensure high research quality a total of four interviews were performed with stakeholders (i.e., parents of autistic children) who served as consultants and evaluated the relevancy, validity, and cultural alignment of the research materials and protocols such as interview questions and research flyers. This was a bidirectional process where research materials were adapted to be culturally appropriate by ensuring the language reflected the language used by the community, and ensure the interview questions were capturing appropriate constructs related to parenting styles, expectations, and practices.

## Sampling and Recruitment

In addition, a CBPR method was utilized for the participant recruitment process to engage in purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is the practice of recruiting members of a specific community who are knowledgeable about or have first-hand experienced the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015) allowing for a true exploration of the parenting style, practices, and expectations of Latinx parents of autistic. To perform purposeful sampling outreach to autism-based community organizations was carried out until a partnership was created with a local non-profit. The primary researcher connected with the president of the organization and set up a meeting at their local office where staff and the researcher would be able to meet, answer questions, share a meal, and engage in an open discussion about the research topic. This format of meeting aligns with CBPR as it promotes *familismo* and transparency. *Familismo* captures the family-centered orientation, which is prevalent among Latinx families, a critical component for building trusting relationship with community members (Magaña, et al 2020). This format also allowed for the demystification of the research purpose and process between the researcher and the community, allowing for successful purposeful recruitment.

After the community meeting, a staff member and the lead researcher called a list of participants who fit the recruitment criteria. The staff member would begin the call and introduce the project and ask if they were interested in learning more. If the potential participant answered yes, then the researcher would take the phone and share the details of the study. A total of 25 participants were called and seven agreed to participate. Further snowball sampling was utilized until saturation was reached at 10 participants.



Once participants had expressed interest in participating, the lead researcher documented their preferred medium of communication and sent a personalized link to complete the informed consent process. After participants received the personalized link and had time to review the information the lead researcher contacted them again to answer any potential questions or concerns. Following this, the first interview was scheduled and participants were then asked to complete the demographic form and the Parenting Expectations form (adapted from Mutua 1999). The second interview took place two weeks after the first interview to maintain engagement in the study. After parents completed both interviews and study measures, they were emailed an electronic gift card of \$50 as a form of compensation for their time and participation.

### **Participants**

A total of ten Mexican-heritage mothers of children with autism participated in the two-part semi-structured interviews (Table 1). Participant inclusion criteria included a) parent who self-identified as Latino/a/x, b) had a child with an autism diagnosis between the ages of 10-16, and c) had a neurotypical child of any age. Exclusion criteria included a) parents with only one child with autism and/or b) only having children with disabilities. More specifically, we aimed to examine at how Latinx heritage parents engage in parenting and how their expectations of their children with autism may guide their parenting practices while also comparing the way they parent their typically developing children. Recruitment was done following CBPR in partnership with a community organization to successfully engage in purposeful sampling resulting in a total of 25 participants (seven agreeing to participate). Further snowball sampling was utilized until recruitment goal of ten participants was reached.

The autistic children of the 10 participants had an average age of 11.7 (SD= 1.70). All mothers identified as Latinas and were of Mexican heritage with a total number of 8 mothers being first generation immigrant generation while the remainder were second generation with a mean age of 44.1 (SD=5.24). The racial makeup of the mothers was inconclusive as three mothers chose “Prefer Not to Respond”, two chose “Multiple” but did not specify, one did not complete the item, and one repeated their ethnicity by filling in “Latina”. Furthermore, one participant chose White and other chose Mestizo, which represents mixed races with at least one indigenous group but did not specific which one. Seven out of 10 mothers completed the interview process in Spanish while the remainder preferred English with occasional code-switching in Spanish. All participants were interviewed utilizing the CBPR developed semi-structured interview protocol described below and remotely utilizing the Zoom software. The following section provides family narratives for each participant.

***Martina.*** Martina is married to a Mexican first-generation immigrant male, Hector, who at the time of Martina’s interview was 50 years old. Hector migrated to the U.S. at the age of 18 from Michoacan, Mexico. Martina has less than a secondary school education level while Hector has a high school education. Martina and Hector have five children, two sons and three daughters. Roberto, their third born, was diagnosed with autism at the age of four years and eight months prompted by concern from their downstairs neighbor. Hector is the primary financial provider with a yearly income of \$30,000 to \$39,000. Martina reports that Roberto is currently receiving in-clinic social skills group therapy through their Medi-Cal insurance provider. Martina reports that she communicates with her children in Spanish while her children communicate in English with each other.

**Cassandra.** Cassandra is a first-generation immigrant from Guadalajara, Mexico. Cassandra is married to Eduardo, a second-generation Mexican immigrant who at the time of Cassandra's interview was 54 years old. Cassandra and Eduardo have two sons, with their second son Esteban being diagnosed with autism at the age of 3 years and 2 months. Eduardo has some college education and works as a telecommunication service coordinator. Cassandra and Eduardo are both employed and report to have a yearly income of \$70,000 to \$79,000. Esteban at the time of Cassandra's interview was receiving Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) services, social skills group therapy, and academic tutoring. Cassandra reports that their primary language in the home is Spanish.

**Vanessa.** Vanessa is a single mother and a first-generation Mexican immigrant from a small town outside of Mexico City who migrated to the US at the age of 23. Vanessa has a high school education and at the time of her interview was unemployed and reported a yearly income of \$10,000 to \$19,000. Vanessa has two sons, with her oldest Jaime being diagnosed at the age of two years and four months prompted by the concerns from a pediatric nurse. Vanessa reports that at the time of the interview Jaime was receiving floor time therapy and was waiting to be assigned a therapist to begin ABA therapy. Vanessa reports she primarily speaks to her sons in Spanish while her sons speak English to each other.

**Maria Teresa.** Maria Teresa is a first-generation Mexican immigrant from Guerrero, Mexico who re-married when she arrived in the US at age 35. Maria Teresa has a middle school education, was employed full time, and reported a yearly income of \$10,000-\$19,000. Maria Teresa had a total of three sons, with her youngest Christian being diagnosed with autism at the age of 9. Maria Teresa reports how her family communicates primarily in Spanish and that Christopher was not receiving any autism related services.

**Marina.** Marina is a single mother and a second-generation Mexican immigrant born and raised in California. At the time of the interview, she was employed full time as a caregiver and reported an annual salary of \$30,000-\$39,000. Marina reports completing some college education. Marina has two daughters and one son, with her son and second born Adrian being diagnosed with autism at age 4. Marina reported that she primarily uses English with her children and uses Spanish with her extended family such as her aunts and mother. Marina reported how Adrian receives ABA therapy during the week and equestrian and farm therapy during the weekends.

**Marcela.** Marcela is married to David, a second-generation immigrant who at the time of Marcela's interview was 44 years old and incarcerated. Marcela reports completing some college education and David having a high school degree. Marcela and David have two sons together, and David has one older daughter whom Marcela cares for as her own. Marcela reported being unemployed and having an annual salary of \$20,000- \$29,000. Marcela's second son David was diagnosed at age 3 through the Regional Center and receives ABA services through the Medi-Cal insurance provider.

**Georgina.** Georgina is a first-generation immigrant from Sinaloa, Mexico who is married to Mateo. Georgina migrated to the US at age 25 and at the time of the interview was in the process of receiving her US residency. Georgina completed some college education in Mexico while her husband had a high school degree. Mateo at the time of Georgina's interview was employed full time as a mechanic, serving as the sole financial provider with an annual salary of \$50,000-\$59,000. Georgina and Mateo have three daughters, with their second daughter Julieta being diagnosed with autism at 2 years and 4 months. Georgina reported how Julieta receives daily ABA services after school.

**Estela.** Estela is a first-generation Mexican immigrant from Mexico City who migrated to the US at the age of 10. Estela was married to Jason who worked as a construction worker. Estela worked as an administrator and as a two-income household reported an annual income of \$50,000-\$59,000. Estela and Jason had two children, a son and a daughter. Their son Julian was diagnosed with autism at age 4 at the Regional Center. Estela reports how Julian was currently receiving ABA and floor time services. Estela reports that her family uses both Spanish and English to communicate.

**Liliana.** Liliana is a first-generation Mexican immigrant from Guadalajara, Mexico. Liliana migrated to the US at the age of 18 and has some high school education. She is married to Arturo, who migrated alongside Liliana at the age of 18. Arturo also has some high school education and works as an apartment complex manager. Arturo is the sole financial provider and Liliana reports an annual income of \$10,000-\$19,000. Liliana and Arturo have three children, a daughter and twin boys, both of which have an autism diagnosis. Liliana's sons were diagnosed at the age 8 after being misdiagnosed with behavioral defiance. Liliana reports how her sons are not currently receiving services outside of special education but is actively looking for services which focus on employment skills development. Liliana reports that she uses Spanish primarily at home while her children communicate primarily in English with each other.

**Valentina.** Valentina is a second-generation immigrant Mexican from Michoacan, Mexico with a master's in child development. Valentina is married to a second-generation immigrant, Saul, who at the time of Valentina's interview was 45 years old. Saul had a high school degree and was employed full time with a Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Company. As a two-income household, Valentina reported their annual income was \$100,000 and above. Valentina and Saul had a total of three children together, with their second born Brandon having autism.

Brandon was diagnosed at age 2 by their primary physician. Valentina reports how they communicate in English as a family. Valentina also reports how Brandon receives ABA therapy daily in home.

Table 1. Participant Demographics (n=10)

Participant Pseudonym	Age	Education Level	Immigrant Generation	Income category	Child's Age	Age of Diagnosis	Number of Children	Race
Martina	47	High School	1.0	\$30,000-\$39,000	14	3 years	5	PNR
Cassandra	45	Some College	1.0	\$70,000-\$79,000	10	3 years 2 months	2	Multiple
Vanessa	37	Middle School	1.0	\$10,000-\$19,000	11	5 years	2	PNR
Maria Teresa	41	Middle School	1.0	\$10,000-\$19,000	14	9 years	3	-
Marina	44	Some High School	2.0	\$30,000-\$39,000	14	4 years	3	Latina
Marcela	49	Some College	2.0	\$20,000-\$29,000	11	3 years	3	Multiple
Georgina	49	Some College	1.0	\$50,000-\$59,000	10	2 years 4 months	3	White
Estela	37	Some College	2.0	\$50,000-\$59,000	11	4 years	3	Mestizo
Liliana	52	Some High School	1.0	\$10,000-\$19,000	12	8 years	3	PNR
Valentina	40	Graduate	2.0	\$100,000+	10	2 years	3	PNR

*Note.* Education Levels are inclusive of education received in Mexico and the United States. PNR= Prefer Not to Respond.

## Measures

**Semi-structured Interview Protocol.** The two-part interview protocol was developed through a multi-step approach. To begin, an initial set of questions based on the study's aim and research question were developed and resulted in the following domains. Interview part 1 included personal history, diagnostic process, autism knowledge, and parenting practices while part 2 was made up of daily routines, parenting expectations and future aspirations. To expand the limited work that has focused on Latinx parenting style domains, various items of the Parenting Style Observation Rating Scale (P-SOS) from Domenech et al., 2009 were adapted and included to illustrate the parenting practices related to each domain. This resulted in a total of four questions per parenting domain (Warmth, Authority Granting, Demandingness: Supportive, and Demandingness Nonsupportive). The final interview protocol was made up of a total of 32 questions spread out across the two-part interview (see Appendix A).

After the interview protocol was written, three mothers of autistic children who were not part of the current study were recruited to serve as stakeholders to provide feedback on the interview protocol. In accordance with CBPR methodology, the three mothers all addressed questions and evaluated the relevancy, validity, and cultural alignment of the interview protocol by answering questions such as "What do you think of these questions?", "How would you ask this question in your own words?", and "What do you think other Latinx parents would think when they hear these questions?". The interview was piloted with the three stakeholders and allowed them the opportunity to review the interview protocol post-interview to provide additional suggestions or edits. The stakeholder-pilot interviews lasted between 45- 90 minutes and occurred over the course of two months. The three stakeholders reviewed the interview protocol after all suggestions were incorporated and provided their approval to ensure protocol was culturally appropriate, reflected the language used by the community, and ensured the

interview questions were capturing appropriate constructs related to parenting styles, expectations, and practices. After final approval was provided all three stakeholders were compensated for their time with a \$50 electronic gift card.

*Parenting Expectations.* To document parental expectations the Likelihood of Expectations measure was utilized (Ivey, 2004). This measure was specifically adapted from Mutua's (1999) importance and likelihood of expectations survey to evaluate parents' expectations of their autistic child. The measure currently includes 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale on either 1) the likelihood and 2) importance of that scenario happening to their child. The items include various constructs such as educational, social, financial, and physical (Thomas et al., 2018) was translated into Spanish. In alignment with CBPR and due to the experimental use of this form, the three same stakeholders also reviewed the Likelihood of Expectations Measure to provide cultural validity and relevance by completing the survey for themselves, discussing their own interpretation of the items, and asking for clarification where needed.

### **Data Coding and Analysis**

**Semi structured Interviews.** Due to the exploratory nature of the current study, data analysis followed an inductive approach. The interviews were recorded utilizing the Zoom videoconferencing software, transcribed, and analyzed using the qualitative data analysis software Dedoose™. Data analysis was made up of two coding cycles where the initial cycle followed an open line-by-line coding model and was predominantly made up of descriptive and In Vivo coding (Ravitch & Carl, 2021; Saldaña, 2013). Open coding allowed for the data to be summarized and categorized to then allow descriptive coding which focuses on summarizing the overall concept of the word or short phrase being analyzed. In Vivo coding was utilized when the words of the participants accurately captured the phenomenon being analyzed and therefore, the



participants exact words were used as codes. At the end of the first cycle of coding a codebook had been created with a total of 72 codes. Before the second cycle of coding could begin, a close analysis of the codebook was performed to merge similar codes, develop in-depth definitions, and begin to organize the codes into major categories and subcategories (Saldaña, 2013). The final codebook had a total of 26 codes, three parent codes and 23 child codes which can be found in Appendix B.

During the second cycle of coding, the final codebook to was utilized to continue analyzing the data and engage axial coding (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Axial coding is a process where the individual codes come together to establish categories and ultimately develop themes and construct findings (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). After all interviews were coded utilizing the final codebook, a second coder was trained to test for interrater reliability and establish consensus. The second coder coded 20% of randomly selected full length transcripts and achieved a percentage agreement of 100%.

Table 2. Data Corpus

Participant Pseudonym	Interview 1	Interview 2	Language
Martina	1 hr. 14 min	1 hr. 15 min	Spanish
Cassandra	59 min	1 hr. 51 min	Spanish
Vanessa	1 hr. 24 min	1 hr.	Spanish
Maria Teresa	1 hr. 38 min	2 hr. 4 min	Spanish
Marina	59 min	1 hr. 33 min	Spanish & English
Marcela	1 hr. 5 min	1 hr. 36 min	English
Georgina	1 hr. 16 min	2 hr. 31 min	Spanish
Estela	1 hr. 15 min	1 hr. 14 min	Spanish

Liliana	1 hr. 24 min	1 hr. 40 min	Spanish
Valentina	1 hr. 5 min	28 min	English

*Parenting Expectations.* In concurrence with work from Ivey (2004), parents’ ratings of the likelihood and importance of achieving certain outcomes for their children with autism were captured using the Likelihood of Expectations survey. Parents’ ratings were only used for descriptive purposes therefore no statistical tests were performed. Parents’ means as individual participants were calculated as well as by survey item. Means of survey items were accompanied by the traditional descriptive statistics of standard deviation, min, and max.

## **Results**

**RQ 1: What is the nature of parenting practices among Mexican heritage mothers of autistic children?**

***Theme 1: Mexican heritage mothers' cultural values and children's autistic characteristics shape parenting practices.***

All ten Mexican heritage mothers of autistic children described engaging in similar parenting practices which through the data analysis process were found to be rooted in the Latinx cultural values: *familismo*, and *respeto*. Parents described how they visualized familismo within their family and what the expected behaviors according to these values looked like for their children. Parents then engaged in parenting practices which would promote their children to behave according to such behavior expectations. Across the ten mothers, there was variability among how closely parents aligned to the traditional values of *respeto* and *familismo*, creating a spectrum where some mothers practiced the traditional notion of the cultural value and some re-defined the cultural value. This variability was prompted by their autistic child’s characteristics

and led parents to create or call for modifications at four different levels: family change-child change, family change-child no change, family no change- child change, and family no change-child no change. These levels of modifications created a change at either the family level or the child level which facilitated mothers to engage in parenting practices which aligned with their own forms of *familismo* and *respeto*.

### **Familismo**

The mothers in the sample described familismo as a value which is rooted in family centrality and highlights the importance of family by promoting unity and connections while protecting and supporting all family members. Across all mothers, the data illustrates how they enacted familismo across a continuum which spans from seeing *familismo* to describe the unity of both the extended and nuclear family to only including the nuclear family. The modifications that parents utilize to promote their own form of familismo varies from adaptations at the family level, child level, or both.

***Familismo Including Extended and Nuclear Family Equally.*** Although mothers described familismo as a value which encompasses all family members, one mother described familismo as a reason to justify family members paying closer attention to the individual with autism. Valentina, a second-generation Mexican American mother whose family immigrated from Michoacan, shares how she emphasized the value of family to her nephews, nieces, and other children in the family to reinforce their connection to Brandon, her autistic son.

Valentina describes Brandon as a loving ten-year-old boy who loves being outdoors, regardless of the weather. Valentina even mentions Brandon's love for the outdoors being a contentious issue at home because even if it is raining, windy, or too hot outside, Brandon always wants to be in nature. This is an issue because Brandon does not show danger awareness

and therefore, they are constantly checking to make sure all doors are locked because of the fear that Brandon will go outside without supervision. This need for taking care of Brandon's well-being is shared with Valentina's immediate and extended family as she makes it a point to emphasize this responsibility as an integral part of what it means to be family. Valentina makes sure her family is aware of Brandon's support needs and will be able to actively look out for him. Valentina shares this information with all growing family members to promote a common and shared responsibility.

*Interviewer: Are there any values that you have looked to instill in your children as they develop?*

*Valentina: Um, with them. I always tell them about the importance of family and always looking out for each other, especially like for their brother. I'm going to do that with like, all my little niece and nephews. They all know about Brandon and like taking care of him and making sure, like nobody bullies him.*

Valentina is involving her family members in the responsibility of caring for Brandon; she is emphasizing how familismo involves all family members, regardless of if they have a disability or not. In addition to Valentina's family sharing the responsibility of taking care of Brandon, they also ensure to take Brandon's food preferences into consideration for family parties. Valentina describes how Brandon's food preferences are very limited as he will only eat "meat, chicken nuggets, or grilled cheese". Valentina's family will make sure to include flank steak- carne asada- as one of the food items at every family get together to make sure that Brandon is able to eat, highlighting another area where it is a shared responsibility to ensure Brandon's wellbeing. The shared responsibility and acceptance of Brandon was evident since he received his diagnosis as Valentina shared it with them right away.

*Valentina: As soon as when he was identified as at risk. I mean, right away it was communicated. And then we were officially diagnosed. Um, which, you know, you already know because you see differences. So, um, we're a very tight knit family, so. And right away. I let them know.*

*Interviewer: Did you have to teach them about what autism was?*

*Valentina: No. No.*

*Interviewer: How did they know what autism was?*

*Valentina: We have instances in the. I have two cousins that have it. They're older and then my mom with her cousins, there's a couple I think three of them that have it. And she has a brother that has a daughter with autism.*

The prevalence of autism within the family may be a contributing factor to Valentina's family acceptance of Brandon's support needs and reinforces the value of familismo generation after generation. The prevalence and accommodations illustrate how the concept of familismo in Valentina's family is used to justify the expectation that the family adapt to Brandon.

Three mothers also viewed familismo as involving both the extended and nuclear family, but they reported actively looking to change their child's behavior so that they could better integrate into the larger family. One of these three mothers was Georgina, a first-generation Mother from Sinaloa, who saw it necessary to change her daughter Julieta's sensory sensitivity, rigidity, and lack of communication so that she could be physically present at family parties. Georgina remembers how at an early age her daughter's autistic characteristics weighed on their family and forced them not be as involved with their extended family as they would want.

*Georgina: Porque Juliana era muy. Muy solitaria, muy antisocial. Entonces llegamos al punto de que cuando tenía como un año y medio o dos salíamos a las fiestas y no quería estar, porque el ruido, porque la luz, todo le molestaba. Entonces, eh, me jalaba, me jalaba de la mano y así como que al carro vámonos...Era un, era un ataque ...y a las niñas les gusta ir y a ella no le gustaba.*

*Translation: Because Juliana was very. Very solitary, very antisocial. So we reached the point that when she was about a year and a half or two, we would go to parties and she didn't want to stay, because the noise, because the light, everything bothered her. So, um, she would pull me, pull my hand, and like, to the car lets go... It was an, it was an overload... and the girls like to go and she didn't like it.*

Georgina here is describing how Julieta's sensory challenges and behaviors would force the family to leave family parties and limit their time going on family outings in fear of Julieta's "ataques". Because of situations like this, Georgina remembers how she made the decision to "sacar" or take out her daughter from "su mundo", her world.

*Eh, Juliana era nomás ella en su mundo y ya. Entonces o te metes al de ellas o lo sacas del de ellas. Entonces dije no, tú vas pa afuera, mijita, no te vas a quedar aquí porque los dejas ahí y después ellos te manejan a ti. Entonces era como como sacarla de ahí o que no te gusta la tienda. Vamos a la tienda. ¿No te gusta el mall? Vamos al mall. ¿No te gusta la aspiradora? Vamos a aspirar, la licuadora. Vamos a la fiesta. Fulana, Hay ruido ahí vamos a estar. Y ya íbamos y estábamos haciendo todo eso. Todo lo que no le gustaba era cuestión de exponerla. No le gustaban los abrazos, abrazarla. Entonces todo eso se fue cambiando y Juliana es súper amorosa ahorita ella es un amor, ella siempre te está besando, te está abrazando, es muy cariñosa mi niña.*

*Translation: Um, Juliana was just herself in her own world and that's it. So either you enter their world or you pull them out of it. So I said no, you go outside mijita, you're not going to stay here because if you leave them there, they'll end up controlling you. So it was like getting her out of there oh you don't like to go to the store. Let's go to the store. Don't like the mall? Let's go to the mall. Don't like the vacuum cleaner? Let's vacuum, the blender. Let's go to the party. So-and-so, There's noise there, we'll be there. And then we went and we were doing all that. Everything she didn't like was a matter of exposing her to it. She didn't like hugs, hug her. So all that changed and Juliana is super affectionate now, she's a sweetheart, she's always kissing you, hugging you, my girl is very affectionate.*

Georgina's determination of having her daughter be equally present with the family drove her to expose Julieta to uncomfortable situations and force her to become comfortable with situations which caused her stress as she describes in her quote such as hugs, the mall, or parties. Georgina believes that "molding" her child to fit the expectations and values of the family to the highest extent was a success as the immediate family is able to spend more time together as a unit or with the extended family as well.

***Nuclear Family Slightly More Important than Extended Family.*** For three out of the ten mothers, they saw familismo as including their extended and nuclear family but prioritize their nuclear family. They look to promote change at both the child and family level to facilitate the

development of familismo and form connections between the nuclear and extended family units. An example of this is Cassandra, a first-generation immigrant from Guadalajara. Cassandra identifies how her child Esteban must learn skills to cope with the environments that he is in so that he can spend time with his family, but the family must also adapt to Esteban's needs. Cassandra reflects on how Esteban's autism manifests in sensory sensitivity and leads him to be overwhelmed by loud noises, a common element of quinceañeras, weddings, extended family parties, and nuclear family outings. Being aware of Esteban's sensory sensitivity allows for Cassandra to evaluate scenarios and be prepared to address Esteban's needs ahead of time. She does this by priming Esteban on what to expect when they will be attending an event, remind him of his supports such as his noise cancelling headphones, and for the family to set an expectation of how long they will be at a set place. Priming Esteban in such a way allows for him to be prepared to be in the settings where his extended family will be, but this is sometimes not enough. Cassandra reflects on how she must also make sure that there is a place where Esteban can be "el mismo", himself, and re-group. This has led Cassandra to ask family members ahead of time if they could have a room or space available for Esteban to use if the environment is too sensory overwhelming. Reluctantly family members have agreed, but at first they were reluctant to make these accommodations:

*Cassandra: Mmm porque nos vamos a juntar como familia y si nos juntamos como familia pues si Eduardo grita mucho cuando nos juntamos como familia es el grito ese que hace y es un grito muy molesto y ese grito que hace como que lo regula, como que lo encierra en su caparazón de todo lo la familia de mi esposo y pone la música y por allá la gritadera la guagua, entonces como que es demasiado para él, pero tampoco podía decir no más reuniones familiares porque no es justo ni para mi esposo ni para mi otro hijo. Mhm. Entonces a. Empezaron a decirle obviamente los primos que era annoying, que era Weird que era. Entonces fue decirle No, tu primo está aquí tratando de convivir con ustedes. Pero le está costando. Le está doliendo.*

*Y no le está doliendo el corazón. Le está doliendo físicamente. Si. Está desesperado. Está frustrado. Está. Entonces nosotros venimos. Ustedes también. Ayúdenme con el control*

*de ruido. No es que no cantes, pero yo ocupo un espacio seguro para poder sacar a mi niño cuando él ya no pueda. Yo ocupo que tú me dejes un cuarto donde yo me puedan encerrar con él. Mmm. Y el entender y me han ayudado. La familia política me ha ayudado. Ya al inicio era como ay que mamona decía que ahora me ayudan, se han vuelto un apoyo, pero fueron años difíciles. Los latinos tendemos a ser difíciles con estas circunstancias.*

*Translation: Mmm because we're going to get together as a family and if we get together as a family, well, yes Eduardo shouts a lot when we get together as a family, it's that shouting he does and it's a very annoying shout and that shout he makes seems to regulate him, seems to enclose him in his shell of my husband's whole family and they put on the music and over there the shouting, the fuss, so it's like too much for him, but I couldn't just say no more family gatherings because it's not fair to my husband or my other son. Mhm. So, um, they started obviously telling him that he was annoying, that he was weird, that it was. So it was like telling him no, your cousin is here trying to socialize with you. But it's hard for him. It's hurting him.*

*And it's not hurting his feelings. It's hurting him physically. Yes. He's desperate. He's frustrated. He is. So we come. You also. Help me with the noise control. It's not that you can't sing, but I need a safe space to be able to take my child out when he can't take it anymore. I need you to leave me a room where I can lock myself in with him. Mmm. And understanding, and they have helped me. The in-law family has helped me. At first, it was like, oh, she's being difficult, but now they help me, they have become a good support, but it was difficult years. Latinos tend to be difficult with these circumstances.*

Cassandra shares how this road has been long and difficult, and ultimately has also made her see her family as two separate units - nuclear and extended. Ultimately, Cassandra has chosen to focus on emphasizing familismo as it relates to her nuclear family at higher levels than her extended family.

This same view of familismo is also illustrated by Estela, a first-generation mother from Mexico City whose oldest son, Julian is on the spectrum. Estela shares how her family is not as close or united as she believes other families are, yet she still sees the value of promoting familismo for both her immediate and extended family. She reinforces the trust and connection that her husband, herself, and three kids have in each other and how this transcends to the extended family. Estela mentions how they attend family parties and she notices how Julian is usually on his own and does not socially interact with either children or adults. She mentions



how Julian can have conversations usually around preferred interests when others initiate it and sees social skills as his highest area of need. Estela recognizes the difficulty Julian experiences in these spaces therefore she lets him play on his electronic devices when they are at family parties. Estela's family knows of Julian's autism but do not ask Estela about Julian's goals, areas of need, or anything that has to do with his autism specifically. She mentions how family will talk amongst each other about the behaviors they would observe from Julian but never addressed her directly.

*Estela: Mi mamá lo notaba también otras personas de la familia. ¿Lo lo a mí no me decían, pero sí lo notaban porque ya después pues supe de comentarios que hacían, no?*

*Translation: My mom noticed it too, as did other family members. They didn't tell me directly, but they did notice because later I found out about comments they made, right?*

Estela does not allow for the comments or treatment from her extended family to keep her from attending family functions. Estela does not mention asking her family to learn about autism or to implement changes and she also does not specifically promote Julian to learn skills that would lead him to have improved relationships with the extended family. Estela's dismissal of her extended family's behavior represents the value she sees in her extended family as she maintains a relationship with her extended family, even if they do not seem to want to learn about her son's autism. At the same time, Estela emphasizes how the most important people in her family are her nuclear family, further emphasizing the two elements of familismo as separate yet related.

***Nuclear Family Only.*** For three out of the ten mothers, they see familismo as only encompassing their nuclear family due to the lack of understanding, judgment experienced, and lack of support from their extended family. These three mothers see that in order for them to embrace familismo and form connections amongst themselves, they must incorporate changes as a family and also look to promote their child's skills to better incorporate into their nuclear

family. One of these mothers is Maria Teresa, a first-generation immigrant from Guerrero who moved to the United States as a political refugee with her three children. For Maria Teresa, familismo only applies to her nuclear family due to the geographical distance between her and her extended family and the traumatic situation they escaped. Maria Teresa and her children are survivors of domestic violence and fought their way out of poverty while they were living in Guerrero, Mexico. Throughout various years Maria Teresa struggled with her children's father alcoholism and was forced to have him care for the three children as her mother did not want to care for her children.

*Nosotros llegamos a un acuerdo. ¿Este donde? ¿Donde él se los tenía que llevar porque yo tenía que trabajar, porque mi mamá no me quería cuidar a mis niños, ya yo no tenía cómo pagar y también tenía que pagar deudas, no? ¿Este es donde tomamos la decisión de que él tenía que cuidarlos, No, porque él me dijo yo no tengo dinero, no te voy a dar y yo lo único que puedo hacer es cuidártelos mientras pagas, no? Mhm. Tomé esa dura decisión porque no tenía opción.*

Translation: We reached an agreement. Where? Where he had to take them because I had to work, because my mom didn't want to take care of my kids, and I had no way to pay, and I also had to pay debts, right? This is where we made the decision that he had to take care of them. No, because he told me he didn't have money, he wasn't going to give me any, and the only thing he could do was take care of them while I paid, right? Mhm. I made that tough decision because I had no choice.

Maria Teresa shares how she felt like she was forced to place her children under their father's care so that she would be able to work and financially provide. After Maria Teresa was able to save up, she discovered that her children were being neglected, and after her brother was kidnapped, Maria Teresa made the decision to apply for asylum in the United States and it was granted. Maria Teresa shares how she confused Cristian's autism symptoms with symptoms of physical and psychological abuse, and it was not until Cristian started school in the US that he was identified as being on the spectrum. Nonetheless, the journey Maria Teresa and her children have gone through has united them and reinforces the value of being together and accepting

Cristian for his autistic self, as they are all they've got. Maria Teresa quotes the Disney movie, Lilo and Stitch to describe their family as “una familia chiquita, pero rota, y unida,” a small broken family but united.

## **Respeto**

All ten mothers also described utilizing the value of *respeto* as a guiding principle underlying their parenting practices. Mothers described *respeto* as a value which emphasizes respecting those who are older than you such as parents and grandparents by following their directions. *Respeto* also entails speaking to people according to their position and title in the family hierarchy by using formal pronouns such as “usted,” abiding by societal rules and social norms such as greetings, and being conscious of your position in a place as a guest. Although all ten mothers described *respeto* as an omnipresent value in their home, Mothers understand that the value of *respeto* demands certain behavior, four Mothers described how they accept that their autistic child will abide to *respeto* as much as they can and even adapted what *respeto* looks like for them. The following section categorizes mothers' congruency with the traditional value of *respeto* and how this manifests for their autistic child.

***Respeto Includes Oneself.*** Two mothers, Liliana and Marina, expanded the definition of *respeto* even further by adding how they see *respeto* as also encompassing respect for oneself. Liliana is a first-generation immigrant from Guadalajara who has twin autistic sons and has slowly separated her family from her extended family due to the way they treated her sons.. Liliana remembers how it all started because as her sons Daniel and Ramon were growing up, other family members were constantly reprimanding them, leading Daniel and Ramon to always feel like they were misbehaving and forcing them to apologize constantly.

*Liliana: “Mis hijos siempre decían antes de cualquier cosa que hicieran. “Oh, sorry”. Disculpa. Lo siento. Disculpa. Lo siento. Y no sé. Para mí es un, ¿No siempre tiene que*

*ser así, porque ellos son los que siempre tienen que estar disculpándose, porque ellos son los que siempre tienen que llegar a saludar, porque ellos son los que siempre tienen que decir con permiso, disculpa, ya me voy, hola, por qué? ¿Por qué? ¿Porque es la sociedad, porque es la familia? porque la gente no?"*

*Translation: "My children always used to say before anything they did. 'Oh, sorry'. Excuse me. I'm sorry. Excuse me. I'm sorry. And I don't know. For me, it's like, Does it always have to be like this, why are they the ones who always have to be apologizing, why are they the ones who always have to come to greet, why are they the ones who always have to say excuse me, sorry, I'm leaving, hello, why? Why? Because it's society, because it's family, why not people?"*

In the previous quote, Liliana is expressing her frustration at the fact that her children were at a time having to constantly apologize to her extended family members. She expresses disagreement with the fact that her children are always the ones who are in the wrong when around their family and are expected to be the ones to apologize as a way to show respect. She continuously asks “¿Por que?” and connects this expectation to the larger societal norms and respect to the family as the reason why they are expected to be the ones to apologize, but she does not agree with this. She recognizes that greeting people when they arrive at a place is the respectful thing to do but does not believe that her children Ramon and Daniel should be required to do this if they are not comfortable, even though her husband disagrees with her.

*Liliana: Y es algo que mi esposo sí regaña mucho a los niños. “[les dice]Por que no tienes este vergüenza. No, no, no te estás comportando bien al entrar a una fiesta”. Él siempre a “un lugar y un lugar. Te tienes que portar bien, tienes que llegar y saludar, tienes que llegar y y y este pues comportarte”. Y yo le digo. “Son ellos. Déjalos que sean ellos. No quieras que se vean igual que los demás sobrinos que llegan, saludan de beso esos. O sea, es bonito, sí, pero si no te nace, no lo hagas. Entonces llegan... y saludan Hola, ¿así no? \*mueve mano\* Y hacen sus cosas. Sin faltar a eso, es una falta de respeto llegar y decir hola y seguir caminando es una falta de respeto. Pero y eso está bien para mí. A mis ojos. Eso está bien. Eres tú. No tienes que. Qué gran presión de aparentar algo que no quieres hacer, pero lo haces por el qué dirán o porque digieres como son tus valores o lo que tu papá te ha enseñado.*

*Translation: And it's something that my husband does scold the children about a lot. “[He tells them] Why don't you have this shame. No, no, no, you're not behaving well when entering a party.” He always says, “There's a time and a place. You have to behave, you have to arrive and greet, you have to arrive and, and, and well behave.” And I tell*

*him, "It's them. Let them be themselves. Don't want them to look the same as the other nieces and nephews who arrive, greet with a kiss. I mean, it's nice, yes, but if it doesn't come naturally to you, don't do it. So they arrive... and greet, 'Hi, isn't it?'"\*waves hand\*And they do their things. Without failing to do that, it's disrespectful to arrive and say hello and keep walking, it's disrespectful. But that's okay for me. In my eyes. That's okay. It's you. You don't have to. What grand pressure to pretend to do something you don't want to do, but you do it because of what people might say or because you digest how your values are or what your dad has taught you.*

Liliana shares how she and her husband disagree on the way *respeto* should be carried out by greeting people as soon as they arrive to a party. Liliana's husband is constantly telling Daniel and Ramon what he expects of them and how they are to behave which is culturally and societally expected and taught. This societal teaching is seen through other nephews as Liliana mentions how they do in fact say hello to all of the uncles and aunts by verbally saying hello and giving them a kiss on the cheek which is always accompanied by praise. She then goes on to describe how her sons do not engage in this social norm and only say hello verbally and by waving to the larger group. She reiterates how it would be disrespectful to not greet the family, but she also does not believe that they must conform to societal expectations and engage in a behavior that does not feel natural to them. Liliana respected her own children's preferences and was guided by them to normalize greeting by simply waving, a form of greeting that is not culturally accepted by all. Through this Liliana redefined what *respeto* looks like in her family based on her son's behaviors and needs.

Marina reflects on how her mother instilled the value of *respeto* in her but never taught her that she also needs to respect herself and not let people mistreat her just because they are in positions of power.

*Marina: Pienso pues el respeto más que nada no el respeto. Siento qué es muy importante. Pero también una cosa. Si les enseñado mis hijos es también. Uh if it's funny porque yo platique esto con mi mama. No de que tus nos enseñaste a nosotros que okay El respeto a Los mayores. El respeto. Pero le digo tu nunca nos enseñaste que al mismo tiempo. Si es importante tener ese respeto. Pero también es importante tener el respeto*

*hacia nosotros y si alguien nos está tratando de cierta manera hablando de cierta manera. También no tenemos qué continuar nosotros dejándonos que nos falten el respeto porque ya ahí como qué es si te puedo tener respeto. Pero también no me puedo I cant expose myself for you to continue to abuse me.*

*Translation: I think, well, respect above all, not just respect. I feel that it's very important. But also, one thing. If I've taught my children anything, it's also, uh, if it's funny because I discussed this with my mom. Not that you taught us that okay, Respect for elders. Respect. But I tell her, you never taught us at the same time. Yes, it's important to have that respect. But it's also important to have respect towards us, and if someone is treating us in a certain way, speaking to us in a certain way. We also don't have to continue allowing ourselves to be disrespected because then it's like, yes, I can have respect for you. But I also can't expose myself for you to continue to abuse me.*

Through this quote Marina expands the definition of *respeto* to represent a value which is not only meant to include people who are of higher social status such as elders but also to include herself. She explains how this expansion pushes *respeto* to also include herself in order to serve as a protective practice from disrespectful behavior which she even calls a form of abuse. She believes that to respect yourself is to not allow yourself to remain in situations where you will be treated in a way which will put down your value. She identifies how this version of *respeto* is what she is teaching her children.

*Marina: "Entonces por eso si es la diferencia entre Como mi mama me enseñó mí y Como yo estoy enseñando a mis hijos. Like no falta es el respeto, pero también. It's almost like walk away, no walk away. No tienes por qué continuar quedandote en un lugar. En qué te están haciendo sentir de una manera. Qué no te hace a ti sentir bien."*

*Translation: So that's why if there's a difference between how my mom taught me and how I'm teaching my children. Like, it's not about being disrespectful, but also, it's almost like walk away, no walk away. You don't have to continue staying in a place where you're being made to feel a certain way that doesn't make you feel good."*

By Marina delineating the differences in the generational views of *respeto* between her mother, herself, and her children she is laying down the groundwork for the way in which she looks to be different than her family and teach her children to value themselves as a related element to *respeto*. Marina also highlights how having self *respeto* also relates to being in places

that do not make you feel valued. This further expansion was brought on by an interaction Marina had with one of Antonio's teachers. Marina recalls how a teacher, an authority figure, continuously called Antonio a "bad boy" as a way to shape Antonio's behavior.

*Marina: "...tuvo la experiencia, uh, con mi niño, uh, cuando estaba yendo la escuela, estaban usando mucho el término. Bad boy. 'You're a bad boy'. Uh, una cosa yo mire era que le afectaba mucho emocionalmente y cuando salía uh en cuando me miraba empezaba a llorar entonces fue cuando yo empecé a mirar a la importancia de las palabras."*

*Translation: "...he had the experience, uh, with my boy, uh, when he was going to school, they were using a lot the term. Bad boy. 'You're a bad boy'. Uh, one thing I saw was how much it affected him emotionally and when he would get out right when he would see me he would start crying and that's when I began to see the importance of words."*

Marina began to see the repercussions of such words as Adrian's self-confidence began to plummet and showed signs of anxiety. This is when Maria decided to speak to the teacher and demand *respeto* for her child and informed the teacher of her disapproval of the language. This also prompted Marina to combat the negative impact of the teacher's comments by practicing daily affirmations and saw this as a way for her to support her son with developing respect for himself. She sees the connection between her son's self-esteem and his ability to demand *respeto* as integrally connected. She has seen the positive impact the daily affirmations have on Antonio as he engages in positive self-talk unprompted when dealing with difficult situations and praises Marina when she accomplishes things.

***No Enforcement of Respeto.*** For two mothers, they describe how their autistic child does not abide to the traditional definition of *respeto* and as much as they do not agree with it, they do not actively try to have their child change so that they do. Martina is a first-generation immigrant from Michoacan who has a total of five kids, where her third child and second son, Roberto, has autism. Martina describes how when Roberto was growing up, she noticed some behaviors and

developmental delays, but she did not ever think that it was autism due to her lack of awareness and knowledge of the disability. It was not until a neighbor approached her and told her about the Regional Center that she sought out a formal evaluation and received the diagnosis of autism. Now at 15, Roberto is in high school and is part of the cross-country team, takes public transportation, is on alternate curriculum at school, and needs constant support at home to complete tasks around daily living skills such as showering, meals, laundry, and hygiene.

When asked to describe what values she believes are important to teach children, she immediately mentions *respeto* and describes this value within the traditional definition mentioned above. When asked if Roberto behaves in this way, she chuckles and says no.

*Martina: Sí, porque a veces le digo saluda porque llega y pues no, él llega y se sienta, le digo saluda y ya, pues ya los saluda. No así, pero a veces no, no lo hace. Le tengo que repetir yo para que lo haga.*

*Translation: Yes, because sometimes I tell him to greet because he arrives and well, no, he arrives and sits down, I tell him to greet and that's it, then he greets them or not like that, but sometimes no, he doesn't. I have to repeat it to him so that he does it.*

As Martina mentions, she expects and has taught Roberto that when he arrives at a family party or anywhere as a guest, the respectful thing to do is to greet with either a handshake or a kiss on the cheek. Roberto evades this behavior and usually goes straight to sit on a couch or a far room with a TV and if Martina is not there to demand that he at least say hello verbally and wave to the entire room, he does not greet the family. Roberto expresses his discomfort with family events verbally at home when he asks Martina why there are so many people and how long they will have to be there. He will usually ask to leave as soon as they are done eating, limiting the amount of interaction Martina is able to have with her extended family as she knows that this indicates Roberto “se está hartando,” is becoming overwhelmed. Through Roberto’s behavior we see that although Martina expresses that *respeto* is an important value, she recognizes that



Roberto does not behave that way and does not describe engaging in specific tasks that will result in a change in Roberto's behavior to align closer with *respeto*.

**Parenting Practices.** All mothers were guided by their alignment or deviation to the traditional definitions of *familismo* and *respeto*, and engaged in a range of similar parenting practices. Mothers recognized how their parenting practices had changed due to the information they learned through receiving autism services. Nonetheless mothers mentioned times when the strategies they had learned in therapy did not work or did not match their cultural values and beliefs, therefore they did not utilize that strategy (e.g., ignoring). Overall, parenting practices fall into four different categories: general instruction, behavioral, self-awareness, and self-determination.

**General Instruction.** Seven mothers described engaging in the parenting practice coined as “general instruction” where parents provided extensive details and clear instruction to their children on 1) the tasks to be completed and 2) how to complete such tasks such as putting away dishes, cleaning up after the dog, showering, and getting dressed (code “*Dando Instrucciones*”). Maria Teresa was one of the seven mothers whose parenting practices fit this category as she described how her son Cristian needed clear direction and specificity to teach him how to complete basic tasks around the house or to maintain his own hygiene.

*Entrevistador: Si ahorita dijo algo que se me hizo interesante, ¿no? Que dice la forma que habla con Carlos y que habla con Cris es diferente. ¿Por qué cree que usted tiene que ser diferente?*

*Maria Teresa: A es la manera de explicar las cosas. Ajá. Porque a Carlos le puedo decir Mmm. Carlos haz tus cosas. Si hablando de cosas, Carlos ya sabe cuáles son sus cosas. Son cosas. No. ¿Y con Cristian? Cristian, tiende tu cama, lava tu ropa, dobla la ropa, ponla en su lugar. O sea, a Cristian le tengo que especificar.*

*Entrevistador: Sí.*

*Maria Teresa: ¿Cuáles son sus cosas? ¿Cuáles son las cosas que él tiene que hacer?*

*Entrevistador: ¿Cree que la necesidad de ser tan específica es por el autismo de Christopher?*

*Maria Teresa: Hay, yo creo que sí. Yo creo que sí. Creo que sí. Y sé que sí, por qué. ¿Porque pues yo como les digo no, yo ya sé cuáles son mis, mis responsabilidades o las cosas que yo tengo que hacer, no? ¿Así les llamamos, no? Aunque a veces ellos me hacen burla. ¿Como ya están grandes, no? ...Pero es que cuando yo digo tus cosas son tus cosas personales. Tú tanto como tu aseo personal, como tu ropita lavada, tu ropita limpia, tu camita, limpia tu camita tendida, tu cuarto limpio, barrido. Osea, esas son tus cosas. Este mi, mi o tu responsabilidades como tú las quieras llamar y osea con Carlos. Él ya sabe. No tengo yo que ser tan específica. Y con Cristian incluso hasta él me dice pero es que tú no me dices qué cosas, hasta él me lo dice y le digo Okay, entonces por eso es que yo soy bien. Dice pero no me dices qué cosas. Y es cuando yo digo Ok, Entonces me digo yo a mí misma entiende que tú le tienes que especificar. Para que después él no te diga, Pero es que tu no me dijiste.*

*Translation: Interviewer: So, just now you said something that I found interesting, right? You mentioned that the way you talk to Carlos and the way you talk to Cris is different. Why do you think it has to be different?*

*Maria Teresa: It's the way of explaining things. Uh-huh. Because with Carlos, I can say, "Hmm. Carlos, do your things." When talking about things, Carlos already knows what his things are. They're just things. And with Cristian? Cristian, make your bed, wash your clothes, fold the clothes, put them away. I mean, with Cristian, I have to be specific.*

*Interviewer: Yes.*

*Maria Teresa: What are his things? What are the things he has to do?*

*Interviewer: Do you think the need to be so specific is because of Cristian's autism?*

*Maria Teresa: Yes, I think so. I believe so. And I know so, why? Because, as I tell them, I already know what my responsibilities are, or the things I have to do, right? That's what we call them, right? Even though sometimes they make fun of me. Like, they're already grown up, right? ...But it's because when I say "your things," I mean your personal things. Like your personal hygiene, your washed clothes, your clean clothes, your bed made, your room clean, swept. Those are your things. My, uh, your responsibilities, whatever you want to call them. And with Carlos, he already knows. I don't have to be so specific. And with Cristian, he even tells me, "But you don't tell me what things." Even he tells me that, and I say, "Okay, so that's why I'm..." He says, "But you don't tell me what things." And that's when I say, "Okay, then I have to remind myself that I have to specify for you. So that later you don't say, 'But you didn't tell me.'"*

Maria Teresa is using her older son as an example of the different needs that her son Cristian has. She describes how for her older son she is easily able to tell him to do “his things” and he will know that he will have to clean his room, do his homework, shower, etc. She notes how, for Cristian, she cannot use the same language of “his things” as he will not understand what this means. Instead, she has learned she must list out the specific things she wants Cristian to do in great detail in order for him to successfully complete what she is asking. Maria Teresa expresses frustration in needing to do this because, in her eyes, this conveys disrespect as it may appear that he does not respect her and is not listening to her when he needs this information to be outlined and constantly repeated.

Another parenting practice that fits the larger category of general instruction was the parenting practice of giving reminders (code “Le recuerdo, le recuerdo”). Mothers who utilized this parenting practice shared how they recognize the need to constantly remind their child of their responsibilities and personal needs to ensure their children successfully fulfilled them. Vanessa shares how her son Jaime needs constant reminders to complete nonpreferred tasks such as showering or completing homework. Vanessa talks about how she has tried to use other forms of reminders such as sticky notes, alarms, or having Jaime’s backpack on the table as visual reminders but these are not as successful as verbal reminders. Vanessa explains how her son is still only 11 and so she has hope that he will not need these reminders in the future.

Three mothers, Marina, Marcela, and Estela uniquely identified how they did not feel they had the adequate knowledge to understand their autistic child, motivating their parenting practice of self-instruction (code “Find Information). Marcela and Estela both decided to go back to school to their local community college and enrolled in child development courses. This is where they learned more about autism and were finally able to understand how autism impacted

their child and what their child needed to develop which then facilitated their engagement in general instruction parenting practices. Marina on the other hand did not go back to school but signed up for various trainings through her assigned Regional Center to learn more autism specific strategies. She recalls how her son was not developing language and by attending these training she heard about the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and found a way to learn it herself. She successfully learned PECS, implemented it with her son and was able to teach him communication skills. These communication skills then allowed for Marina to engage in the general instruction parenting practices which depended on Adrian's communication ability.

***Behavioral Parenting Practices.*** Mothers engaged in parenting practices which can be grouped under the large category of 'behavioral parenting practices' aimed at teaching children to improve their behavior. The ultimate goal of these practices is to diminish challenging behavior such as biting, yelling, kicking, self-injurious behavior and severe tantrums. The specific parenting practices used were priming, modeling, environmental arrangement, visual supports, sensory supports, and a third person as the source of instruction.

Mothers used priming, environmental arrangement, visual support, and sensory supports as tools to prevent challenging behavior from arising and to support child to be successful at the current task. An example of a mother who used sensory support as a parenting practice was Martina. Martina understood that her son Roberto experienced sensory sensitivity due to his autism and that if she were to force him to eat what she cooked for the family, this would lead into a major tantrum for her son, even at the age of 14. She made the point to support the sensory needs of her son by cooking a meal which she knew would meet the cultural expectations of eating as a family and not come off as disrespectful for not eating. She understood that cooking

an alternate meal to provide sensory support was frowned upon by her husband and extended family as this promotes individualism and is counter to familismo. This aligns with Martina's view of familismo as she still aligns with the traditional views of familismo encompassing both nuclear and extended family, but she believes the family can change to accommodate the integration of her son.

Environmental arrangement and a third person as a source of instruction were used when mothers anticipated behavioral outburst from their child when they attempted to implement a general instruction practice. The three mothers who engaged in these practices were Marcela, Maria Teresa, Marina, and Liliana. Marcela, Marina and Maria Teresa utilized siblings as the third person who would either remind their sibling of what they needed to do or serve as models of what needed to be done. This also facilitated as an environmental arrangement practice because Mothers strategically had siblings do their homework next to each other, clean their rooms at the same time, or tell siblings to take out the trash together so that their autistic child could watch and learn from their neurotypical sibling. Liliana was the only mother who utilized a school behavioral interventionist as the third person. She would share the issues she was having with her son Daniel and the behavioral interventionist would have separate conversations about the issues with him. Liliana recognized that the behavioral interventionist had established instructional control and capitalized on it to promote her own expectations.

***Self-determination.*** There were two parenting practices utilized by mothers which fall under the larger category of self-determination: opportunity for deciding (code "Decidir) and opportunity for acting (code "Hacer Algo"). A total of five mothers showed to engage in the parenting practice of opportunity for deciding. Mothers described this parenting practice as instances where they allowed their children to engage in decision making around basic things

such as the clothes they wear to complex things such as IEP goals. The parenting practice of opportunity for deciding prompted mothers to present options to their autistic child and gave them the space and opportunity for them to choose from these options. Providing the options scaffolded the decision-making process and allowed for a positive interaction between mother and child. Building off deciding, mothers also engaged in the parenting practice of opportunity for acting which was described as instances where parents let their children have the space and opportunity to do things, they themselves wanted without direct supports. The parenting practice of opportunity for acting was identified as a safe way for parents to see if their children could utilize the skills and strategies they had been learning and put them into action. One mother who utilized both opportunity for deciding and opportunity for acting as a pair was Liliana. Liliana shares how she has preached to her children Daniel and Ramon that they always have options. She offers options daily at mealtimes and outings to ensure that her sons can successfully engage in decision making. Liliana has also outlined to her family that Saturdays are no-cook days which means that she will not be cooking, and everyone is responsible for feeding themselves by either making something or by warming up leftovers. She utilizes reminders with her sons on Fridays that the following day will be a no-cook day and reminds them of what this means. She then observes them on Saturday to see what they do, what time they eat, and uses their own actions as talking points for the coming week and as evidence for the areas that they still need support in.

**RQ 2: How do such parenting practices relate to the expectations mothers have for their autistic children?**

**b. What maternal supports do mothers provide according to their future expectations?**

***Theme 2: Regardless of future expectations, Mexican heritage mothers provide support through a systems approach.***

### **Expectations and Aspirations**

***Expectations when child was diagnosed.*** Through the interview process, mothers were asked to remember back to when their child was first diagnosed and share what they believed in that moment was the most important thing for their child to accomplish. A total of 6 mothers mentioned 3 similar aspirations while 2 mothers mentioned unique expectations, for a total of 5 aspirations. Three out of the four aspirations across the mothers can be grouped under the construct of long-term outcomes as they include: being a part of the family, be safe, and be independent.

The aspiration of being a part of the family was mentioned by Georgina as she shares how when Julieta was diagnosed, Julieta's behavior isolated her away from her family. This really pushed Georgina to "hacer más cosas que la involucraran en la familia" [*do things which involved her in the family*] such as exposing her to stress inducing situations so that she could tolerate being in family environments.

The aspiration of being safe was reported by Maria Teresa as she mentions how when her son Cristian was diagnosed, he was experiencing high rates of bullying. She was afraid that Cristian was allowing for his classmates to hurt him both physically and mentally because of his desire to have friends.

*Que se empezará a defender. Que se empezará él a. A defender. A a quererse. Aceptarse como es él. Sí, a que no tuviese amigos. ¿Por que? ¿Que lo dañaran? Porque a veces por amistades o por querer tener amistades, él él permitía que le pegaran o que lo dañaran.*

*For him to begin to defend himself. For him to begin to. Defend himself. To love himself. To accept himself how he is. Maybe, he would not have friends. Why? That would hurt him? Because sometimes to have friends or because you want friends, he he would allow for them to hit him or hurt him.*

Maria Teresa sees how Cristian would put himself in danger due to his desire of having friends. Maria Teresa recalls those times and remembers how she wanted Cristian to defend himself and accept himself for how he is. Maria Teresa connects Cristian's safety as being able to defend himself as the "friends" who were bullying him, were perhaps doing so due to his autistic characteristics. This then pushes Maria Teresa to aspire for Cristian to accept himself and relates this acceptance to him being safe.

The aspiration of being independent was endorsed by three mothers, one who was Cassandra. Cassandra shares how when Esteban was first diagnosed, she aspired for him to be independent. She makes it clear that perhaps this does not mean that he will be married but have what it takes to live his life.

*Vivir independiente y no sé si le interese casarte, dice que no, que porque las mujeres somos muy annoying este pues no sé si en la vida le va a interesar casarse, pero que sea independiente.*

*Live independently and I don't know if he'll be interested in getting married, he says no, because women we are very annoying and I guess I don't know if in life he'll be interested in getting married, but be independent.*

Cassandra identifies being independent as a life aspiration for Esteban and draws the parallel between being independent and getting married. This parallel highlights both outcomes perceived life goals but identifies living independently the focal aspiration for Esteban at the time of his diagnosis.

Four out of the eight mothers reported that their aspirations for their children when they were first diagnosed was for their children to be able to speak and/or communicate. We see the importance of language at the time of diagnosis emphasized by Marcela as she shares how she was afraid he wouldn't be able to express his wants and needs if he didn't develop spoken language.



*At that point talk. I was always scared he wasn't going to be able. To verbalize his needs or his wants or his anything. I think that's one thing that really scared me.*

Marcela's fear of her son David not developing language is directly connected with his wellbeing. Through this Marcela is outlining the connection between language and wellbeing, and this fear ultimately propels her early parenting to focus on developing language. Another factor that another mother, Marina, whose aspiration was also connected to language was fueled by behavioral challenges.

*More than anything, was for him to be able to speak, for him to be able to communicate, because I felt like there was a lot of frustration, a lot of hitting, a lot of, um, a lot of injuries, a lot of injuries, behavior. So just him having the ability to express himself. I think that was something that I was really looking forward to.*

Marina here is connecting Antonio's lack of verbal communication with his behavioral challenges. In this way Marina is alluding to a potential association between lack of language and increased behavioral challenges, therefore in order to see a reduction in trouble behaviors Antonio needed to develop language. Marina is also connecting Antonio's frustration, hitting, and injuries to not being able to express himself, again emphasizing that developing language would reduce the negative behaviors.

***Parents' Expectations for Child's Future.*** Mothers were also asked to share what they expected or imagined for their autistic child's future. The responses were corroborated by their responses with the Parents Likelihood of Expectations (Ivey, 2004) measure as parents mentioned expectations associated with adult outcomes such as living independently, securing a job, higher education, and getting married. Across all ten mothers, responses of the Parents Likelihood of Expectations measure followed a similar pattern. All mothers' means on the Importance scale of the survey were higher than the means for the Likelihood scale. Maria Teresa shows the least amount of variability between her scores with an Importance mean of

4.98 and a Likelihood mean of 4.88. This pattern highlights the consensus view of expectations being viewed as important yet not necessarily viewing those same expectations as likely to happen. Valentina’s means show the highest amount of variability between the Importance and Likelihood mean with an importance mean of 3.41 and a likelihood mean of 2.24. Total means of Likelihood of Expectations Measure by participant can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Participant Means of Likelihood of Expectations Measure

Participant Pseudonym	Mean of Likelihood of Expectations	
	Importance	Likelihood
Martina	4.71	4.41
Cassandra	4.17	4.0
Vanessa	4.59	4.41
Maria Teresa	4.94	4.88
Marina	4.29	3.94
Marcela	4.35	4.41
Georgina	4.0	3.82
Estela	4.65	4.11
Liliana	4.94	4.11
Valentina	3.41	2.24

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of Mothers’ Expectations for Future Outcomes Measures

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Importance</i>	<i>Likelihood</i>
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<i>My child with autism will...</i>	M	SD	MIN	MAX	M	SD	MIN	MAX
1. ...be happy and satisfied	5	0	5	5	4.45	0.52	4	5
2. ...attend school	4.91	0.30	4	5	4.27	1.01	2	5
3. ...get married	3.91	1.22	1	5	3.64	1.03	1	5
4. ...have a house	4.55	0.69	3	5	4.09	0.70	3	5
5. ...have a group of friends	4.45	0.69	4	5	3.91	0.70	3	5
6. ...practice a religion of their choice	4.36	0.67	1	5	4.27	1.19	1	5
7. ...be accepted by their community	4.64	1.21	3	5	4.18	0.60	3	5
8. ...have a financially secure future	5	0	5	5	4.36	0.67	3	5
9. ...be safe of physical harm	5	0	5	5	4.09	0.70	3	5
10. ...reach the highest level of education	4.45	0.82	3	5	4.09	1.04	2	5
11. ...help with household chores	4.45	0.93	2	5	4.27	0.79	3	5
12. ...be socially responsible and follow the law	4.73	0.65	3	5	4.18	1.25	1	5
13. ...take care of their parents when they are older	3	1.55	1	5	3.27	0.90	1	5
14. ...participate in civil activities	3.82	1.08	1	5	3.55	1.04	1	5
15. ...live independently	4.64	0.50	4	5	4.09	0.83	2	5
16. ...utilize community services	4.36	0.50	4	5	3.91	0.70	2	5
17. ...have success in schooling	4.45	0.69	3	5	4.09	1.22	1	5

Derived from the interview analysis, Mothers connected their child's future aspirations to two types of current actions: pursuing services or securing the child's financial future.

*Services.* A total of eight mothers described how in order for their child to reach the aspirations they have, they will need specific support services. Mothers also described how for their children to one day have a job, a wife, or be a part of their community, they will need to further develop their social skills. One of these moms was Estela, she mentioned how she has seen Julian's social skills grow through social skills therapy.

*Pues [ya] puede interactuar más con las personas. Yo pienso que no va a tener problema en eso. ¿Am Yo creo que, pues va a tener una buena vida, porque o sea hasta ahorita pues se le han dado los apoyos necesarios y creo que tiene una buena base de habilidades que, que lo van a que lo van a poder dejar a ser independiente a pesar de sus dificultades que tengan, no? De o sea en cuestión de su de su diagnóstico.*

*Translation: Well, [now] he can interact more with people. I think he won't have a problem with that. I believe that he will have a good life because, I mean, so far he has been given the necessary support and I think he has a good foundation of skills that will allow him to be independent despite the difficulties he may have, right? I mean, in terms of his diagnosis.*

Estela's belief and trust in the therapy system pushes her to believe that in order for Julian to reach his optimal potential, they must continue to seek services. She notes how the therapies he has received thus far have laid a "buena base" [good foundation] and although his autism does present some difficulties, by continuing to receive services Julian will one day be independent.

Mothers also mentioned how they are actively looking for contacts for services they foresee they will need in the future such as life skills coaches or job coaches who will be able to teach and support them. They see job coaches and life skills coaches as a valuable resource who will be able to support their child in being successful in these domains. Even if mothers do not know the specific name of the specific support service they will need in the future, there is a

sentiment that support services are the avenue they will need to travel so that their children can work towards these aspirations. Vanessa highlights this sentiment as she says:

*Pues yo no sé si sea suficiente con las terapias, pero le digo realmente no tengo, así como o pues no tengo como tanta información... Lo poco que he entendido es que con terapias con que existen pues muchas terapias que pueden ayudarlo y. Y digo pues aquí, aquí estoy. Pues si él este, no sé si con eso sea suficiente, pero. Si. Pienso que probablemente con las terapias pueda él tener una mejor calidad de vida.*

*Translation: Well, I don't know if therapies alone will be enough, but I really don't have that much information... From what little I've understood, there are many therapies that can help him. And I mean, here I am. Well, if this, I don't know if that alone will be enough, but... yes. I think that probably with therapies he can have a better quality of life.*

Vanessa admits how she is not sure that therapies will be enough to propel Jaime towards accomplishing the aspirations she has for her him. She mentions how she has heard there are “so many therapies” that can help him. In this way Vanessa connects Jaime’s future success with her ability to connect him to services.

**Financial Security.** Two mothers mentioned how they are preparing for their child’s future by focusing on their financial security. Valentina mentions how she has a separate savings and life insurance where her son Brandon is the beneficiary. She strategically does not have the savings account under Brandon’s name so that it will not interfere with his disability social security income. Georgina mentions how her husband and her are working and prioritizing paying off their home so that Julieta will always have a place to live. In this way, Valentina and Georgina are both ensuring that their children’s future is financially secure if Brandon or Julieta are not able to be financially self-sufficient.

## **Discussion**

The current study used an ecocultural framework to identify themes related to the Mexican heritage mothers’ parenting of autistic children. Two themes were identified which

begin to capture experiences that are part of the parenting process of Mexican heritage mothers raising autistic children. The first theme, *Mexican heritage mothers' cultural values and child's autistic characteristics shape parenting practices*, captures how the parent's level of adherence to *familismo* and *respeto*, and the person's autistic characteristics result in parenting practices which fall into categories of general instructions, behavioral, and self-determination. The second theme, *regardless of future expectations, Mexican heritage mothers provide support through a systems approach*, provides insight into how Mexican heritage mothers approach preparing their autistic child for the future they imagine and expect for their child, even if these are different. The themes provide an additional pathway of understanding the bidirectional relationship of a person's development and their biology, family environment, and culture. More specifically, the current findings show the heightened interconnectedness of the ecocultural theory nodes of family accommodations, family schema, culture, and individual needs, interests, and competencies. The mothers in the sample report how the cultural value of *familismo* created a family schema of having both the extended and the nuclear family be interdependent. Yet for this family schema to be achieved, family accommodations based on the child's autistic characteristics need to be made and the extended family needs to have the interest and competency in order to make such accommodations. This therefore not only calls for accommodations to promote the connectedness between the extended and nuclear family, but there also need to be adaptations made to the cultural values, interests and priorities of the nuclear and extended family units. The following section will highlight how mothers attempted, failed, or achieved to promote such unity and the specific parenting practices they utilized to do so.

### **Deviation from Traditional Values Due to Autism**

The larger Latinx parenting literature makes the blanket conclusion that when parents abide to the value of familismo, they engage in parenting practices that foster interdependence and sociocentrism (Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016). The interdependence and sociocentrism is passed on from generation to generation as the value of *familismo* which can be conceptualized as family centrality (Parke et al., 2006). Familismo has been shown to be stronger for first generation families who have generally not acculturated to the larger American culture and has even been identified as a protective factor against depression and maternal low quality of life (Calzada et al., 2012). In the realms of autism, familismo has continued to be viewed as a positive value (Lopez & Magaña, 2020) and has even been used to make the claim that interventions should involve more members of the family to make interventions culturally adapted and relevant (Luna, 2023; Calzada et al., 2010). The current data complicates this view of familismo as mothers provide evidence to how family centrality that includes the extended family does not always serve as a strength. For some families the value of familismo could only be implemented after changes were made at the family level, child level, or both.

These changes align with past ecocultural research on families with disabilities, as they have been shown to incorporate accommodations into their daily routines based on disability-related developmental needs (Bernheimer & Wiesner, 2007). These accommodations, recorded by Bernheimer & Weisner (2007), revolve around family values and goals, manifesting in parents quitting or changing their jobs, or seeking and avoiding specific activities. The mothers in the current study provide evidence of how caregivers pursue accommodations and expand ecocultural theory for autistic individuals to also include Latinx cultural values such as familismo and respeto. In the current study, mothers implemented changes at the family level, child level, or both, so that their autistic child could also practice the cultural values of familismo

and respeto. The level of change needed for the autistic children to participate in familismo and respeto varied in success, as some families were unwilling to adapt, or a child was unwilling to change. The level of change from the child and the family was matched to the level of adaptation and redefinition of the cultural practices of familismo and respeto. For example, if there was a change in the family but no change in the child, the family accepted that if the autistic child simply waved physically as a greeting, the extended family would not see this as disrespectful or interpret it as the child not wanting to be part of the family. For some mothers, the level of accommodation and family change needed for their child to partake in familismo and/or respeto was seen as countercultural, further pushing mothers to redefine the expectations for what it looked like to practice familismo and respeto. A Latinx family's lack of willingness to change, adapt, or accommodate the needs of an autistic child could be related to the cultural stigma associated with autism.

Literature on the experience of receiving an autism diagnosis for Latinx parents has documented how difficult it is to accept the autism diagnosis due to the cultural stigma associated with the disability (Zuckerman et al., 2014). The mothers in the current sample allow us to visualize the impact of autism among Latinx families and continues to be a barrier for the true establishment of *familismo*. Nonetheless we see that even when extended families do not show to accept the child's autism, the parents may still desire to be involved with the extended family. Families may put up with being othered, offended, or discriminated against due to their desire and internalized value of *familismo* and *respeto*, as they have the internalized belief around the importance of family and to go against the family would be *irrespetuoso* (disrespectful). The current data shows how the negative experiences that come from extended family members who do not understand autism may push families to deviate from *familismo*,



redefine what this cultural value means and looks like for them, to the extent where autism may break or make the family (DuBay et al., 2018). For some families *familismo* may be a superficial value that is maintained due to societal pressure and *respeto*, as to go against this value would be seen as disrespectful, individualistic, and countercultural (Arevalo-Flechas et al., 2013). This deviation from the traditional familismo questions the validity of cultural adaptations of autism interventions for Latinx to solely include familismo as a blanket value. Just like Latinx families come from various diverse and heterogenous countries and nationalities, the congruency to familismo may also vary and therefore requires for a holistic evaluation and modular evaluation to truly qualify as culturally adapted and relevant.

Parent psychoeducation interventions that have been developed specifically for minoritized populations such as Mind the Gap (MTG) and Parents Taking Action (PTA) (Iadarola et al., 2020; Lopez et al 2019) have a section on sharing the diagnosis with the family. These parent psychoeducation programs highlight how research has looked to formalize *familismo* into evidence-based practices by giving parents the tools to educate their families. *Respeto* has also been formalized into larger intervention programs by educating service providers on gender dynamics and social hierarchies which manifest in the ways that you speak and interact within Latinx households, calling service providers to use formal tense such as “*usted*” and to schedule supervisor meetings when the head of household is home. These intervention adaptations fall short as they do not address how the individualization merited by autism services challenge the interdependence of familismo and may be seen as disrespectful to believe one person requires more attention than others. This individualization may be harder to understand for families who hold traditional values and may be a barrier for the success of parent psychoeducation and child autism services overall. A way to address these issues may be to

assess the priorities of the family and to work together to write goals that connect traditional autism related goals and family centered goals. An example of such a goal may be that a parent has a traditional view of familismo and highly values that her son be a close friend with his cousins, but they have a hard time playing together. Therefore, a social skills goal may be appropriate and target both familial and autism level concerns.

### **Parenting Practices to Turn Aspirations into Expectations**

The conceptualization of autism among Mexican immigrants in the United States is impacted by their cultural, religious, and folk beliefs about autism as they may believe that the disability is a punishment from God, a blessing from God, or an overall illness that cannot be improved (Ijalba, 2016). Their conceptualization is directly related to the diagnosis process as the stigma associated with having a disability, language barriers, machismo, poverty, health care coverage, and familial normalization of developmental delay all hinder the pursuit and acceptance of an autism diagnosis (Zuckerman et al., 2014). The mothers in the current study echoed the normalization of developmental delay amongst their children as extended family members reassured them that all children were different and developed at their own space. Some mothers had previous experience and ideas of what typical development looked like and so they were able to compare and see the developmental delay themselves, where other mothers were made aware of the developmental delay by professionals or extended family members. Nonetheless all mothers recognized how their parenting ideologies stemmed from their own upbringing and therefore had pre-existing ideas of what was needed to raise a typically developing child.

Receiving the diagnosis prompted the mothers to deviate from this schema and to adapt their parenting practices and expectations based on what they believed to be important and

probable (Blacher & McIntyre, 2005). The mothers in the sample align with previous literature on Mexican parents, specifically mothers, as it shows how they find strength in their cultural values of being hardworking and family oriented to pursue autism services and persevere during difficult times (Lopez & Magaña, 2020). The mothers spoke of how their children had improved because of the services they had received and had some level of optimism for their children's future. Optimism is observed in work from Lopez & Magaña (2020) as their sample of Latina mothers of children with autism had optimistic views of their children's future, with mothers of children with higher verbal ability having higher optimism scores. This optimism is shown to be protective factor against mental health issues amongst mothers with low education levels as caregivers with high levels of education show low levels of optimism and experience higher levels of stress around their autistic child's development as they are more aware of their child's developmental delay.

The current study expands the work from Lopez & Magaña (2020) as optimism around an autistic child's life refers to a general disposition or attitude towards their life, while the importance and likelihood of expectations refers to the evaluation and empirical probability of certain outcomes occurring. Almost all mothers in the current study were optimistic as they had aspirations around their child's future, yet there was incongruency between the items they believed were important versus those they deemed probable. This aligns with the work from Ivey (2004) as they observed the same pattern, highlighting that among minority parents they may hold low expectations for their child's future as they identify low probability among adult-related outcomes such as living on their own, getting married, or achieving higher education.

A potential bridge between the incongruency between parental aspirations and expectations may be parenting practices. The parenting practices mothers used fell into the

categories of general instructions, behavioral, and self-determination as tools to improve their children's daily functioning and potentially enhance their long-term quality of life. The influence from autism services was clear as mothers themselves recognized that they had changed their parenting practices to include strategies used in their child's therapy, although they had not received direct coaching on these strategies themselves. Work from Cohen & Morales (2018) showed how mothers equate their efforts to support development to pursuing and securing autism specific interventions, as mothers may see the interventionists as the experts on autism and ultimately, their children's behavior. This in turn provides evidence to the fact that parents are willing and open to learning and will ultimately adapt their parenting regardless of if they receive a parenting or psychoeducation intervention. All mothers in the study had ideas around the future, some were optimistic while others were uncertain due to their child's autistic characteristics and difficulties with social interactions, academics, and independent living skills. Regardless of their views on the future, mothers endorsed autism services as the critical ingredient to prepare their child for the future.

The research adds to the growing literature on Latinx mothers of autistic children, with an emphasis on the parenting experience. The large emphasis on early intervention for autism has created a service cliff for autistic adults and therefore looking at the parenting practices of parents with autistic children ages 10-16 may be a way to identify adaptive intervention avenues.

**Limitations.** The current study was limited due to its lack of representation of Latinx mothers from various heritage and nationalities. Research on Latinx in the United States has been dominated by participants from Mexican heritage, and unfortunately this research follows the same pattern and therefore the findings may or may not apply to mothers from El Salvador, Guatemala, Columbia, Peru or Puerto Rico- all immigrant Latinx groups with high population

numbers in the United States. Most mothers in the sample were from low-income and limited educational backgrounds and therefore may also not be representative of Latinx caregivers with high socioeconomic status and education levels. Due to the participants in the sample being all mothers, the current study only focuses on the mother's parenting experience and does not include the eight fathers who were also part of the caregiving unit. Additionally, the current study is limited due to the lack of direct observation of parent child interactions, a traditional method used to observe parenting practices.

Additionally, qualitative methodology complicates the generalization of assumptions and conclusions therefore the findings of the current study should be used to add nuance to future interventions. By using the findings of the current study future interventions which are deemed to only be enacting change on the autistic child, can take a closer look at the secondary parental change. Furthermore, severity of autistic characteristics was not captured in the current study and therefore this important variable was not able to be explored in depth.

**Conclusion.** The current study demonstrated that although the Latinx cultural values of *familismo* and *respeto* are guiding the parenting practices of Mexican heritage mothers, the values do not follow the traditional definitions. The current study also showed how parents are adapting their parenting practices because of the autism services their children receive and see the continued access to services as an integral path to a successful future for their autistic children. Prior studies around parent-mediated interventions have seldom included Latinx parents and when they do, parents have shown increased levels of burden after being taught evidence-based strategies (Tafolla, 2023; Magaña et al., 2017). This increased burden may be due to the interventionists' failure to acknowledge that parents possess their own schemas regarding their interactions with their children, coupled with a lack of effort to build upon these

existing strategies and an insufficient recognition of the funds of knowledge parents possess, may engender feelings of inadequacy and marginalization among parents. Future interventions need to first take a holistic inventory of the current parenting practices and build off of such practices in order to truly create culturally responsive interventions that are sensitive and effective to both the parent and the child. In this way parents will have the knowledge and skills to in turn see their future aspirations as future realities.

## Appendix

### A-Interview for Latina Mothers of Autistic Children

#### Historial

1. Hábleme de usted
2. ¿Dónde nació, donde creció
3. Platíqueme de su familia, de sus hijos.
  - a. ¿Cómo son sus hijos?
  - b. ¿Cuántos hijos tiene?
4. ¿Cómo es la relación entre sus hijos?
5. ¿Cómo es la relación familiar?

#### Preguntas sobre Prácticas de Crianza

Me gustaría platicar sobre lo que usted cree o sabe sobre cómo los niños crecen y se desarrollan.

1. ¿Qué diría que sabe sobre este tema?
2. ¿Antes de tener hijos, usted tenía una idea o creencia sobre como los niños crecen?
  - a. ¿Han cambiado estas ideas desde que tuvo hijos?
3. ¿Cómo describiría las diferentes etapas de crianza?
  - a. ¿Cuál ha sido su etapa favorita?
  - b. ¿Cuál ha sido la etapa más difícil?
    - i. ¿Estas etapas han sido igual de difíciles para todos sus hijos, algunas etapas que han sido más difíciles para su hijo/a con autismo?
  - c. ¿Como ha navegado las diferentes etapas?
  - d. ¿Como describiría su paciencia en las etapas?
4. ¿Usted cree que los niños con autismo se desarrollan o crecen de esta misma manera o hay elementos diferentes?
  - a. ¿Como que etapas? ¿Que es diferente? ¿Necesitan apoyo diferente?
  - b. ¿Como llego a tener estas ideas sobre el desarrollo de los niños con autismo?
5. ¿Cómo cree usted que los padres apoyan el desarrollo? / ¿Cuál es el rol de los padres mientras los niños crecen?
  - a. ¿Este rol es diferente para padres de niños sin discapacidades/con autismo?
6. ¿Cómo cree usted que la familia extendida (por ejemplo, suegros, abuelos, tíos) apoyan el desarrollo?
  - a. ¿cómo se ha visto este apoyo en su familia?
  - b. ¿su familia extendida sabe sobre el autismo de su hijo? ¿usted les enseñó sobre el autismo o ya sabían algo del tema?
7. ¿Durante las etapas de crianza, que valores cree que son importantes de desarrollar?
  - a. Por ejemplo, ser bien educado, etc, respetuoso, ser servicial, ¿ser unido a su familia?
  - b. ¿Cuáles son sus expectativas sobre el comportamiento de su hijo?
  - c. ¿cree que es importante imponer/enseñar las reglas? ¿Que tan importante es para usted seguir estas reglas? ¿Hay flexibilidad en sus reglas?
  - d. ¿Qué reglas les ha enseñado/impuesto a sus hijos?
8. ¿Usted toma en cuenta la opinión de su hijo en cuanto las reglas de su casa?

- a. ¿Cómo trata de promover que sus hijos sigan las reglas de su casa?
  - b. ¿Usted utiliza alguna forma de disciplina con sus hijos?
    - i. ¿Con su hijo/a con autismo?
  - c. ¿Usted cree que los niños con autismo entienden la disciplina, pero es que solo son más tercos que los demás?
9. ¿Me podría dar un ejemplo de cómo se ve cuando sus hijos hacen algo que no deben?
- a. ¿Hay algo que su hijo haga que lo haga a usted “explotar”?
  - b. ¿Cómo maneja las situaciones cuando su hijo se porta mal?
  - c. ¿Cuándo su hijo se porta mal, usted llega a decir cosas como “si no te portas bien ya no te voy a querer”?
  - d. ¿usted motiva a su hijo a entender el impacto de su comportamiento cuando se esta portando mal?
10. ¿Y en general, usted como se siente sobre su forma de criar o su forma de ser padre/madre?
- a. Los comportamientos de sus hijos lo/a hacen sentir seguro de la forma en la cual está criando a sus hijos/as?
  - b. ¿Qué tal los comportamientos de sus hijo/a con autismo?

## **PARTE 2**

### Proceso del Diagnostico & Preguntas sobre el Conocimiento de Autismo

Me gustaría platicar sobre su hijo con autismo, ¿me podría platicar de él?

1. ¿Cómo es?
  - a. ¿Qué le gusta hacer?
  - b. ¿Cuáles son sus actividades favoritas, shows, etc?
2. ¿Y cómo fue que usted se dio cuenta que había algo “diferente”?
  - a. ¿Cuál fue la primera señal?
3. ¿Usted platico con alguien sobre sus preocupaciones?
4. ¿Había escuchado el termino autismo antes de buscar/recibir el diagnostico?
  - a. ¿Cuánto sabía sobre el autismo en ese entonces?
5. ¿Me podría platicar sobre cómo se ve el autismo en su hijo?
  - a. ¿Cuáles son sus comportamientos?
  - b. ¿Cómo se comunica y expresa?
  - c. ¿Cuándo su hijo tiene algo que decir, usted que hace?
  - d. ¿usted cree que los niños con autismo tienen dificultad para comunicar sus necesidades?
  - e. ¿Cuándo usted ve que su hijo está pasando por un mal momento, usted que hace?
6. ¿Me podría platicar sobre los apoyos que esta recibiendo su hijo con autismo?
  - a. ¿Qué servicios recibe, en casa, en la escuela?
  - b. ¿y usted como se siente con estos servicios?
    - i. ¿Le parecen suficientes, apropiados?
7. ¿Me podría platicar sobre cómo se involucra en las terapias de su hijo con autismo?
  - a. ¿Usted cree que entre más temprano empiecen estos servicios mejor?
  - b. ¿Usted cree que hay un solo o mejor tratamiento/terapia para el autismo?
8. ¿Como diría usted que expresa su amor para su hijo?



9. ¿Usted cree que los niños con autismo pueden formar lazos fuertes con sus padres o cuidadores?
10. ¿En sus palabras, usted que cree que causa el autismo?
  - a. ¿Usted cree que los doctores saben que causa el autismo?
  - b. ¿Cuándo cree usted que aparecen los síntomas?
  - c. ¿Usted cree que las madres que no expresan afecto abiertamente pueden hacer que sus hijos desarrollen autismo?
  - d. ¿Usted cree que existe un amplio rango de gravedad o niveles entre los niños con autismo?
  - e. ¿usted cree que el autismo afecta a personas de todas las razas y etnias de aproximadamente la misma manera?

**Ahora me gustaría platicar de como se ve su día a día.**

11. Me podría platicar como se ve su un típico día para usted y su familia.
12. Me podría platicar de cómo se prepara su hijo para un día típico
  - a. ¿se viste solo, escoge su ropa, se baña, se lava los dientes solo?
  - b. ¿Se hace de desayunar?
13. Platíqueme sobre cómo se ven las salidas en familia.
  - a. ¿Qué les gusta hacer para divertirse como familia?
  - b. ¿Qué le gusta hacer a su hijo con autismo para divertirse?
  - c. ¿Como encuentran una actividad para hacer todos como familia?
  - d. ¿Usted toma en cuenta los gustos de su hijo cuando están haciendo planes para la familia?
  - e. ¿Hay algunas cosas que quisieran poder hacer como familia?
  - f. ¿Hay algunas cosas que quisieran hacer como familia en el futuro?
    - i. ¿Alguna razón por la cual no está haciendo estas cosas ahorita?
14. Me podría platicar sobre como su familia celebra días festivos, cumpleaños, ¿etc?
  - a. ¿Como celebra usted a su hijo? ¿Por cuales ocasiones lo celebra?
15. ¿Cómo se involucra/participa su hijo en su casa?
  - a. ¿Hay alguna forma que le gustaría que su hijo se involucrara o cosas que hiciera en casa?
    - i. ¿Cómo se involucra su hijo en los deberes de la casa? ¿Tiene algunos deberes asignados?
16. ¿Me podría platicar sobre como usted apoya a sus hijos con las responsabilidades?
  - a. Tareas de la escuela, dinero, citas de doctor/agendas, manejar tiempo,
17. ¿Usted plática con su hijo sobre lo que cree que quiere hacer con su vida?
  - a. ¿Cuándo plática con su hijo, o se confrontan con una situación, usted lo motiva a vea los dos lados del argumento?
  - b. ¿usted le pide o escucha la opinión de su hijo hasta cuando usted no esta de acuerdo con su punto de vista?

Expectativas de Crianza

Ahora me gustaría platicar sobre las expectativas de crianza que tiene sobre sus hijos.

1. Cuando diagnosticaron a su hijo/a con autismo, ¿Cuál o cuáles diría que eran las cosas más importantes para usted que su hijo/a llegara a hacer o lograr?
2. Usted plática con su hijo sobre lo que cree que quiere hacer con su vida?
3. ¿Como se imagina el futuro de su hijo?
4. Ahora y en el futuro, ¿qué/cuáles son las cosas más importantes que su hijo con autismo haga o logre?
  - a. Ser feliz y estar satisfecho con su vida
  - b. Asistir a la escuela
  - c. Cazarse
  - d. Comprar una casa
  - e. Tener un círculo de amigos
  - f. Practicar una religión
  - g. Ser aceptado por su comunidad/familia
  - h. Tener un futuro financieramente seguro
  - i. Estar libre de peligro
  - j. Ayudar con los deberes en su casa
  - k. Seguir las reglas civiles
  - l. Cuidar a sus padres cuando sean ancianos
  - m. Participar en actividades civiles (ie., votar)
  - n. Vivir independientemente
  - o. Tener tiempo para ver/participar en juegos deportivos
  - p. Tener hijos
  - q. Usar servicios comunitarios
  - r. Tener éxito en la escuela
5. ¿Ahora y en el futuro, cuáles son las cosas o experiencias que usted cree que sean las más probables en ocurrir?
  - a. Mismos que anteriormente
6. ¿ Y que está haciendo ahora para preparar a su hijo para este futuro?
7. ¿Cómo se imagina que la forma en que está criando a su hijo se relaciona a la visión que tiene de su futuro?
8. Consejos

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B- Qualitative Analysis Code Book

Code Book

Themes	Categories	Codes	Definitions	Examples from Transcripts
Mexican heritage mothers' cultural values and child's autistic characteristics shape parenting practices.	Values		Parent describes values which they perceive as important to guide their parenting such as familismo, respeto. Parent may also describe how they recognize that they are redefining what these values look like for their family.	
		Familismo	Family-centered orientation where parents describe how all family members recognize how the family is at the center. Parents may or may not differentiate between extended vs nuclear family and describe how they teach this value to their autistic child.	<i>“Pero sí creo que es muy importante que que uno como como padre, pues le enseñe a sus hijos el la importancia de de los valores de de la familia y no ser grosero, no andar peleando con con con la gente no respetar y y y este. Y pues cualquier otro otro valor que que sea importante para la familia.”</i>
			Mothers Coded Martina, Cassandra, Vanessa, Maria Teresa, Marina, Marcela, Georgina, Estela, Liliana, Valentina	
		Respeto	Parents describe how children must behave in a way that shows distance and honor to those who are older than you such as parents and grandparents by following their directions. Respeto also entails speaking to people according to their position and title in the family hierarchy by using formal pronouns such as “usted”, abiding to societal rules and social norms such as greetings and being conscious of your position in a place as a guest.	<i>“¿Yo creo que el respeto, primero que nada, es una de las fundamentales, porque donde sea, en donde sea, lo vas a poner en práctica en cualquier situación, eh? ¿Tanto el respeto como a las demás personas, el respeto a los padres, el respeto a las cosas ajenas, yo creo que es algo fundamental, más que nada no?”</i>

			Mothers Coded	
			Vanessa, Maria Teresa, Marina, Marcela, Georgina, Estela, Liliana	
	Parenting Practices		Specific set of behaviors that parents use to socialize their children to be passive and/or active members of their community in the present and future.	
		"Dando Instrucciones"	Mother directly states what she wants the child to do, how to do it, so that they can learn, in various areas such as self-regulation, appropriate behavior, and/or adaptative skills. Being able to be very specific and recognizing that child needs that to understand. Mother may also recognize the need to engage in such teaching repeatedly for the child to learn or apply the knowledge.	<i>"He has started to, um, warm up stuff in the microwave. So we we've taught him just the 30 seconds button. What we do is like, okay, you're going to have to press the the button 1 or 2 times, right, depending on, on the amount of time. So we'll be like okay, so if it's two minutes we'll just tell him we're going to do four times okay. So then uh it's like one two. But we have to pace it because we can't throw things at him like really fast. It has to be like okay, one, two. And then because he's very, um, he's always very distracted, he'll forget. So it's like, okay, we did one. Remember? We still have more to go."</i>
			Mothers Coded Martina, Cassandra, Vanessa, Maria Teresa, Marina, Marcela, Liliana	
		"Decidir"	Mother describes giving the child options and space to support their decision making, promote them to move forward in their education choices, job choices, clothes choices, food, preferred activities.	<i>Eso también es sus beneficios. Pues él los tiene. Pero él incluso me ha dicho No me saques, Dame, dame que yo me de el tiempo. Él me lo ha pedido. Este. Déjame, déjame darme, déjame que yo me de el tiempo igual que los otros. Yo puedo. Y yo Y yo lo he dejado. Yo he firmado. Que lo dejen en clase normal porque él me lo ha pedido. Yo, yo. Este. Yo lo estoy apoyando en eso, no porque este la escuela me diga o bien me digan, me den, me dan las opciones, pero yo siempre le pregunto a él</i>
			Mothers Coded Martina, Maria Teresa, Marina, Marcela, Liliana	
		"Escuchando a otra persona"	Mother describes how she uses a third person to reinforce/teach child. This may be a therapist or another family member.	<i>Uh, I know that he listens more to my to my oldest daughter than he does me. She just kind of like, you know, pushes him, like, you know, you have to take out the trash now.</i>
			Mothers Coded Vanessa, Maria Teresa, Marina, Marcela, Liliana	

		"Find Information"	<p>mother describes how she has to research and find new information to teach child communication, cooking, or other skills. This may call for to use this information in innovative and creative ways. Mom may also recognize that she does not have the necessary knowledge or skills to address an issue and may reach out to other people, therapists, for support.</p> <p>Mothers Coded</p> <p>Marina, Marcela, Martina, Valentina</p>	<p><i>I researched it and I learned it. I know that they did say that it has a process. You know, there's a process to it. But, you know, I through the regional center, I know that they also had like, uh, parent training. So I did attend all those. I mean, I can't tell you how many, how many places I've been. It's like regional center, like out in my community, you know, uh, the Tiger program.</i></p>
		"Hacer algo"	<p>Mother describes giving the child space, opportunities, structure, and time to do things for themselves such as prepare their own food, serve own food, ask questions to advocate for their own needs. Mother may or may not connect the skills needed for these acts as fundamental skills to be independent, autonomous, or for their future.</p> <p>Mothers Coded</p> <p>Cassandra, Vanessa, Maria Teresa, Marcela, Liliana</p>	<p><i>Hazlo porque tú lo quieres y porque tú crees que que es lo que lo que tú quieres hacer en tu vida el resto de tu vida, porque eso vas a hacer tú en en toda tu vida.</i></p>
		"La técnica de un espacio"	<p>Mother offers child a break to support emotional regulation and recognizes the practice was learned from autism providers.</p> <p>Mothers Coded</p> <p>Martina, Cassandra, Estela, Liliana</p>	<p><i>Tiempo atrás le decíamos. Le decía a su papá lávate la cara, ponte agua fría y respira y cuenta hasta diez. Cuando ya hagas eso regresas y ya me me explicas.</i></p>
		"Les recuerdo, les recuerdo"	<p>Mother describes how she uses reminders to support child to complete tasks, engage in desired behaviors, and may use these reminders to redirect the child and be specific about what the child needs to do.</p> <p>Mothers Coded</p>	<p><i>Esos todos los días, aunque sean pequeñitos. Nosotros somos los que pasamos más tiempo con ellos y los enseñamos a a moldear esos comportamientos de una o de otra manera, a pesar de que no esté ABA lo seguimos implementando en la casa. Entonces era, Julieta come con la cuchara, límpiame las manos en las servilletas, este</i></p>

			Martina, Cassandra, Vanessa, Maria Teresa, Marina, Marcela, Georgina, Estela, Liliana	<i>no lo tires el agua en el piso porque sí. Tenía la costumbre de tirar el el agua al piso cuando terminaba de comer. Ahorita ya, gracias a Dios que ya no, pero son como pequeños recordatorios que le van ayudando a ella a no a no hacer las cosas. ¿Me entiendes? Si poco a poco, pues ahí va aprendiendo.</i>
		"Mano sobre mano"	Mother may engage in full manual guidance prompt such as hand'-over'-hand to support child to successfully complete tasks or engage in desired behaviors such as washing hands, cleaning up, or using own body to set up a physical barrier to stop child from doing something. This may also describe parents need to be on watch and ensure autistic child is safe.	<i>Speaker1: Sí. Y cuando, por ejemplo, cuando la ayudan a lavarse las manos, este cómo apoyan a que ella llegue a lograr hacer eso es con recordatorios, tienen visuales, es mano en mano. ¿Cómo le hacen?</i>  <i>Speaker2: ¿Eh? Es más mano a mano. Fíjate, yo creo que Julieta es mucho de. Es mucho de de mano a mano. Eh, Mi hija. Batalla con los visuales.</i>
			Mothers Coded	
			Estela, Georgina	
		"Moldeando"	Mother describes how she exposes child to situations which may results in behavioral challenges or uncomfortable situations in hopes that behavioral challenges will reduce, and child will be able to participate in family activities or long term aspirations and ultimately achieve what mother sees as "success".	<i>Just when we take him to the mall letting him choose what he wants to see, you know, taking turns, like when we go to the stores, we practice this a lot because it has helped also with, you know, he didn't want to be in certain places because it's loud, because it's crowded, because, um, you know, he just doesn't want to be there.</i>
			Mothers Coded	
			Cassandra, Marina, Georgina	
		"Primero esto y luego vamos a hacer esto"	Mother utilizes contingencies to support child in completing in desired tasks.	<i>But, uh, what I, what I do, we try to trick them, we we'll get one shirt and we get another shirt. It's like, okay, so it's either this one or it's either that one. So then he ends up picking one.</i>
			Mothers Coded	
			Martina, Vanessa, Marina, Georgina	

		"Tienes Autismo"	Mother describes telling child about their autism so that they can understand themselves better, recognize and talk about their needs.	<i>¿Entonces yo les dije sabes qué? Tienes autismo, esto es así y así y así le di una explicación simple, porque también explicarles mucho no es como nada más se les da vuelta en la cabeza, so. Si no fue bien aceptado. Dijeron que estaban ellos enfermos. ¿De qué? ¿Que si era algo del cerebro, Que qué había pasado? ¿Que por qué ellos estaban así? Les hizo muchas preguntas.</i>
			Mothers Coded	
			Martina, Marina, Liliana	
		"Trato de preguntarle"	Mother uses questions to indirectly indicate to her child that something is expected or to support child to gage emotional state and engage in emotional regulation. Mother may also use questions to support child to walk through a situation and conceptually visualize a situation and understand the consequences.	<i>Well, why did you do that, though? Why? And he'll look at me like, I don't know. And it's like, okay, but you always had a reason. The reason that you did it. Were you mad? Were you irritated? Like, why would you do something so silly? So I do ask their opinion a lot of the time. Sometimes they have a logical excuse, sometimes they don't. But again, if you don't know why they did it. Then what's the point of teaching them how to manage anything if they don't even understand themselves if they did something like that? Yeah. So yeah, their opinion matters.</i>
			Mothers Coded	
			Martina, Cassandra, Maria Teresa, Marina, Marcela, Estela, Liliana	
		Environmental Arrangement	Mother engages in environmental arrangement to support child to complete necessary tasks/chores or to facilitate child to participate in an activity. Mother may organize child's room so that the child can independently complete tasks, reduce sensory sensitivity, or provide visual cues and supports.	<i>So a lot of the times like there's so I get his water bottle. And a lot of the time he won't ask me for it. I have to fill it. I'll fill it with his water. I'll fill it with his ice, and I have to leave it on the counter, because if I don't, he's not going to tell me he needs water. He'll go all day without drinking it. But he's the same way with food. He's not going to tell me he's hungry. I have to sit there and play the guessing game. So I'd rather play the guessing game and. Use that chart, then sit there and wait till he's hungry, and then we go into meltdown mode. So one meltdown screws up the whole day. So. It helps.</i>
			Mothers Coded	
			Cassandra, Vanessa, Marcela, Valentina	
		Pretending / Exaggerating	Mother may pretend something is happening to her or exaggerate an emotion during a specific situation so that autistic child is able to sympathize, reflect, or realize how other people feel in a situation which they are causing.	<i>You know, and I'll even pretend like, oh, my ears are hurting and my head is hurting. And, you know, he he he kind of starts, you know, thinking about, well, this is is this how you feel when you're at a party? And he tells me, yeah, that's how I feel. Well, this is how I'm feeling because you're turning this on.</i>
			Mothers Coded	

			Marina, Georgina	
		Priming	Mother describes how she prepares child to be prepared for an activity or situation by telling the child directly that situation is coming so that child does not a behavioral outburst and complies with what is being asked of her.	<i>Yo soy [child], en cinco minutos nos vamos a bañar. Perdón y ella ya se mentaliza o lo procesa y dice okay, ahorita va a decir y nos vamos a bañar y ya me paro.</i>
			Mothers Coded	
			Marina, Georgina, Liliana	
		Sensory	Mother considers child's sensory needs and changes own behavior such as speaking in lower voice, cooking different meals and other intentional acts which are meant to reduce the stress of the child's sensory sensitivity.	<i>Porque si lo haces adentro de una casa, él va a acabar escondido, porque se concentra el ruido, se concentra la gente. Entonces, si lo haces en un parque, si lo haces en un lugar natural, él va a correr, él va a caminar, él va a jugar, Él va a venir al pastel. Entonces este, um. Pero no se va a sentir abrumado si va.</i>
			Mothers Coded	
			Martina, Cassandra, Maria Teresa, Marina, Marcela	
		Visual support	Mother utilizes visual supports such as timers, charts to explain contingencies to child to have child complete and engage in desired tasks/or behaviors.	<i>Entonces creo que esos son los visuales que uno tiene que usar. Para enseñarles las consecuencias lógicas de una acción. Al final si haces esta serie de pasos. Esta consecuencia que a lo mejor nada más atiende de manera visual, se va a sentir como esto que no te gusta. Para que ellos aprendan a tomar decisiones</i>
			Mothers Coded	
			Cassandra, Marina, Marcela	
Regardless of future expectations, Mexican heritage mothers provide support through a systems approach.	Future Aspirations		Parent describes attributes, events, or outcomes that they have a strong desire for their autistic child to achieve or accomplish.	<i>Que aprendiera en cuestiones de ellas un uso. No se usó. Como se dice, como su higiene personal a a cambiarse, a bañarse, a no sé hacer más en en cuestiones de ella para mí, yo creo que lo que es ella sería lo más importante por ahora y más adelante. Obviamente si. Que se aprenda su nombre al menos. Si llegase a perder por algún lugar. Es contestar. ¿De alguna manera? ¿Necesariamente contestar, porque la comunicación no es nada más, eh? Vocalizar. ¿La comunicación viene siendo en todos los aspectos, no? Pero como cosas más de seguridad para mí que para que ella aprenda a estar</i>
			Mothers Coded	
			Martina, Cassandra, Vanessa, Maria Teresa, Marina, Marcela, Georgina, Estela, Liliana, Valentina	



				<i>segura siempre por lo normal, está acompañada de alguien, siempre tiene cuidado.</i>
		Actions towards future aspirations	Parent describes attributes, events, or outcomes that they have a strong desire for their autistic child to achieve or accomplish. Parent also describes the actions they are engaging in so that their child will potentially reach such aspirations such as securing services, researching services, or taking financial measures.	<i>Speaker 1: ¿Y qué diría que está haciendo para preparar a Julieta para este futuro que se imagina de ella?</i>  <i>Speaker 2: Pues con las terapias, mira. Con las terapias me apoyo mucho y normalmente trabajamos las áreas que que son las de necesidad, es con la de ella es con la que más me apoyo.</i>
			Mothers Coded	
			Georgina, Valentina	

Figure 3. Codebook including themes, categories, codes, and quotations from the dataset.

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