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Perceptions and Practices: Parent Educational Engagement of Mexican Heritage Families Rearing Autistic Children

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

in

Education

by

Jessica Miguel

Committee in charge:

Professor Shana R. Cohen, Chair
Professor Angela Booker
Professor Megan Hopkins
Professor Cristoforos Mamas
Professor Alison Wishard-Guerra

2023

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The Dissertation of Jessica Miguel is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

University of California San Diego

2023

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2018 *Cohen, S.R., & **Miguel, J.** Amor and social stigma: ASD beliefs among immigrant Mexican parents. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, 1-15. doi: 10.1007/s10803-017-3457-x

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Perceptions and Practices: Parent Educational Engagement of Mexican Heritage Families Rearing Autistic Children

by

Jessica Miguel

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California San Diego, 2023

Professor Shana R. Cohen, Chair

Parental engagement enhances academic outcomes. While numerous studies have examined the academic benefits of parental engagement among families of different sociocultural backgrounds, limited research has focused on Mexican-heritage families rearing autistic children. Mexican heritage (MH) families make up a growing number of students in K-12 and have increased in autism diagnoses. Utilizing Barton and colleagues' (2004)

definition of parental engagement, this study explored parental engagement among Mexican heritage families rearing autistic children. Research questions examined (1) MH families' distribution of household and educational tasks, (2) MH families' perceptions of educational engagement, (3) MH parents' description of their educational engagement practices, and (4) MH household's enactment of educationally engaging practices in their daily lives. This dissertation study employed a convergent parallel design using a survey, focus groups interviews, individual interviews, and video recordings of parents engaging in educational activities with their children to investigate findings. Results from this study revealed that MH mothers are the main participants in caregiving (i.e. playing, feeding, bathing child) and educational (i.e. speaking to teachers, attending IEP meetings) activities. MH families described three distinct themes related to educational engagement, educational engagement tools, mother's educational engagement traits, and an independent future. MH parents' descriptions of practices included parent versus educator's perceptions of educational engagement, childrearing practices, parent-educator partnerships, supportive environments, and the impacts of COVID-19 on child development. Lastly, enacted practices revealed key strategies such as mothers providing resources, attending to their child's mood, and at-home support of educational concepts. Findings from this study may be used to modify parental engagement strategies of special education teachers in Mexican heritage communities, provide an understanding of academic engagement strategies in MH homes, and help adapt existing parent engagement practices to better fit those of the home environment.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Research on the educational attainment of autistic[1] children have shown worrying findings related to both social and academic outcomes (Ashburner et al., 2010; Estes et al., 2011; Kim, 2018; Vanegas, 2019; Wei et al., 2015; Zhou et al., 2019). Research on the academic outcomes of autistic children in comparison to non-autistic students include difficulties with behavioral and emotional regulation, lower than-predicted academic achievement, and slower growth across reading measures (i.e. passage comprehension) (Ashburner et al., 2010; S. H. Kim et al., 2018; Wei et al., 2015). A longitudinal study by Kim et al. (2018) measuring academic achievement in autistic children found that while word and letter recognition was equivalent to the intelligence quotient (IQ) of a child, inference ability was hindered regardless of IQ. However, studies examining within-group academic outcomes show some positive results, including improved word reading and language gains for autistic children from racial/ethnically diverse backgrounds (Estes et al., 2011; Vanegas, 2019; Zhou et al., 2019). For example, Vanegas (2019) compared academic measures (e.g. word reading, basic math, writing) among bilingual and monolingual autistic children and found a positive relationship between monolingual children and the word reading subtest, and between the numerical operations subtest for bilingual children. Given negative academic outcomes for autistic children, it is important to consider factors that may increase academic achievement for autistic children.

Parental engagement has been highly researched among autistic and non-autistic children. Parent academic engagement corresponds with increases in pre-literacy skills, reading comprehension, and standardized testing (Arnold et al., 2008; Banerjee et al., 2011; Jeynes, 2007, 2012; Jeynes, 2017; Wilder, 2014). Jeynes' (2017) meta-synthesis examined research

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[1]Following calls from the autistic community denoting preference for person-first language, autistic child(ren) will be used in this study (Bottema-Beutel et al, 2020).

studies on parental involvement among Latino[2] families. He found a positive relationship between parent involvement and children's outcomes in reading, math, science, and social studies (e.g. studies measured grade point average, standardized and non-standardized test scores). However, research demonstrating these gains does not specifically sample families rearing autistic children. Research in autism has examined how parents engage in educational settings (i.e. attending meetings, communicating with school personnel), home-based engagement activities (i.e. directed play, training in social skills), and explored outcomes related to family functioning (i.e. psychological distress, familial cohesion) (Benson et al., 2008; Benson, 2015; Zablotsky et al., 2012). Few studies have examined the educational engagement practices in Latinx families rearing autistic children. Based on autism literature examining types of parent engagement and positive academic outcomes associated with parental engagement among non-autistic populations, there is a need to examine further the benefits parental engagement can afford autistic children.

Parents' Educational Beliefs and Expectations

Parents of autistic children have consistently stated the importance of education (Azad & Mandell, 2016; Bush et al., 2017; Callahan et al., 2008; Connolly & Gersch, 2016; Palmer, 2006). Interviews and observations conducted by Azad and Mandell (2016) with 39 parent-teacher pairs indicate that 18% of parents listed academics as a primary parental concern, compared to 8% of teachers. When examining the academic transitions (i.e. switching schools) for six parents rearing autistic children, Connolly and Gersch (2016) found that parents' academic and educational decisions (e.g. how they communicated with teachers, the type of

[2] To promote gender inclusivity (Scharrón-del Río & Aja, 2020) I will use the term Latinx when describing the larger Latin American population. However, when referencing a specific ethnic communities or journal article to respect the authors linguistic choice, the term used by the author will be utilized (i.e. Hispanic, Mexican-heritage).

classroom for their child: special day class or general education classroom) were based on reflections of their child's future (e.g. parents desired that their child be 'typical,' or have appropriate social skills). In addition, studies have found that parents of autistic children generally hold positive educational expectations, looking forward to their child's school year and believing their child will make important academic and social gains (Bush et al., 2017). Among Latinx families, studies have found similar results (Hughes et al., 2002, 2008). Hughes and colleagues (2002) found that Latino parents were satisfied with the communication they received from school educators; parents were involved in educational planning and service provision for their children (Hughes et al., 2002). This is encouraging given positive school-family relationships (i.e. frequent parent-teacher communication, supportive parent-teacher relationship) are associated with higher parent educational expectations (Bush et al., 2017). While some families did identify expectations for their autistic child to improve in physical (i.e. walk, eat) and academic (i.e. improving speech, writing, reading) outcomes, parents' primary expectations were for them to develop independence (i.e. pay rent, hold a job) (Hughes et al., 2008). Given the importance of education to parents of autistic children it is important to examine the educational activities and practices they engage in with their children.

Autism & Latinx Populations

There are documented diagnosing and intervention disparities among racial and ethnically diverse autistic children (Bishop-Fitzpatrick & Kind, 2017; Delobel-Ayoub et al., 2015; Lin & Yu, 2015; Liptak et al., 2008; Zablotsky et al., 2017). Specific to Latinx populations, Zablotsky and colleagues (2017) found that from 2014 to 2016 Hispanic children were less likely to receive a diagnosis for a developmental disability when compared to non-Hispanic children of any race/ethnicity. Additionally, in the last decade, there's been a shift in

the special education field to examine the lived experiences of Latinx families rearing autistic children (Angell & Solomon, 2017; Blanche et al., 2015; Burke et al., 2016, 2018; Casillas et al., 2017). However, many demographic and theoretical gaps remain. Bridges et al.'s (2012) ethnography of 26 parent-child dyads suggests that there are specific beliefs, such as *bien educado,* defined as educating the whole person (e.g. proper demeanor, clear communication, affection, obedience), that may inform educational beliefs for Mexican heritage families. In addition, research on parental engagement among Latinx parents in general education highlights the need to incorporate cultural/family values and home practices to garner higher parental involvement (De Gaetano, 2007; Durand & Perez, 2013; Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012; Walker et al., 2011). Mexican-heritage parents of autistic children may have culturally situated beliefs regarding academic engagement that differ from other racial/ethnic groups and are not accurately described in the autism literature.

Parental Engagement in Autism

Parental engagement for parents of children with disabilities differs from parents of neurotypical children (Rosenbaum et al., 1998; Rosenbaum, 2001; Zablotsky et al., 2012). Rosenbaum and colleagues (1998) note that parents of autistic children experience additional responsibilities related to educational engagement since they are directly involved in goal setting and planning for intervention services. In fact, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004 specifically calls on parents to be actively involved in their child's educational trajectory. Examples of parental engagement provisions listed in IDEIA include providing parents/guardians with the right to examine all educational records pertaining to their child and requiring prior notice of all changes made to the child's educational plan (i.e. §1415, IDEIA, 2004). Research on parents with children enrolled in special education describes

what engagement looks like in adherence to IDEIA policy outside of IDEIA policy (Bacon & Causton-Theoharis, 2013; Brown, 2014; Burke et al., 2018; Kalyanpur et al., 2000; Wright & Taylor, 2014). For example, Zablotsky et al. (2012) used a survey of 8,978 families rearing autistic children to measure parents' satisfaction levels with schools (i.e. academics, personnel, discipline, rules) and parent-teacher communication. Their findings indicate that parents of autistic children were more likely to be involved, attending parent-teacher conferences and meeting with guidance counselors, compared to parents of children in general education (Zablotsky et al., 2012). In addition, a study by Burke and colleagues (2018) examined 46 Latino parent's strategies for engaging with their autistic child's school, they reported participating in school activities (i.e. volunteering, joining committees), as well as having to aggressively request services and manage positive relationships with educators by consistently documenting communication with educators. Families of autistic children are mandated by educational policy to take a critical role in designing and engaging with service providers and school personnel for their child (Rosenbaum, 2001), previous research indicates that many parents are engaged in adherence to IDEIA policy, but that barriers exist particularly among racial/ethnically diverse families.

Examining Inequity in Educational Engagement

To understand parental engagement it is necessary to understand issues of equity within the involvement literature as they relate to socioculturally diverse populations (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Ishimaru, 2019; Ishimaru et al., 2016). Baquedano-Lopez and colleagues (2013) call attention to early policies in education, noting the U.S. government's perception that minoritized communities (e.g. Mexican, Native American) were unfit for educating their children, which allowed for the creation of boarding schools. They indicated how these early

policies helped to construct early iterations of parental involvement policy, one that was rooted in deficit (i.e. unfit, uneducated) notions of the home and cultural communities. Baquedano-López et al. (2013) maintain that literature in parental involvement examining race, class, and immigration status continues to generalize minoritized communities while failing to recognize how white supremacy, gentrification, and citizenship status influence parents' ability to engage in a typical school-based setting. Ishimaru (2019) extends these ideas and adds to the discussion by highlighting the emergence of new terms in the literature (i.e. parent vs. family, involvement vs. engagement) noting that this shift allows for the valuing of siblings and other caregivers in the home, as well as 'non-traditional' families (i.e. single parent, multigenerational households). Researchers note that even with new terminology the responsibility of engagement is still placed on parents/caregivers when it comes to engaging with school personnel, rather than expanding or envisioning new beliefs around engagement (Ishimura, 2017) or using a relational approach (i.e. parent and teacher work to support and establish goals in partnership; Kim & Sheridan, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Considering calls for more inclusive theoretical framings of parental engagement I used Barton and colleagues (2004) Ecologies of Parental Engagement (EPE) framework to guide my understanding of this topic as it accounts for parent's educational engagement through all spheres of life (e.g. home, school, community) and acknowledges resources and experiences parents utilize in all phases of educational engagement. According to Barton et al. (2004) the EPE framework is "a dynamic, interactive process in which parents draw on multiple experiences and resources to define their interactions with schools and among school actors" (p. 3). EPE highlights the agency of parents and families as it calls on researchers to center their pre-existing knowledge and the tools or strategies used to navigate educational engagement. In

addition, the framework acknowledges that space and capital mediate engagement activities, asking researchers to consider the constraints and affordances embedded in an individual's school and broader community, and attend to how culture (i.e. race, language, disability) and social institutions impact educational involvement (Barton et al., 2004).

For this dissertation, I envisioned this framework as an interactive, two-way process between the home and school; parents and families worked with educators, interventionists, and other academic personnel to co-create educational engagement practices. I also sought to account for parents' perceptions of education, engagement, and family, to help emically identify examples of educational engagement strategies in Mexican-heritage households.

Statement of the Problem

Numerous studies have examined the academic benefits of parental engagement among families of varying sociocultural backgrounds with neurotypically developing children (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007, 2012; Jeynes, 2017). Limited research examines parental engagement among parents of autistic children (Burke, 2013; Burke & Hodapp, 2016). Parental engagement is a necessary component of an autistic child's educational trajectory and parents of autistic children are mandated by legislation to participate in the educational process (Rosenbaum et al., 1998). There also continues to exist a lack of diversity (i.e. race, ethnicity, language, income) in autism research (Maye et al., 2022). Latinx families make up a growing number of students in K-12, and research has found that cultural models of education are important to understand how Latinx families think about education for their children (Cohen, 2018; Lopez et al., 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Additionally, due to a lack of awareness, a lack of access to services, and stigma related to disability, the prevalence of autism among Latinx children is lower than among other racial/ethnic groups (Christensen et al., 2018). Research also notes that barriers such as

language, jargon-heavy vocabulary, and low numbers of bilingual staff, can create additional problems for Latinx families rearing autistic children (Lasky & Karge, 2011).

To examine the sociocultural backgrounds of Mexican-heritage (MH) families, I use critical sociocultural theory, which examines parents' cultural models of parenting, to understand how MH parents perceive and engage in educational practices with their autistic child. In addition, Barton et al.'s (2004) ecologies of parental engagement framework, an interactive process where parents draw on their resources and experience to interact with schools and educators, defined parental engagement within this study.

Overview of the Research Questions

This dissertation study sought to understand how Mexican Heritage (MH) parents perceive and engage in educational practices with their autistic child(ren). Using a convergent parallel study design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) and the ecologies of parental engagement framework (Barton et al., 2004) to define parental engagement, the research questions provide a nuanced, contextual, understanding of the multiple ways in which MH families engage with their children to support their academic development. The questions as well as the primary data collection method are listed below:

1. How do MH families distribute daily household tasks?

I identified the distribution of daily household and educational tasks among household members, using the family accommodation scale (Holloway et al., 2014).

2. What are MH families' <u>general</u> perceptions of educational engagement?

I captured the collective understanding of MH parents' perceptions and value systems regarding educational engagement and their educational practices using cultural consensus modeling (CCM: Grinker et al., 2015) during virtual focus group discussions.

3. How are MH parents describing their educational engagement practices?

I examined the individual perceptions, practices, and routines of MH mothers related to their educational engagement with their autistic children in the home and in interactions with school personnel via semi-structured interviews.

4. How do MH households enact educationally engaging practices in their daily lives?

I identified MH mothers' educational engagement strategies in the home to understand the distribution of participation by household members, the nature of each activity by household, and the language and location of educational interactions via participant-led daily video recordings.

Significance

Research on socioculturally diverse families rearing autistic children is needed in the autism literature (Maye et al., 2022). Existing literature on Latino families with autistic children focuses on diagnosis and service disparities (Bishop-Fitzpatrick & Kind, 2017; Delobel-Ayoub et al., 2015; Lin & Yu, 2015; Liptak et al., 2008; Zablotsky et al., 2017) and although calls have been made to examine within-group differences (Fuller & García Coll, 2010), research examining these phenomena among specific ethnic communities among Latinx populations is scarce (Cohen et al., 2023; Cohen & Miguel, 2018). Furthermore, research on parental engagement often fails to acknowledge the strengths that families bring to educational engagement interactions, given a focus on parents and 'traditional' family structures. (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). Benefits to parents' engagement in academic activities have been demonstrated with increases in grade point average, word and letter recognition, and improvements in reading and math scores (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2017; Kim et al., 2018). However, there are still gaps in how we understand parent educational engagement within autism. This dissertation study aims to fill those gaps by using additive and culturally situated

frameworks and theories to understand how Mexican heritage parents perceive their engagement in their child's educational trajectory and how they engage in these practices with their autistic children.

Organization of the Dissertation

In this chapter, I discussed the need for this study and provided an overview of the research questions. Chapter 2 provides a review of current literature that examines parental engagement among Latino families of children with ASD and will focus on further exploring the conceptualization of parental engagement, describing the importance of parental perceptions, and examining existing research on parent educational engagement strategies among Latinx families. In Chapter 3 I will share my positionality and describe the study design before explaining the methodological details of the dissertation study, including the participants, the procedures, and the data analysis approach for each research question. Chapters' 4 through 7 will provide the findings and discussion for each research question. Finally, Chapter 8 will conclude the dissertation by interpreting the overall findings of the study and sharing the broader implications this study makes in the field and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Parental engagement impacts children's educational outcomes (Antony-Newman, 2018; Boshoff et al., 2016; Fan & Chen, 2001; Goldman & Burke, 2017; Jeynes, 2003, 2012; Ma et al., 2016; Wilder, 2014). Among socioeconomically diverse families (e.g. ethnicity, income, urbanicity) parent educational engagement has been associated with increases in children's pre-literacy skills, reading comprehension, standardized testing, GPA, and student's academic confidence (Arnold et al., 2008; Banerjee et al., 2011; Farkas & Grolnick, 2010; Jeynes, 2012). Meanwhile, research has primarily been conducted in general education settings. Burke (2013) noted that parental engagement literature in special education began in 1975 (i.e. due to the enactment of special education legislation) versus 1960 in general education (i.e. in efforts to close the achievement gap). In addition, literature examining parental engagement among parents of children with autism has focused on implementation and barriers to parent participation among majority white and middle to high-income families (Benson et al., 2008; Burke, 2013; Wright & Taylor, 2014; Zablotsky et al., 2012). Fewer studies have examined parental engagement among socioculturally diverse families.

The current dissertation study addressed these gaps by examining how Mexican Heritage parents perceived and engaged in educational engagement practices with their autistic child(ren). The following literature review examines research central to this topic. This chapter begins by exploring definitions of parental engagement. I examined the influence of seminal parental involvement theories in the field, discussed issues of equity within the parental involvement research, and detailed the usefulness of the parental engagement framework to critically examine emerging research. The second section focused on literature examining the relationship between parental engagement and academic achievement. Whereas the third section defined parental

engagement in the field by examining parental engagement in the autism literature, discussed barriers to parental engagement, identified efficacious practices in parental engagement, and discussed educational engagement for parents of autistic children. The final section makes the case for focusing on Mexican heritage communities by discussing cultural models of education, and existing literature on parental engagement for autistic children.

Conceptualizing Parental Engagement

Theories of Educational Engagement

Epstein & Connors' (1992) six levels of parental involvement framework described the different types of parental involvement that parents engaged in at school. Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's (1995) framework on parental involvement, described the motivations behind parental involvement. Utilizing data compiled from over 7,000 teachers, administrators, children, and parents, Epstein's early work described types of parental involvement (Epstein, 1987). Involvement types were mediated through school-sponsored activities (e.g. providing meals, school supplies for low-income students) and took into consideration parents' linguistic diversity and varying work hours by describing different types of parent volunteering opportunities. In 1995 Epstein expanded the framework to six types of involvement in school; (1) parenting (i.e. parent education courses, home visits), (2) communicating (i.e. parent-teacher conferences, school newsletter, review of student work) (3) volunteering (i.e. parent room helper, parent patrol), (4) learning at home (i.e. setting student goals, managing homework calendar), (5) decision making (i.e. involvement in parent-teacher associations, school district committees), and (6) collaborating with the community (i.e. providing information on social services, school-community service integration). Epstein's research provided both definitions and examples of

actions parents and teachers could use to understand parents' involvement in children's academic activities.

Meanwhile, Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues set out to understand the differentiation of involvement among parents (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987; 1992). When examining parental involvement based on the school's socioeconomic status (SES; i.e. average income of families enrolled in a school) they found that schools with higher SES had higher rates of parental support, volunteering, and participation in parent-teacher conferences (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987). Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1992) also found that higher parenting efficacy (i.e. parents' belief in their ability to affect school outcomes for their child) led to more classroom volunteering, time spent on educational activities in the home, and fewer parent-teacher phone calls. This research led to the identification of five decision-making points parents used to determine involvement. These included (1) parental involvement decisions (e.g. self-efficacy), (2) considerations towards involvement (e.g. current skills, time available), (3) involvement influencing student outcomes (e.g. instruction), (4) mediating variables (e.g. use of developmentally appropriate practices to increase educational outcomes), and (5) student outcomes (e.g. increased skills, stronger student self-efficacy) (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Later work by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) signaled the importance of schools understanding parental beliefs because “parental decision-making about involvement occurs in both implicit and explicit ways” (p. 6). In their 1997 study, they explored parents' role construction, parenting self-efficacy, and opportunities for involvement made by schools. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) argued that parents' view of child-rearing, their perceived role in supporting education, their belief in the ability to support their child in educational tasks, and their perception of schools as inviting and receptive to involvement influenced engagement;

only when schools invested in supporting these constructs did parent involvement in schools increase.

Meta-synthesis studies conducted on parental involvement have demonstrated an increase in research on socioculturally and neurodiverse families. For, example, Goldman & Burke (2017) reviewed the efficacy of parental training interventions among parents with children in special education finding no relationship between parent training and an increase in parental involvement in school. Within general education, Antony-Newman's (2018) reviewed parental involvement in immigrant families finding that immigrant status affected parent's ability to engage due to a lack of familiarity or understanding of schools and educators, and language barriers that affected parent-teacher communication. In addition, research suggested that children had increased academic benefits (i.e. improved grades and reading, vocabulary and math scores, and better outcomes on standardized tests) when parents of minoritized communities engaged in their child's education (Jeynes, 2003, 2012). Jeynes (2003) meta-synthesis analyzed 20 studies on parental involvement among minoritized communities (e.g. African American, Latino, Asian American) to examine the role of parent involvement in children's academic achievement. Utilizing statistical analyses to determine effect size (EI) and significance, Jeynes found that parental involvement (e.g. parents talking to their children about school, checking homework, participating in school functions) had a small (EI = .01) to large (EI = .74) effect size and that all types of involvement were positively correlated to increases in academic achievement. Diversity among research participants has increased in studies over time, however studies that examine how multiple demographic factors (i.e. race, class, neurodiversity, gender) influence educational engagement are still lacking. For example, while Antony-Newman (2018) examined immigrant families from different countries and Jeynes (2003; 2012) examined racially and ethnically

diverse families, no information on disability status was provided or discussed as a potential limitation to their studies. In addition, Goldman and Burke's (2017) examination of parents with children in special education noted that many of the compiled articles lacked reporting on race and income level, and those that did had an underrepresentation of racially and ethnically diverse participants. The continued lack of inclusion of neurodiverse students from parental engagement studies featuring socioculturally diverse participants demonstrates the need for an examination of the parental engagement literature among specific minoritized populations including Mexican-heritage families rearing autistic children.

Addressing Equity

Parental involvement as a framework has been criticized for its failure to capture the nuance of educational participation among families and communities (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Barton et al., 2004; Ishimaru, 2019). Researchers critical of parental involvement have noted how white, middle-class values are often centered, alongside the expectations of school administrators and educators which shuts out the values and perceptions of marginalized families (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Critiques of Epstein's parental involvement framework highlighted an overemphasis on school-based forms of parent participation, such as volunteering at school or attending school-based activities (e.g. parent-teacher association, field trips, school-sanctioned activities), and under emphasized home-based parent engagement activities (e.g. academic encouragement or *consejos* such as providing advice on behaviors in a kind manner) (Brown et al., 2020; Kim, 2009; Öztürk, 2013). Complex experiences between parents and educators on topics of parental involvement have also been documented. For example, Carreon et al.'s (2005) case study examined the educational engagement experiences of three immigrant parents' and discovered a disconnect between school

administrators' and immigrant parents' interpretation of events. In the study's findings one mother, a Latina and non-native English speaker, detailed her high levels of parental involvement (e.g. attending Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, school district meetings, building relationships with teachers). Interviews with the mother indicated her involvement occurred despite reported school barriers, such as a lack of Spanish-speaking staff and translators that made it difficult to attend meetings in a foreign language and complete basic school tasks for her child (e.g. excuse attendance) (Carreón et al., 2005). Whereas, administrators provided a very different perception of her role. They described this mother as a role model for other parents to follow and used her participation and presence as evidence of the school's ability to engage the community. In effect this mother confirmed administrators' beliefs that parental involvement was possible only when parents conformed to the school districts' definitions of parent involvement activities; the parent was responsible for attending designated school events (i.e. meet the teacher, breakfast with mom) and withstand a lack of bilingual personnel.

The dissociation between the administrator's and parents' perceptions demonstrated how individual actions can be interpreted in different ways. While the mother noted structural factors that could be improved to encourage parental engagement, administrators leaned on individual actors and actions to dispel their shortcomings. Research showed that school entities over-relied on parents as individual actors to explain parents' lack of involvement versus examining the structural factors that increased barriers to involvement (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2014; Ishimaru, 2019). Ishimaru's (2019) work lends credence to this phenomenon. Her study compared three educational sites (i.e. two school districts and one community development association) implementing parent engagement initiatives seeking to increase parental involvement in high-poverty schools. Findings indicated that although all three sites were

looking to reform existing practices by utilizing theoretical frameworks that emphasized parent empowerment (e.g. parent/family capacity building, parent-school relationship building, systemic change) these efforts "largely aligned with educator-defined agendas and expectations for how parents should behave," maintaining existing power structures between parents and schools (Ishimaru, 2019, p. 369). While there were promising changes, such as the use of cultural brokers to build trust with families, much of the efforts in the study indicated the difficulties schools had in reforming parental engagement practices to be less school-based (e.g. attending meetings at school, volunteering at school, communicating with the teacher) and integrate strategies and practices that were co-created alongside parents, community leaders, and educational staff.

Parental roles in school involvement are at the root of longstanding inequities due to the influence of societal norms and early theories of involvement (i.e. theory of parental involvement) and parental expectations (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Crozier, 2001). For example, Baquedano-Lopez and colleagues (2013) explored parental involvement literature for school-family relationships and expectations and found four themes that were consistently applied to parents in relation to their parental involvement. The first was *parents as first teachers,* the expectation that parents be the first set of instructors for children and prepare them for entry into the educational system. The second was *parents as learners*, the belief that parents need to learn how to engage with their children (i.e. family literacy interventions). The third was *parents as partners*, the expectation that schools partner with parents to further educational outcomes. The final theme was *parents as choosers*, parents' educational right to decide on academic and/or school placement for their child. Baquedano-Lopez et al. (2013) conceded that many of these roles provided parents with more decision-making ability surrounding their child's

education, however, they also noted difficulties in implementation. For example, among the *parents as choosers* theme, there were difficulties among marginalized parents in the selection of schools, course placements, or testing, as Baquedano-Lopez and colleagues indicate, "mechanisms of choice create a hierarchical system of inequitable distribution" since they fail to consider tracking, access to resources (e.g. transportation), and institutional harm (2013, p. 156).

When examining roles it is also important to recognize how Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's categories of motivating factors for parental involvement (e.g. role construction, self-efficacy, time or resources available) had a positive relationship on parents' educational involvement (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Park & Holloway (2018) expanded on this theory and examined how schools and families contribute to parental involvement among 3,248 parents of high school students. Findings demonstrated that among both high and low-income families a welcoming school environment and home-school information (e.g. flyers, school newsletter) were positively correlated with parental involvement. However, findings also indicated that as parental involvement decreased, parental satisfaction increased. Authors proposed that dissatisfied parents were more likely to become involved, which lead to increased parent involvement to change the perceived barriers and challenges tied to decreased satisfaction. Most importantly, this study examined parental role construction (i.e. parental beliefs or expectations constructed from external messaging) as a mediating variable between school factors (e.g. communication, satisfaction, academic socialization) and parental involvement. Parents' role construction was used to understand parental involvement since research demonstrated parents adopt cues from school and educators to inform their decision-making around school participation and involvement, and beliefs on how they engaged with their child academically (Kim & Sheridan, 2015; Park & Holloway, 2018). Results indicated that parental role

construction was a mediator between school factors and parental involvement, specifically school-based involvement, and academic socialization (Park & Holloway, 2018). This finding supports the understanding that schools play an important role, contributing to parents' construction of their educational role, which shapes parents' actions and practices toward motivating their child's academic engagement.

Examining How Parental Engagement Impacts Academic Outcomes

The section above describes how parental engagement is conceptualized from the perspective of parents (i.e. examining parent self-efficacy or parents as choosers). Research in parental engagement often examines academic outcomes, therefore a discussion on how parent engagement impacts students' academic achievement will be provided below.

Student-Parent Connections Towards Parental Engagement

Turning to the parental engagement literature it is important to understand how parent relationships with their children impact children's academic outcomes. Research examining these impacts points to positive findings including, high parental expectations, increased level of parental self-efficacy, and high parental view of academic responsibility (Boonk et al., 2018; Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012; Sha et al., 2016; Tapola & Niemivirta, 2008).

Cheung and Pomerantz (2012) helped to bridge student's academic motivation to parent-oriented motivation (i.e. children's desire to avoid punishment or cultivate academic self-worth). Their two-year study with 825 U.S. and Chinese students, examined the relationship between parent-oriented motivation and student motivation arguing that motivation in school is often mediated by a child's concern for meeting parental expectations and that cultural models of education may lead to different types of parental involvement. Their findings signaled that across both countries parent-oriented motivation was associated with autonomous motivation (i.e.

identified - due to personal importance, intrinsic - due to personal enjoyment) and controlled motivation (i.e. extrinsic - due to consequences, introjected - due to personal guilt). In addition, higher parent involvement (i.e. homework help, familiarity with teachers, discussing school at home) increased parent-oriented motivation which created higher student engagement (i.e. asking for help, planning, checking comprehension) in school and higher grades (i.e. language, math, science). While no findings signaled a difference related to cultural values of education, the findings in this study indicated that parental involvement and parent-oriented motivation were associated. This meant that how parents motivated their children to learn (i.e. rewards, enforcing rules, signaling academic enjoyment) affected students' academic motivation and impacted their school engagement and academic performance (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012). This is important for this study as it demonstrates how student motivation is influenced by parental engagement.

A literature review examined the association between parental involvement and academic achievement by Boonk and colleagues (2018) further spoke to the importance of educational engagement. The study featured 75 articles across three age groups, early childhood (0-6 years), elementary school (6-12 years), and middle to high school (12-18 years), and both home-based (i.e. reading, homework help, expressing expectations) and school-based measures (i.e. parent-teacher communication, volunteering, attending school meetings). Findings for early childhood indicated reading (i.e. modeling, reading at home), home-based learning activities (i.e. teaching numbers, singing songs, playing games), and school-based involvement predicted improvements in literacy skills, grades, and reading and math achievement. Examining elementary-aged children's engagement activities resulted in increased achievements in math and reading including expressing educational expectations (i.e. believing in their child's academic ability),

providing encouragement, supportive homework help (i.e. providing autonomy, no overt control), home-based reading activities, and school-based engagement. Lastly, for middle to high school students' engagement strategies such as expressing expectations, providing support, reinforcing learning at home (i.e. providing educational materials), and educational discussions (i.e. conversations between parents and children about school) were found to increase academic achievement, smaller drop-out rates, and promote self-efficacy. These results provided an in-depth understanding of how engagement practices, both home and school-based, led to increased educational achievement, when coupled with findings linking parent-oriented motivation to parent involvement, a fuller picture of how academic achievement is impacted begins to emerge.

Parental Engagement in the Field

Parent Engagement Literature Within Autism

There has been an abundance of research on parental engagement and involvement among general education populations and settings (Boonk et al., 2018; Castro et al., 2015; Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007; 2012; 2016; 2017; Park & Holloway, 2018). Historically, less literature has been conducted in the special education sphere (Acar et al., 2021; Burke, 2012; Cobb, 2014; Rogers et al., 2009) but more have emerged. Gaps within the parental engagement literature among general and special education students should be highlighted given the increased responsibilities provided to parents under federal law (Turnbull, 2005). Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are subjected to specific educational services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004. The IDEIA provides rights and responsibilities that IDD students, and their parents, control such as participation in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team, access and management of children's records, and participation in advisory boards (i.e. state and local educational agencies)

(Turnbull, 2005). Given parents' unique responsibilities, there is a need to understand parental engagement among parents with students in special education.

Within parental engagement literature in autism, there is a large portion dedicated to parents as intervention participants (Brown et al., 2016; Burrell & Borrego, 2012; Estes et al., 2019; Magana et al., 2020; Rispoli et al., 2019; Yingling et al., 2018). For example, Rispoli and colleagues' (2019) literature review examined parent and child outcomes in school-based intervention by analyzing intervention models (i.e. family school partnership model and parental involvement model) and parents' intervention role (e.g. agent, recipient, collaborator, multiple roles). Findings indicated that parents were more likely (i.e. 75%) to serve as agent recipients (i.e. receiving training from interventionists to implement activities) which is in line with traditional parental involvement models (i.e. structural or process-driven activities focused on increasing academic outcomes). Only 25% of studies featured a family-school partnership model (i.e. parents served as collaborators with the interventionist/teacher). While all studies featured parents as participants in school-based intervention, 44% did not report parental outcomes including studies where parents served as the primary interventionist. Child outcomes were recorded in all studies and included increases in social-emotional functioning, communication, child cognition, and decreases in maladaptive behavior in the home. Rispoli and colleagues' (2019) findings indicated that special education literature overemphasized parental involvement tenets and focused on parents as recipients of information versus collaborators. Burrell & Borrego (2012) noted that parents' participation in intervention can be challenging due to household stressors but interventionists should aim to collaborate with parents and caregivers in creating intervention outcomes and knowledge sharing. Burrell and Borrego (2012) highlighted that many autism interventions occured in home settings and found that parental participation is

important for the efficacy of intervention outcomes. This focus on parents' participation in intervention is just one facet of the parental involvement literature in autism research.

Parental engagement literature in special education is largely influenced by the theoretical frameworks of Epstein, Hoover-Dempsey, and Sandler (Rispoli et al., 2019). Therefore, a second large portion of articles on autism focused on parental involvement in special education (Acar et al, 2021; Benson, 2008; Burke, 2013; Sousa, 2015; Zablotsky et al., 2012). Using a national database Zablotsky et al. (2012) examined parental involvement and the satisfaction levels of parents rearing autistic children. Findings indicated that parents of autistic children were more likely to attend parent-teacher conferences and meet with their child's school counselor in comparison to parents of non-autistic children and families of children with other disabilities. In addition, they were less likely to be satisfied with the school's communication pertaining to their child (i.e. child's school placement, role in school). While no theoretical framework has defined parental involvement, Epstein is frequently cited to explain results, demonstrating a reliance on school-based markers for parental involvement. Furthermore, Benson et al. (2008) researched autistic children's participation in education-related activities and analyzed factors (e.g. school, child, family) contributing to school-home engagement among 95 parent-child dyads. School-based educational engagement consisted of communication with teachers and staff, formal meetings with educators, and volunteering in the classroom. Interestingly, they also examined home-based educational engagement. Reported activities were integrated into daily activities and included practicing routine skills (e.g. brushing teeth, getting dressed) and social skills (e.g. greeting, turn-taking; Benson et al., 2008). Both articles articulated parent participation among parents rearing autistic children, however, research questions were largely shaped by Epstein's parental involvement framework which limited a

more inclusive understanding (i.e. multi-generational households, cultural models of education) of parental engagement.

A third, smaller and newer, area of literature focused on parents' perceptions and experiences towards participation in education and intervention (Cheblowski et al, 2018; Fish, 2008; Goldman and Burke, 2019; Goldman et al., 2019; Stoner et al., 2005). One example is the work of Stoner and colleagues (2005). Utilizing a case study method, they examined the influences and experiences of four parents rearing autistic children, during interactions with educational professionals at their child’s school. Findings indicated that key influences between parent-educator interactions centered around mistrust of education professionals. Parents who had a difficult time gaining an autism diagnosis for their child, due to perceived challenges with medical professionals, came to distrust future providers. In addition, parents who worked to educate themselves on autism (i.e. researching services, programs) or encountered educators who were less knowledgeable about autism noted feeling distrust towards future educator interactions. Positive parent experiences occurred when parents perceived teachers with an ‘innate disposition’ for teaching (i.e. caring for students, supportive of parents) and access to administrators were readily available (i.e. addressing concerns, speaking to parents). Negative experiences that led to strained parent-educator interactions included IEP meetings (i.e. due to not enough knowledge of the process) and a perceived lack of communication from educators (i.e. infrequent communication when issues arise). In addition, a recent meta-synthesis by Goldman & Burke (2019) examined 37 quantitative research studies to determine parents’ perceptions of parental involvement among parents rearing autistic children. Findings suggested that home-school communications (i.e. verbal/written communication referencing the child, attending teacher conferences) were frequently examined in studies, increased parent

involvement led to higher satisfaction with services and/or the IEP process, and parental involvement decreased as their child's age increased (Goldman & Burke, 2019). Research on this topic within parental engagement in autism highlights challenges parents face when accessing educational and intervention services for their autistic children.

Given differences in parental engagement legislation (Goldman & Burke, 2017; Rosenbaum et al., 1998) for general and special education at the federal level, there exist differences in the corresponding literature. For example, while special education parents maintain a minimum, annual, level of school involvement due to their role in the IEP process, parents of students in general education have no such minimum requirements (Rosenbaum et al., 1998). In addition, there are differences in parents' intentions for involvement, where parents with children in special education utilize parental engagement to increase educational services for their children (Burke, 2012). These differences further impact parents' motivations for involvement and influence how strategies are enacted, thereby exemplifying a need to understand parental engagement within special education, specifically autism.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Parental engagement literature described the positive effects related to achievement and intervention gains; additional literature also recognizes barriers to entry that parents face. To understand this issue it is important to examine parents' perceptions of barriers (Griffin & Galassi, 2010; Puccioni et al., 2020; Yoder & Lopez, 2013) and efficacious practices (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Barge & Loges, 2003; Shumow, 2001).

Parental Perceptions of Barriers to Engagement.

A study by Griffin and Glassi (2010) examined parent's perceptions of barriers that impeded their child's academic achievement, 29 parents from a rural community in the U.S.

South indicated factors such as themselves, educators, and school systems as barriers to their children's academic success. Parent-related barriers included unfamiliarity or confusion surrounding educational responsibilities or how much involvement or support to provide their children. In addition, for single parents, there were challenges related to lack of time for involvement, coupled with being uninformed about their child's school activities. Parent's perceptions of educator-related barriers included noting a high teacher-to-student ratio that impeded differentiated instruction, a lack of proactive communication by teachers leading to communication barriers, and student reputations from previous teachers that led to negative perceptions and impacted student-teacher relationships. Lastly, barriers related to the school system included inefficient transportation to and from school leading to long hours on the bus, difficulties gaining access to services or accommodations, and academic pressure created from an emphasis on high-stakes testing.

An additional study that examined a more racially diverse sample of parents (i.e. Native American, Hispanic, African American, Caucasian) reported on barriers related to marginalization and protective factors (i.e. supportive personnel, decision-making) that helped broker engagement. Yoder and Lopez (2013) examined 12 parent participants to understand which activities promoted academic development for their children. Barriers parents reported included a lack of access to technology, language barriers, feeling dismayed over attempts that solve issues but to no avail, and feeling marginalized (i.e. lacking power over a child's education). Parents also identified strategies that mitigated these feelings, including school choice (i.e. ability to select their child's school/teacher) and drawing on resources (i.e. relying on community or family for support). Results from Yoder and Lopez (2013) and Griffin and Glassi

(2010) provide an initial understanding of barriers to parental engagement via parent experience allowing for challenges to implementation to be revealed.

A complete picture of parental engagement requires an understanding of the impact educator invitations (i.e. providing chances to volunteer, information on academic progress, or resources) have on parent engagement (Puccioni et al., 2020). Puccioni and colleagues (2020) investigated the association between educators' invitations for involvement and educational engagement. Using a longitudinal nationally representative database on early childhood (0 - 6) they found a positive relationship between parent's perceptions of educator invitations and parent's home-based involvement (i.e. telling stories, reading books, singing songs) which in turn led to higher rates of engagement and increased academic achievement in math and reading. These results signaled that educators can play a large role in engagement and should be mindful of how they achieve parental engagement since it can affect what occurs in the home and have an impact on academic achievement.

Parental Engagement Barriers Among Minoritized Communities.

This section provides a more focused examination of the barriers minoritized families encounter while engaging in educational and school practices for their children. As noted by Oztürk's (2013) literature review, there are common barriers, such as difficulties building strong teacher-parent relationships due to language barriers and unfamiliarity with cultural values of education, leading to distrust. To further explore these barriers key additional studies are reviewed below (Brown et al., 2020; Patel & Stevens, 2010; Turney & Kao, 2009).

Research by Turney and Kao (2009) utilized a large database to examine differences and barriers among racial/ethnic and immigrant status towards parental involvement among 1,294 parents from over 100 counties in the U.S. Their findings demonstrated that minority (i.e. Black,

Asian, Hispanic) immigrant parents reported more barriers to involvement then non-white native-born parents, with Hispanic and Asian families more likely to report not feeling welcome at school or language barriers. In addition, Hispanic parents faced increased issues regarding transportation to school, scheduling of meetings at inopportune times, and safety concerns when traveling to school. Lastly, the study found that both Black and Hispanic immigrant parents were less likely to be involved in school activities and speak a non-English language as a primary language, whereas the length of time in the U.S. was a protective factor (i.e. the longer a family lived in the U.S., the higher the rate of parental involvement). Findings from this study provide an in-depth understanding of how migration status across race and ethnicity impacts barriers and entry to involvement.

Surveying 437 parents in a low-income, ethnically diverse school in the Southwestern U.S. Patel and Stevens (2010) examined how parents' perceptions of their students' abilities impacted parent involvement and analyzed differences among Spanish and English-speaking parents. Their findings indicated that Spanish-speaking parents had higher rates of parental involvement in comparison to English-speaking parents. In addition, they examined how parent's estimations of their child's academic performance might impact parental involvement. They found that the higher the discrepancy between parent's perception of their child's ability and the grades provided by the teacher, the less likely parents were to be involved in school programs or volunteering. Specifically for Spanish-speaking parents, discrepancies around perceived academic ability arose more with students than with teachers. These findings pointed to differences among Spanish and English-speaking parents that are important to consider given differences in rates of engagement and factors that lead to disengagement.

Lastly, a study by Brown and colleagues (2020) examined an ‘urban emergent’ (i.e. smaller cities experiencing rapid population growth and demographic change) city in Massachusetts to determine how parental academic support differed between a sample of 479 Hispanic parents and a larger database of urban parents (i.e. 2016 National Household Educational Survey). Their findings indicated that barriers to involvement included household status (i.e. single parents, stay-at-home mothers) and economically disadvantaged parents (i.e. receiving nutrition or temporary assistance or Medicaid), but no significant findings related to parents' level of education. Additionally, they found that Spanish-speaking parents, particularly those with a child born in their native country, had a high sense of community which was correlated with higher rates of involvement (i.e. school-initiated activities). This study provided a nuanced look at Hispanic parents, noting barriers and protective factors that contributed to parental involvement and further demystifying this topic among socioculturally diverse families.

Parental Perceptions of Efficacious Parental Engagement Practices

Researchers examining efficacious practices have cited findings such as monitoring student academic progress, focusing on involvement at home (e.g. libraries, extracurriculars), and relying on community support systems as best practices (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Barge & Loges, 2003; Shumow, 2001).

As stated in the section above, parents believed that educators' invitations to participate in involvement activities at school influenced how parents engaged in educational activities with their children (Puccioni et al., 2020). This finding was further explored by Anderson and Minke (2007) who examined the ways in which parent's self-efficacy (i.e. confidence in their ability to teach their child) and role construction (i.e. how strongly parents believed it was their responsibility to help with homework or attend conferences) influenced parental involvement

and was mediated by teacher's invitations to engage. Parents from three schools located in the southwestern U.S. were surveyed and findings indicated that parents reported more home-based engagement (i.e. working on numeracy in the home) versus school-based engagement (i.e. attending conferences). In addition, both home and school-based involvement were linked to teacher invitations and parents with encouraging teachers displayed higher levels of involvement. Both self-efficacy and role construction showed no significance on involvement once the mediator, teacher invitation, was introduced. These findings continue to signal the importance of educators for parents and highlight the need to understand home-based involvement.

A study by Shumow (2001) examined the parenting beliefs of 31 parents with children in second grade concerning schooling and education. Parent findings included traditional views on the role of schooling (i.e. school is for learning reading, writing, and math), a belief that children learn through hands-on experiences, and the perception that educators provided children with new ways of knowing and thinking. In addition, parents referenced homework as an important achievement marker as it indicated a child's academic progress. Participants also rated their children's opinion of their teachers (i.e. my children like their teacher) as important for designating teaching expertise. These results identified important reasoning and markers for parents' perceptions of schools and educators.

Barges and Loges' (2003) study examined the perceptions of efficacious parental involvement activities among a majority female and African American sample of 80 parents and 128 students. Findings showed that parent participants were involved by monitoring educational progress (i.e. checking for homework, helping complete tasks, providing encouragement, evaluating grades), building parent-teacher relationships (i.e. attending meetings, providing notes on assignments, reaching out via email/technology), and seeking out community support systems

(i.e. engaging with other parents in the school, attending school events that cultivate community). In addition, student participants reflected on their perceptions of efficacious parental involvement practices. Students reported homework help (i.e. teaching difficult material, monitoring progress), providing encouragement (i.e. establishing rules to motivate completing tasks), and parental presence in the school (i.e. fundraising or school-sponsored events) as efficacious involvement practices. This study demonstrated that parents and students have similar perceptions of efficacious engagement activities that can overlap among differing groups. Commonalities included working together to monitor academic progress and providing/ seeking encouragement (Barges & Loges, 2003). This literature helps to provide a broad description of activities and practices that are considered effective when parents engage in educational tasks.

Parental Perceptions on Parental Engagement Among Children with IDD

Research on parental perceptions has thus far examined parents rearing children enrolled in general education but given research demonstrating different legislation and engagement practices among parents with IDD children, it is vital to explore the literature.

Spann et al. (2003) examined the perceptions and involvement of 45 parents in their child's special education services living in a Mideastern U.S. state. Their findings, which provided no demographic characteristics for families or parents, found that all parents reported the ability to communicate with school personnel about their child's education (i.e. academic progress, comportment, or problem-solving) and close to 80% of parents felt confident in their knowledge of the IEP process (i.e. being involved in planning, development, meetings). Whereas half were concerned about their child's social interactions (i.e. ability to make friends) and 30% reported concerns about the child's life skills (i.e. brushing teeth, cooking). Of these parents, only 27% believed that the school had helped them address these concerns and only 24% felt

highly satisfied with their efforts. These results indicated that among parents with students in special education, regardless of high communication and understanding of the IEP process, parents were still left feeling concerned about the level of support their children were receiving. Wagner and colleagues' (2012) study delved deeper into the IEP process, examining the level of attendance, satisfaction, and role enacted by parents using two nationally representative samples (i.e. special education elementary longitudinal study, national longitudinal transitional study). Their findings indicated 90% of parents had attended their child's most recent IEP meeting and a 70% satisfaction rate with their level of involvement. Differences among disabilities demonstrated that parents of autistic children, parents of children with multiple disabilities, and parents of children with blindness, were more likely to attend versus parents of children with learning disabilities. In addition, there were positive relationships between parents and children who attended IEP meetings and enrollment in postsecondary education. These findings help to further elucidate parental involvement and the IEP process, an annual meeting that creates opportunities for goal setting and planning (Turnbull, 2005).

Turning to the literature on parent involvement for socioculturally diverse learners with disabilities, it is important to consider Latinx parent's perceptions when rearing autistic children. A study by Lian and Fontánez-Phelan (2001) sought to understand perceptions of advocacy concerning special education procedures among a sample of 158 Latino parents (i.e. 86% native-born, 50% Mexican, 28% Caribbean) in the Midwestern U.S. The study found that 78% of parents believed their child's school understood their culture and 69% reported cultural and linguistic diversity was necessary for student success, but 65% also wanted additional training on cultural diversity. In addition, while many parents reported familiarity with the IEP and educational services (63-85%), many parents (35-42%) reported less confidence in seeking these

services due to low educational attainment or lack of English fluency. In related research, Casillas et al. (2017) set out to examine parent's experiences while obtaining diagnostic and educational services for their autistic children. Using a comparative sample of five Latino and six non-Latino White parent-dyads (i.e. mother and father), researchers found that parents of autistic children reported higher stress in their marriage (i.e. differences in parenting styles, challenges in managing their child's behaviors) and higher self-efficacy beliefs (i.e. belief in their ability to acquire services). When examining the differences between the two groups, coping strategies for the Latino Families included parent's report of religion (i.e. reading the bible when sad), extended family support (i.e. grandmother helping with care), and consistent parent-educator collaborations (i.e. daily communication, reinforcing school goals at home). The results from these two studies demonstrated how socioculturally diverse families of children with disabilities may perceive educational engagement differently.

Delving deeper into one specific ethnic community, Rodriguez and Olswang (2003) compared the beliefs and values of child-rearing and education among a sample of 30 Mexican American and 30 Anglo-American mothers in the Southwestern U.S. rearing children in special education. Results showed that Mexican American mothers scored higher in Traditional/Authoritarian (i.e. preference for adult-directed behavior such as obedience) and Conformity (i.e. obeying parents, having good manners) scales in comparison to Anglo-American mothers. Within Mexican American mothers, those who were less acculturated to the U.S. were more likely to score higher on the Traditional/Authoritarian parenting beliefs scale. Acculturation was measured by a survey asking about language use and ethnic interaction (i.e. degree to which one adapts customs, traditions of their ethnic culture). A more recent study by Cohen & Miguel (2018) also examined parents' perceptions of autism using a sample of 25

Mexican-heritage mothers rearing autistic children. Their study found that mothers described expressing love (*amor)* as a coping strategy for maladaptive behaviors (i.e. telling him he is loved when experiencing aggressive behaviors). These parents sought out therapies and information related to autism even when encountering barriers (i.e. lack of follow-through from providers). Both studies helped to further parent perceptions of autism among diverse families rearing children with disabilities. The studies specifically examined ethnic communities within Latinx families to better understand within-group differences in parenting practices and perceptions towards childrearing.

This section has demonstrated that perceptions of parental engagement among parents rearing children with disabilities play an important role in increasing engagement and student academic outcomes. Parents' attitudes and beliefs shaped how they engaged with their children and increased engagement leading to improved academic performance. Still, barriers to engagement exist for parents rearing autistic children and socioculturally diverse families generally. Understanding the literature related to perceptions and barriers of parental engagement allows for an understanding of what is currently known, the gaps that need to be filled, and how my study addressed these gaps.

Understanding Mexican Heritage Parents Rearing Autistic Children

Research on academic perceptions of Latinx families have indicated that there are specific cultural values of education that lead to differences in how parents view academic achievement. These views may impact the actions and behaviors of parents toward educational engagement practices and include notions such as *bien educado*, *familialismo, añonar, familismo,* and *respeto* (Bridges et al., 2012; Cohen, 2013; Lopez et al., 2022; Valdés, 1996). In addition, there have been calls to further diversify autism research to better represent the broader

U.S. population (Maye et al., 2022). This section makes the case for why my dissertation study examines Mexican-heritage families.

Latinx Cultural Models of Education

Research by Lopez and colleagues (2022) examined the cultural models of education in Latinx families by describing *familismo, bien educado*, and *respeto*. They began by noting how cultural socialization, or practices that promoted shared history and values, were often used as protective factors by minoritized families in efforts to protect children from bias or discrimination. These three cultural values were protective for families who adhered to them as they provided a sense of familial support and an understanding of how children should be raised and educated. The term *familismo,* promoted family cohesiveness and orientation, sustaining unity within the family, and prioritizing family over individual needs. The second term, *respeto*, required children to treat adults with respect by not interrupting, being courteous, not arguing with elders, and greeting extended family in social interactions. The third term, *bien educado*, was defined as being obedient, self-reliant, composed, and having clear communication.

In terms of importance, these cultural models of education and support were important to consider when examining parent involvement and other parent practices among Mexican heritage families (Cohen, 2013; Lopez et al., 2022). Research by Lopez et al. (2022) noted that *familismo* had been positively associated with collective parenting and positive co-parenting behaviors. In addition, Cohen (2013) noted that familismo among families rearing children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) may lead to increased parenting self-efficacy and family support, and better service and child outcomes. With regards to *respeto*, research among IDD families pointed to a need for service providers to adapt to the needs of families rearing children with IDD by incorporating the modeling and learning of 'good' behaviors. Some

studies have also shown that *respeto* may be important for educators to value as it can lead to Latinx children exhibiting higher family cohesion (Cohen, 2013) and lower depression during adolescence (Lopez et al., 2022). Lastly, Latinx children and parents that exhibited higher rates of *bien educado* may display higher rates of cooperation in school settings and children may be less assertive or amiable according to Lopez et al. (2020). Additionally, Cohen (2013) noted that among IDD families' some parents incorporated practices that improved social behaviors (i.e. respectful behavior), while others sought to challenge notions of *bien educado* given differing views on child development. For example, autistic children who are minimally verbal and/or struggle with social interactions may have difficulties abiding by cultural values of *bien educado* where children are asked to greet family members to show respect, which may influence parent's conceptions of respect and cause them to eschew tradition. In sum, cultural values of education among Latinx families point to the need to examine educational practices through a cultural and disability-oriented lens.

Existing Gaps in Autism Research

Based on shifts in the field of autism to examine racially diverse families and autistic children (Maye et al., 2022) and to help understand existing research in the field, it is important to describe gaps that exist in this research.

First, there is a lack of theoretical consensus among articles concerning advocacy, involvement, and engagement. In autism research, Boshoff et al. (2016) used advocacy to describe obtaining support and promoting their child's rights, whereas Goldman & Burke (2017) utilized involvement to understand participation focused on school events, staff, and educator relationships. Whereas, in general education, the field has utilized Epstein (1995) to describe types of involvement (i.e. parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-

making, and collaborating with the community). In addition, Baquedano-Lopez et al. (2013) have noted a centering of white, middle-class values versus the values and perceptions of minoritized families. Therefore, my study examined the parental engagement literature using Barton et al.'s (2004) ecologies of parental engagement to holistically (i.e. home, school, parent perceptions, activities) understand this research topic.

Second, the findings of studies on parental engagement in autism literature indicated both negative and positive experiences with engagement. For example, Boshoff et al.'s (2016) synthesis described parents childrearing experience and found both benefits and challenges to advocacy, stating that empowerment emerged as a transformative part of their childrearing experience. DePape & Lindsay (2015) reported mainly negative experiences including teachers making uninformed comments, dissatisfaction with school services, and parents having to educate educators on autism. Whereas in general education research on parental engagement pointed to positive academic outcomes for students across grade point averages, specific academic domains, and standardized measures (Antony-Newman, 2018; Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2012). Therefore my study sought to further explore the parental engagement strategies and practices among families rearing autistic children to unpack activities occurring in the home as well as understand how parents conceptualized educational engagement.

Lastly, in autism research there is limited reporting on key demographic variables among the articles reviewed. Recent literature reviews on parental engagement spanning from 1980 to the early 2000s have noted that less than half of all articles have adequately reported key demographics such as race/ethnicity, income, and education level (Boshoff et al., 2016; DePape & Lindsay, 2015; Goldman & Burke, 2017). In addition, studies reporting racial/ethnic demographics had mostly White participants (Boshoff et al., 2016; Goldman & Burke, 2017).

This is in stark contrast to meta-syntheses on parental involvement within general education literature, as many have analyzed specific demographic variables (e.g. immigrant parents, Antony-Newman, 2018; minority and urban students, Jeynes, 2003; 2012). Therefore, my study, which examined parental engagement among Latinx families of autistic children was needed. Research on parental engagement in families of children in general education indicated that Latinx parents were more involved and engaged in schooling when their cultural and family values and home practices were valued (De Gaetano, 2007; Durand & Perez, 2013; Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012; Walker et al., 2011). Similarly focused research in special education was missing even though the U.S. Census Bureau's (2017) most recent American Community Survey indicated that individuals of Hispanic origin made up 18% of the U.S. population and that 25% of the population under 18 years of age was Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Furthermore, given within-group differences among Latinx families related to parenting and socialization practices (Fuller & García Coll, 2010) there was also a need to understand specific ethnic communities. Based on a critical socio-cultural (Holloway et al., 2018) understanding of cultural communities, my study examined the within-group differences of Latinx populations by focusing on Mexican-heritage families rearing autistic children.

Conclusion

This chapter served to create a foundation of key literature necessary to understand my study. Topics of discussion included exploring definitions of parental engagement, discussing equity issues in parental engagement, understanding the relationship between parent engagement and academic outcomes, perceptions of educational engagement, examining parents' perceptions and barriers to parental engagement, and making the case for focusing on Mexican heritage communities. The following section details the methods for this study, as I sought to understand

Mexican-heritage parents rearing autistic children’s perceptions and practices on educational engagement.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This mixed methods study sought to understand the educational engagement perceptions and practices of Mexican heritage families rearing autistic children in Southern California. To provide multiple perspectives and viewpoints the study was designed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; 2007; Johnson et al., 2007). I used a convergent parallel design to collect "different but complementary data" using four data tools (i.e. survey, focus group interviews, individual interviews, video recordings) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). During analysis, results were converged to validate findings across methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; 2007). During the study, I collected qualitative (e.g. interviews, video recorded data) and quantitative data (e.g. demographic survey responses, frequency counts of household task distribution) from mothers, analyzed each data source independently, and then compared results across data tools to validate and expand findings, or to create coding categories (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Johnson et al., 2007; Morse, 1991). This chapter will describe my positionality to clarify my intentions and perspectives in approaching my study. Then, I will explain the study design, including how I merged quantitative and qualitative analyses, recruitment practices, participants, data tools, and provide a detailed data analysis plan.

Positionality

Prior to moving forward it is critical to understand my epistemological underpinnings for this work, as they inform the conception, design, and the analytical lens with which I interpret this study. As a student and researcher much of my work over the last 5 years have been conducted using critical sociocultural theory (Holloway et al., 2018). Critical sociocultural theory prioritizes parents' cultural models of parenting (Harkness & Super, 1996; Whiting & Whiting, 1975) via three main understandings; (1) culture is constructed by a system of

meanings, engaged in over time, and can be created or modified via participation and interaction (Nasir & Hand, 2006), (2) culture is a community of practice where individuals learn via collective and co-constructed knowledge (Wenger, 2011), and (3) cultural membership is generated gradually through understanding language, ideology, and values (Holloway et al., 2018). This approach posits that individuals within a Community of Practice (CoP) may have different experiences and access to facets of society (e.g. power, language, social status) based on how they identify with different groups. However, a critical sociocultural framework also highlights the changing nature of a CoP, where individuals are acknowledged as "agentic, self-reflective individuals" who carry resources and strengths in their interactions (Holloway et al., 2018, p. 9). This theory allows for an intersectional analysis and understanding of individual's lived realities. Given this guiding framework, much of my work examines how cultural practices, or CoP, are inherently intersectional and seeks to understand how individuals navigate life via multiple perspectives (e.g. race/ethnicity, income, developmental ability, language).

As a self-identified Mexican American, bilingual, female educator I embody specific CoPs that overlap with the participants of this study. Participants of this study included Mexican heritage, immigrant, Spanish speaking mothers. My proximity to some of these cultural communities allows me specific affordances. For example, I can interview and engage with Spanish speakers in a research setting, sans an interpreter, as I can communicate with Spanish-speaking participants. This allows me to build a relationship with mothers in their native language, potentially making them feel more comfortable expressing themselves. Milner (2007) noted the importance of understanding and investigating the role of race and culture when conducting research, as a community member or outsider. In understanding critical sociocultural theory, I can see how the CoPs I am a member of overlap with those of the participants and

recognize that my study participants are community members of groups from which I do not pertain or identify. As Saldaña (2014) states, “labels can be very deceiving” (p. 977); meaning, the choice to identify with a label can lead to overfamiliarity or misconceptions. For instance, within the Spanish language, there are often regional differences specific to words or phrases - as someone who was taught Spanish by my parents and received some formal instruction- there are words that I may believe I understand but might hold a different meaning based on the participant's home state or region. In these situations, it is possible to misinterpret a statement's meaning due to the assumption of familiarity. Therefore, while it is important to make participants feel comfortable, it is equally important to be vigilant of my biases or misconceptions, ask clarifying questions, and utilize multiple data methods to understand their experiences. These practices can help curb assumptions and overfamiliarity that may occur. There are nuances to participants' experiences that I may never know personally, but as a researcher, I can strive to understand. The goal of this work is to be transparent and conscious of how I present and share the voices, actions, and experiences of the research participants to a broader audience of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

Dissertation Study Design

The purpose of the study was to understand the educational engagement perceptions and practices of Mexican heritage (MH) parents rearing their autistic child(ren). The research questions aimed to understand the role of educational engagement in MH households. Research demonstrates the need to consider parental perceptions of education to improve parental involvement (Durand & Perez, 2013). The four research questions in this study analyzed different facets of a MH household. The first research question, *how do MH families distribute daily household tasks*, utilized frequency counts of daily household practices from the family

accommodation scale and identified mothers' reports of daily household and educational tasks among household members. The second research question, *what are MH families' perceptions of educational engagement,* used the saliency scores (Grinker et al., 2015) generated from the focus group interviews to understand mothers' perceptions of educational engagement and educationally engaging practices. The third research question, *what are MH parents' perceptions of educational engagement and practices,* relies on inductive themes from individual interviews to understand the motivations, values, and practices behind mothers stated educational practices and activities. The final research question, *how do MH households enact educationally engaging practices in their daily lives,* utilized video recordings to identify and describe educationally engaging practices and activities occurring in the daily life of Mexican heritage families. Ultimately, findings from this research question will provide a nuanced understanding of parental engagement perceptions and practices among MH families rearing autistic children.

Integration of the data was done for two of the four data methods. First, the frequency counts of the family accommodation scale were analyzed utilizing a chi-square analysis, to determine relationships between the presence of household members and participation in activities (i.e. caregiving, parental engagement, financial responsibilities). Results that signified a relationship, were compared with individual interview data validate and explain the relationship. Second, the video recordings were coded using educational engagement strategies stated by mothers in the individual interviews. The emic definitions gathered by the participants were compared to videos of mothers engaging in learning with their autistic children to gain knowledge of educational strategies parents used at home and in other familial contexts. For example, if a video participant's mother identified 'providing resources' as an important educational strategy in their individual interview, their definition was compared with video

recordings to determine overlap among participants' statements and actions and to elucidate how strategies were employed in the home.

The roadmap below describes the data source, the data type, and the purpose for collecting this data (see Table 1). The following sections provide detailed descriptions of the participants, procedures for each method, and data analysis procedures.

Table 1: Description of methods, purpose, and data integration

Data Source	Description	Purpose
Purpose: To understand how Mexican Heritage (MH) parents' engage in educational practices with their autistic child.		
RQ1: How do MH families distribute daily household tasks?		
Family Accommodation Scale (10 participants)	This scale examines which members of the household engage in key educational and general caregiving activities	To identify parent reports of how daily household and educational tasks are distributed among adult caregivers in the home.
RQ2: What are MH families' perceptions of educational engagement?		
Parent Focus Group Interviews (5 participants)	These interviews utilized cultural consensus modeling (CCM: Grinker et al., 2015) to examine how MH parents' perceive and value educational engagement.	To create a collective understanding of MH parents' perceptions and value systems regarding educational engagement and educational practices.
RQ3: What are MH parents' perceptions of educational engagement and practices?		
Parent Individual Interviews (10 participants)	These interviews were semi-structured and examined MH parents' stated educational activities in academic and home environments.	To understand the motivations and goals behind a parent's stated educational practice and activities, both in home and academic environments.
RQ4: How do MH households enact educationally engaging practices in their daily lives?		
Video Recording of Daily Educational Activities (4 participants)	The video recordings examined educational engagement activities and practices in MH households.	To identify the members in a MH household who participate in educational activities and practices, the nature of daily activities and practices in the home environment, and locations where educational activities and practices occur.

Participants

Parents

Mothers from this study were recruited using convenience sampling (Miles et al., 2014) from a prior research study (Cohen & Miguel, 2018). The original study examined the values, beliefs, and intervention practices of Mexican-heritage families rearing autistic children. A detailed explanation of the recruitment procedures in the original study can be found in Cohen & Miguel (2018). Original participants included thirty-eight parent-child dyads recruited from two locations: (1) a local, non-profit, center providing diagnostic and intervention services to individuals with developmental disabilities and (2) a local medical clinic adjacent to the Mexico-U.S. border.

To recruit for this study, I called all 38 of the original parent-child dyads, given their previously stated interest in participating in future research. Of the 38 participants contacted, 14 mothers indicated an interest in participating and were provided with detailed information about the current study. Four of these participants started the data collection process but were not able to complete the first interview; they were excluded from the study. A total of 10 families participated in at least two phases of the study (i.e. individual interview, family accommodation scale). The 24, non-participating mothers, expressed a lack of availability (Individuals (N)=11; busy schedule, not interested) or were not located (N=13, wrong phone number, no answer/response to calls). All individuals contacted were provided with a description of the project, including the study's purpose, average time required, and the remuneration for participation.

Mothers who agreed to participate were enrolled in the study and asked to provide their availability for a one-hour individual interview, which was done via phone. Prior to each individual interview, participants were provided with the UCSD IRB-approved consent form

electronically via a secure, online, platform called Sign Request. Sign Request was selected as the electronic signature platform as it allowed for documents and signing instructions to be sent in both Spanish and English. Each consent form was signed by both the participant and researcher electronically. Once signed, a copy was emailed to both parties and the researcher copy was uploaded to a secure server to protect participant anonymity. Participants were also emailed a demographic questionnaire which was completed prior to the first interview. The demographic survey was sent to participants' email addresses, with instructions and a description of how long it would take to complete (i.e. 10-15 minutes). Participants received $10 for completing the survey.

Based on this demographic information, child participants were 100% male (Participants (N) = 10), they ranged in age from 5 - 15 (Mean = 9.7, *SD* = 2.95), and had an ASD diagnosis, with 17% (N = 2) having both an ASD diagnosis and additional diagnosis (e.g. attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, epilepsy, language disorder). Families in this study were primarily two partner households, 70% (N = 7), and 80% (N = 8) had two or more children in the home. For a full description of family and child demographics see Table 2. Mother participants (N = 10) ranged in age from 28 - 53 years (Mean = 40, *SD = 7*), 59% (N = 9) reported having an annual household income of $35,000 or less, and 100% were born in Mexico with an average age of immigration of 22.63 (*SD* = 8.80). See Table 3 for a full description of the mother demographics of this study. Father participants *(*N = 7) ranged in age from 33 - 52 years (Mean = 41.43, *SD = 7.14*), 86% (N = 6) were employed at the time of data collection, and 71% (N = 5) were born abroad (i.e. Mexico, Korea) with an average age of immigration of 23 (*SD* = 10.39). For a full list of demographics see Table 4. In addition, Table 5 provides a family narrative and participation breakdown for each participating family.

Table 2: Demographics of Families and Children Participants (N = 10)

	Range	Mean (*SD*)	Frequency	Percent
Families				
Children in the Household				
1			4	40%
2			2	20%
3+			4	40%
Two partner household			7	70%
Grandparent in the home			2	20%
Child				
Age	5 - 15	9.7 (*2.95*)		
Age Diagnosed	2 - 11	3.5 (*2.67*)		
Male			10	100%
ASD Diagnosis			8	80%
ASD Diagnosis & Other*			2	20%
Early Intervention			9	90%
1:1 intervention at home (<20 hours a week)			5	*55%*
Intervention based in school			8	*89%*
Other			3	*33%*
School Type				
Special Education School			2	20%
General Education class and school			3	30%
Special Education class in General Education school			4	40%
Charter Homeschool with IEP Services			1	10%
School Based Intervention			9	90%
Speech			3	*33%*
Special Education Teacher and/or Aid			3	*33%*
Language Therapy			4	*44%*
Music Therapy			1	*11%*
Occupational Therapy			2	*22%*
Physical Therapy			1	*11%*
Adaptive Physical Education			1	*11%*
Resource Specialist			1	*11%*
Clinic Services			6	60%
Applied Behavioral Analysis			4	*67%*
Occupational Therapy			1	*17%*
Speech			1	*17%*

Note: *Other diagnosis include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, epilepsy, and language disorder

Table 3: Demographics of Mother Participants (N=10)

	Range	Mean (*SD*)	Frequency	Percent
Age	28 - 53	38.80 (*7.11*)		
Married or Living with Partner			7	70%
Level of Education				
Elementary School			1	10%
Middle School			1	10%
GED or equivalent			1	10%
High School			3	30%
Bachelor's Degree (BA/BS)			4	40%
Currently Working			3	30%
Independent Contractor			1	*33%*
Caregiver			1	*33%*
Delivery Driver			1	*33%*
Household Income				
Less than $15,000			1	10%
$15,001 - $25,000			3	30%
$25,001 - $35,000			3	30%
$55,001 - $75,000			2	20%
Prefer not to Answer			1	10%
Born in Mexico			10	100%
Age of Immigration	11 - 37	22.63 (*8.80*)		
Spanish Primarily Spoken at Home			6	60%
English as a Secondary Language			6	*100%*
English Primarily Spoken at Home			4	40%
Spanish as a Secondary Language			3	*75%*
French as a Secondary Language			1	*25%*

Table 4: Demographics of Father/Partner Participants (N=7)

	Range	**Mean (*SD*)**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Age	33 - 52	41.43 (*7.14*)		
Level of Education				
Elementary School			1	14%
Middle School			2	29%
Some University			1	14%
Bachelor's Degree (BA/BS)			2	29%
Prefer not to Answer			1	14%
Currently Working			6	86%
Self Employed			1	*16.5%*
Gardener			1	*16.5%*
Maintenance Person			1	*16.5%*
Waiter			1	*16.5%*
Salesperson			1	*16.5%*
Prefer not to Answer			1	*16.5%*
Born Country				
Mexico			4	57%
U.S.			2	29%
Korea			1	14%
Age of Immigration	17 - 35	23 (*10.39*)		

Table 5: Family Narrative and Participation

	Summary	Participation*			
		S	FG	II	VR
The Dante Family	The Dante family consists of four family members, the mother, Susana, the father, Peter, the 13-year-old son, Benjamin, and his grandfather, Feliciano. Benjamin was diagnosed with autism at 3 years of age. Susana was 39 years old and born in Mexico. She immigrated at age 37. Both of her parents were born and remain in Mexico. She was a high school graduate and was not working at the time of data collection. Peter was 47 years old, identified as White, and was born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents. Peter had a university education and was self-employed via an online business. The Dante family reported a household income of $55,001 - $75,000 and used primarily English in the home with Spanish as a secondary language.	√	√	√	
The Garcia Family	The Garcia family is a family of three. Camila, the mother, was 35 years old and her husband, Joaquin, was 36 years old. Both were born in Mexico to Mexican-born parents. Joaquin had a bachelor's degree and was working as a salesperson at the local mall. Camila was not working during data collection and held a bachelor's degree. Lucas, their only child, was five and diagnosed with autism at three years. The Garcia's had an annual household income of $25,001 - $35,000 and spoke primarily Spanish in the home with English as a secondary language.	√	√	√	
The Benavides Family	The Benavides family is a family of six with a total of four children, Angelica, the mother, Luis, the father, Ana, a 14-year-old daughter, Gabriel, a 13-year-old son, Ismael, a 10-year-old son, and Alfredo the youngest son was 7 years old. Ismael was diagnosed with autism at the age of two. The mother, Angelica, was 32 years old and was born in Mexico to Mexican parents, having migrated to the U.S. at 11 years old. She received her general education diploma and was not working at the time of data collection. Luis, was 33 years old and born in the U.S. He identified as white and Filipino, and his parents were both born in the U.S. Luis was not currently working and he had attended college but not completed his studies. Their family's household income was less than $15,000 per year and the primary language spoken in the household was English, with the second language being Spanish.	√	√	√	
The Mendoza Family	The Mendoza family includes Jacqueline the mother, Diego the father, Carmen the oldest daughter (17 years old), and Matthew the younger son and target child. The Mendoza family lives in southern California, reported a household income between $25,001 - $35,000, and spoke primarily Spanish in the home. At the time of data collection, Jacqueline was 42 years old. She reported obtaining a bachelor's degree and was a first-generation immigrant who migrated to the U.S. at 29. Diego was 56 years old and reported completing middle school. He worked as a maintenance worker at a storage unit facility and immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico at age 35. Both Jacqueline and Diego's parents were born in Mexico and remain in Mexico. Matthew was diagnosed with autism at three years old and is now 10.	√		√	√
The Iglesia Family	The Iglesia family includes Diana the mother, Luis the father, Brandon the eldest son (15 years old), Emily the middle child (12 years old), and Michael the youngest (6 years old). The Iglesia family lived in southern California and reported an annual household income between $25,0001 - $35,000. They spoke primarily Spanish in the home and English as a secondary language. At the time of data collection, Diana was 39 years old, had obtained a high school degree, and was a first-generation immigrant, migrating to the U.S. at the age of 28. Her husband, Luis was 45 years old, migrated to the U.S. at 17, and had completed elementary school. Luis was the primary income earner, working as a waiter. Both Diana and Luis were born in Mexico to Mexican-born parents	√	√	√	√

Table 5: Family Narrative and Participation (Continued)

	who did not migrate to the U.S. Their sons, Brandon and Michael, are both autistic, Diana chose to disclose Brandon's diagnosis and interventions for this study. Brandon was diagnosed at three years old and had multiple diagnoses (i.e. autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, epilepsy).				
The Lozano Family	The Lozano family included Marisol the mother and Javier, the child. They lived in southern California and preferred not to report their household income. They spoke primarily Spanish in the home and English as a second language. Marisol was 28 years old, had obtained a high school degree, and was employed as an in-home supportive service provider for her child. Marisol is a first-generation immigrant, having migrated at the age of 17. Her two parents were born and remain in Mexico. Javier was diagnosed with autism at two and a half years of age and was eight at the time of data collection.	√	√	√	√
The Romano Family	The Romano family includes Genoveva the mother, James the father, Melissa the eldest sister (12 years old), and Jared the youngest child. The Romano family lived in southern California and reported an annual household income of $55,001 - $75,000. They spoke primarily Spanish at home and used English as a second language. Genoveva was 39 years old, had completed middle school, and was a first-generation immigrant, migrating to the U.S. at the age of 23. James was 50 years old, held a bachelor's degree, was employed as a software engineer, and migrated to the U.S. at 27. Genoveva was born in Mexico to Mexican parents while James was born in Korea to Korean parents. Both of their parents were living in their country of origin. Jared was diagnosed with autism at two years old and was 10 at the time of data collection.	√		√	√
The Herrera Family	The Herrera family included Amanda the mother and Francisco, the child. They lived in southern California and had a household income of $15,001 – 25,000. They spoke primarily English in the home and Spanish as a second language. Amanda was 35 years old, had obtained a high school degree, and was employed as an independent contractor. Amanda is a first-generation immigrant, having migrated at the age of 14. Both her parents were born and remain in Mexico. Francisco was diagnosed with autism at two and a half years of age and was ten at the time of data collection.	√		√	
The Valle Family	The Valle family includes Gladys the mother, Paco the eldest son (17 years old), Amy the daughter (16 years old), and Armando the youngest child. The Valle family lived in southern California and reported an annual household income of $15,001 - $25,000. They spoke primarily Spanish at home and used English as a second language. Gladys was 46 years old, had completed elementary school, and was a first-generation immigrant, migrating to the U.S. at the age of 26. Gladys was born in Mexico to Mexican parents, and they live in their country of origin. Gladys was employed, working as delivery driver. Armando was diagnosed with autism at three years old and was 10 at the time of data collection.	√		√	
The Ortiz Family	The Ortiz family includes Nina the mother, Pablo the father, Uriel the oldest (15 years old), Gabi the middle child (11 years old), and Carlos the youngest child (9 years old). All three children were diagnosed with autism. The Ortiz family lived in southern California and reported an annual household income of $15,001 - $25,000. They spoke primarily English at home and used Spanish as a second language. Nina was 53 years old, held a bachelor's degree, and was a first-generation immigrant, migrating to the U.S. at the age of 19. Pablo was 35 years old, had completed middle school, was employed as a gardener, and migrated to the U.S. at 17. Both were born in Mexico to Mexican parents and their parents were living in their country of origin.	√		√	

Note: *S=Family Accommodation Scale, FG= Focus Group Interviews, II= Individual Interviews, VR = Video Recording

Procedures

To best capture the complexity of parental engagement practices and perceptions this study utilized individual and focus group interviews, the Family Accommodation scale, and video recordings of daily activities during the data collection process. A full summary of these methods including examples of questions and procedures is detailed below.

Demographic Survey

All participants completed a comprehensive demographics questionnaire at the beginning of the study (i.e. March 2021). The demographic questionnaire sought to understand key information about the participants' backgrounds and was used to provide descriptive details of participants. Questions were uploaded to Qualtrics, a survey software that allows researchers to collect and manage data via their online platform. Participants were able to access the survey via a laptop or phone. Each demographic survey was made available in English and Spanish to accommodate the participants' linguistic preferences. All survey answers were managed via the Qualtrics platform and remained confidential. Only the primary researcher was able to access the raw data.

Survey questions included, *What is the highest level of education you have completed? What is your current occupation? What is your gross annual income?* Questions concerning their partner, if applicable, included, *What is the highest level of education your partner/husband has completed? Is your partner/husband currently working? How old is your partner/husband?* Questions about their target autistic child included, *Is your child currently enrolled in early intervention? Is your child currently in school? Is your child currently receiving services for special education in their school?* A full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix A.

Family Accommodation Scale

Participants also completed the Family Accommodation scale. This survey examined which members of the household engaged in key educational and general caregiving activities. Participants were provided with activities from their daily life and asked to select who in the household typically participated in that activity. For example, “Who makes medical appointments for [the target autistic child]?” Possible answers included, mother, father, partner, sibling, grandparent, don’t know, or no one. Given the focus on parental educational engagement, additional questions were added to the Family Accommodation scale. These questions include; *Who takes care of the child(ren) before/after school?, Who makes appointments with therapists for the child(ren)?, Who attends the IEP meetings of your child(ren)?*, *Who helps the child(ren) with schoolwork?*, *Who, if anyone, speaks to teachers or therapists about your child(rens) autism?* All questions were uploaded to Qualtrics as a survey, made accessible via laptop or phone, and provided in English and Spanish. Responses were managed via the Qualtrics platform and remained confidential. Only the primary researcher was able to access the raw data from the Qualtrics platform. See Appendix B for the Family Accommodation scale.

Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews were conducted with participants in May 2021 and utilized cultural consensus modeling (CCM: Grinker et al., 2015). CCM was selected as it allows researchers to understand shared belief systems within individuals of a cultural group. CCM employs free-listing (i.e. participants listing terms or responses to a shared prompt) ranking (i.e. selection of important or key terms from the free-listing process) and pile sorts (i.e. creation of categories from distinct terms that indicate connections or differences) (Grinker et al., 2015). In addition, CCM allows for analysis at the individual and group level in quantitative (i.e. ranking)

and qualitative (i.e. free-listing, pile sorts) formats. There were two parent focus groups with a range of 2 - 3 participants in each meeting and five total participants. Five parents were not able to participate in this portion of the study due to availability or insufficient technology access. All focus group interviews were scheduled based on participant availability, offered in English or Spanish, and conducted via a Zoom video call due to COVID restrictions but ultimately all parents opted for a Spanish focus group. Interviews lasted an average of 65 minutes and a total recording time of two hours and 10 minutes. Questions for parent participants were first drafted in Spanish and then translated into English. All questions were created to be open-ended. Questions for parent participants included, *Please tell me what words or phrases come to mind when you think about how you educate your child(ren) with autism. What words or phrases come to mind when you think about learning in the home?* See Appendix C for Focus Group Interview Protocols.

Due to data collection occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic, cultural consensus modeling (Grinker et al., 2015) was adapted to a virtual format. To facilitate the discussion, an online platform called Padlet was used. Padlet is a collaborative, digital notice board that allows users to type, or post images and links, via a phone, tablet, or computer. All focus group participants were given personal access to the Padlet to type the responses to the question or they were asked to have a paper and pen handy to record their responses. Participants that did not want to type could dictate their responses for me to record. The use of Padlet allowed participants to type, dictate, view, and edit their responses in real time. During the focus group participants were first asked to free-list all the words or phrases that came to mind in response to one of the four questions, using the Padlet or paper. Mothers were asked to reflect on educational philosophies, strategies, and parent-teacher relationships. After free-listing, participants were

asked to share their responses with the group. Next, participants used the free-listing responses to rank their top five answers to the question, in order of importance (i.e. where 1 is most important and 5 is least important). Participants were also asked to provide a justification for their ranking in the group. Lastly, participants were asked to engage in pile sorting by grouping all free-listed responses into categories. During each phase, responses were recorded on the Padlet and participants were able to verify in real-time their group answers. Focus group videos were also audio recorded and transcribed. Each audio file was transcribed in the language that it was conducted in. To maintain confidentiality transcripts were assigned a personalized identification number, anonymized, and uploaded to a secure repository.

Individual Interviews

Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with all participants in March - July 2021. Individual interviews were selected as they allow the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of an experience, belief, or topic but still allow for the participant's answers to guide the discussion (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Participants had the option to schedule them by phone or video call (i.e. Zoom). All mothers opted to participate by phone. Questions included *How do you define education? What do you believe is the role of the family in education? How do you support your child(ren)s education?* Interviews lasted between 28 to 62 minutes, with an average time of 42.7 minutes and a total recording time of seven hours and 15 minutes. Prior to the start of each interview, participants were asked for verbal assent to confirm participation in the audio recording, in addition to the consent form previously signed. Phone interviews were recorded using Rev Call Recording and backup audio recordings were done via QuickTime player on a MacBook Air. Upon completion of the interview audio files were uploaded to a secure repository that only the primary researcher can access. Interviewee transcripts were

immediately assigned an identification number and were transcribed in the language they were conducted using Happy Scribe. No translation was necessary as the primary researcher is fluent in Spanish and English. See Appendix D for the full Interview Protocol.

Video Data

Mothers video-recorded instances of educational engagement activities in their daily life settings. Video recording was selected to observe how parents engage in educational activities in their day-to-day interactions. To enroll parent participants all 10 families were contacted to determine interest. Each participant was explained the research aims and requirements for recording. If interested a date was set to drop off equipment and provide camera instructions. Four families agreed to participate and in July 2021, a camera was made available for participants to record for 10 consecutive days. Unavailable families declined due to lack of interest (e.g. themselves or their child being uncomfortable with filming) or a mismatch in scheduling (e.g. travel, personal milestones, busy schedules). On the day of equipment drop off the participant agreed to record only with adults and children who assented to being recorded. Participants were also made aware that they had a right to request the deletion of recordings at any time. Mothers were shown how to operate the video recorder and provided with a step-by-step checklist for reference. They were informed that recording would begin the following day and last ten days. On each day of video recording, parents received a reminder text in the morning and at the end of the day text with a link to a short survey that allowed participants to log the activities recorded. At the end of the video recording, researchers returned to collect the equipment and conduct a debrief interview (~30 minutes). Questions for the debrief interview included *What was your primary reasoning for filming this interaction? Is this a typical academic interaction? You stated XXX educational strategy. Can you tell me more about that*

practice? Collected video recordings were uploaded to a secure repository, anonymized with the participants' identification number, and categorized by order recorded. Videos were then sent for audio transcription in the language of recording. See Appendix E for the Video Recording Protocol and Appendix F for a full list of the Debrief Questions.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process for this study was guided by a triangulation design which requires that qualitative and quantitative methods must be analyzed separately before they are converged for the final interpretation of the overarching research question (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Analysis requires processing the collected raw data (e.g. transcription, cleaning of numerical data), exploration (e.g. creating codebooks, coding transcripts, running descriptive or frequency analysis), and sense-making (e.g. using statistical software to determine significant differences, and capturing emerging themes or codes). A detailed explanation of each of the methods with insight into the above analysis process is described below.

Demographic Survey

The demographic survey captured descriptive participant data (i.e. place of birth, distribution of household tasks, frequency of intervention). Participants' demographic information was uploaded to excel de-identified and classified based on the type of information requested (e.g. numerical, close-ended, multiple choice, open-ended). Numerical data (e.g. age, level of education) was categorized based on the appropriate denominator (i.e. child’s age converted to months). Close-ended questions (e.g. is your child currently enrolled in intervention, are you currently working) were categorized into dichotomous variables (i.e. *Yes* coded as a 1, *No* coded as a 0). For multiple-choice data (e.g. language spoken in the home, marriage status), answer categories were assigned a numerical value and re-coded. For example,

participants selecting *single* as their marriage status (vs. married, living with a partner) would be re-coded as a *1,* married, or living with a partner assigned a *2*. Open-ended questions (e.g. *Where do you work? What type of intervention is your child receiving?*) were categorized based on similar groupings, which were then re-coded with a numerical value. For example, a question on the husband/partner's employment received answers such as maintenance worker, janitor, or pool cleaner. These responses were categorized as blue-collar jobs and re-coded with a *1*. Once data cleaning was completed answers were uploaded to SPSS (Version 28) to create tables and for use in the analysis.

Family Accommodation Scale

The Family Accommodations Scale (Holloway et al., 2014) provided mothers' reports of household members' engagement in various household activities (e.g., cooking, cleaning, laundry, homework). As these questions were embedded in the demographic survey the process of de-identification described above was also taken for this dataset. Answers to the Family Accommodation scale questions were multiple choice, with participants able to answer and select all that applied (e.g. mother, father, sibling(s), grandparent(s), cousin(s), aunt(s)/uncle(s), non-relative(s). Each answer category was assigned a numerical value (i.e. mother- "1", father- 2") and was re-coded in Excel based on the participants' answers. Once coding was completed the data set was uploaded to SPSS (Version 28) for further analysis. Within SPSS a frequency and descriptive analysis was computed for each of the Family Accommodation scale questions (e.g. who helps with learning, who talks to therapists and teachers, who if anyone goes to meetings or classes about the child's disability). This analysis allowed the researcher to examine the overall distribution of care among family members and create a profile of care activities for

each household which helps answer the first research question, *How do MH families distribute daily household tasks?* See Table 6 for household member participation across activity settings.

In addition to this analysis, a chi-square test was run to examine potential relationships between the presence of household members and their participation in household activities. Given the small sample size binary variables were created for select household member variables and activity variables. To create household member variables, siblings were well distributed among the participating families (58% of families had 2 or more children), therefore the presence of siblings in a household was coded with a *1*, and the lack of presence of a sibling was coded as *0.* Mothers and fathers were over-represented among households, 83% of families lived in a two-parent household, while grandparents were underrepresented, and 17% of families lived with grandparents, making these three groups unfit for statistical analysis within a small sample. To create activity variables, household activities where mothers participated were separated from non-mother household members' participation in household activities (e.g. father/partner, sibling, and/or grandparent feeding child = 1, mother feeding child = 0). This was done to ascertain representation from non-mother household members in household activities, given mothers' overwhelming participation across all activities (i.e. mothers participated in activities on average 86% of the time). Once results from the chi-square were identified, individual interviews were compared with the results to validate and explain the results. The code, educational actors (i.e. participants' description of teachers, therapists, assistants, or family that assist or impede with their target child's education) was referenced. For example, chi-square results indicated a relationship between the presence of siblings and the participation of non-mother household members in caregiving activities (i.e. feeding, bathing, playing, caring for a child). Excerpts from the code educational actors, that captured instances where mothers talked

about how siblings were involved in caregiving activities, were extracted, and summarized to interpret the results from the chi-square analysis.

Table 6: Family Accommodation Scale (N = 10)

	Mother	**Father/ Partner**	**Sibling(s)**	**Grand-parent(s)**	**No One**
Played with child(ren)?	10	5	5	2	
Fed the child(ren)?	10	4	2	2	
Disciplined the child(ren)?	10	6	3	2	
Cared for the child(ren) at home?	10	5	4	2	
Cared for the child(ren) before school?	10	1	0	1	
Cared for the child(ren) after school?	10	4	1	2	
Made child(ren)'s appointments with medical providers?	10	1			
Made child(ren)'s appointments with therapists?	10	1			
Took the child(ren) to the appointment?	10	2			
Attended child(ren) IEP meetings?	10	3			
Helped the child(ren) with educational tasks?	9	2	2		
Helped the child(ren) with schoolwork?	8	2	1		1
Organized play dates for the child(ren)?	10	1			
Spoke with the child(ren)'s therapists?	10	1			
Spoke with the child(ren)'s teachers?	10	2			
Made decisions about the child(ren)'s medical services?	10	4			
Made decisions about the child(ren)'s educational services?	10	5			
Read about autism for the child(ren)?	10	1	1		
Spoke with friends/family about the child(ren)'s autism?	10	3	1	1	
Spoke with teachers/therapists about the child(ren)'s autism?	10	1			
Worked extra hours to pay for the child(ren)'s health insurance?	1	4			6
Worked extra hours to pay for the child(ren)'s therapy?	1	3			6
Stopped working or worked less to care for child(ren)?	7	1			2
Started or stayed at a job to cover the child(ren)'s medical benefits?	1	1			8

Interviews

Focus Group.

The focus group interviews sought to understand cultural and non-cultural perceptions of Mexican heritage (MH) families' role in supporting children with ASD's learning, by asking questions on how to educate autistic children, strategies utilized, and educational learning in the

home. This question was created to provide answers to research question two, *what are MH families' perceptions of educational engagement*. To gain a descriptive understanding of perceptions of parental engagement, focus group data were analyzed using two levels of analysis.

In the first level of analysis, free-list responses and rankings were collected. A total of 68 responses were generated across all questions. For the first question, there were 20 unique responses generated from free listing (across five participants). The second question generated 23 unique responses (across five participants) and the third question generated 25 unique responses (across five participants). To understand the importance/salience of each response, participants ranked their top five responses by the level of importance (i.e. 1 was most important and five was least important) for each question. To standardize participant ranking it was important to create saliency scores. To create saliency scores, first, all ranked responses were reverse-coded. For example, a participant coded 'paciencia' as the most important response (i.e. 1) was reverse coded to a "5" to indicate a higher numerical score. Whereas 'darle tiempo' was ranked as least important (i.e. 5), which led to a reverse coded score of "1" to indicate a lower numerical score. This process was done for all ranked responses. Second, in cases where a response was ranked by multiple participants the sum of all responses was recorded. For example, 'paciencia' was the most important answer for three participants, which led to a total recorded score of 15. Third, the recorded scores were added and divided by the five, the number of total participants across focus groups. For example, 'paciencia' which received a score of 15 was divided by five leading to a saliency score of 3. This process allowed the researcher to create a standardized value, or saliency score, to determine which responses were the most highly valued across focus groups (Grinker et al., 2015). The top response to question one, words that come to mind on how to educate your autistic child, was 'paciencia' (*patience,* parent's

developing patience to support their child*)* with a mean saliency score of 3. For question two, words that come to mind when thinking about at-home learning, the top response was 'su espacio' (*their space*, providing children with a space where they can be independent and feel comfortable*)* with a mean saliency score of 2.2. Lastly, for question three, words that come to mind when identifying strategies that parents utilized to educate autistic children, the top response was 'rutina' (*routine*) with a mean saliency score of 1.4. See Table 7 for a list of responses with corresponding saliency scores.

For the second level of analysis, the transcription of each focus group was utilized. Transcriptions were useful in understanding participants' decision-making and justification for their ranked responses. Out of the 68 unique responses generated, 58 were used in the ranking portion of the focus group. Participants shared their rationale and definitions for these 58 responses. To organize the responses, first, the researcher read through each transcript and identified instances where a rationale was provided for a ranked response. The excerpt was then transferred to an Excel sheet which was placed next to the appropriate response. This process was repeated for all 58 responses. Then response excerpts were analyzed via an 'a priori' method or coded with a predetermined lens. The top-ranked responses (i.e. *patience, their space, routine*) were utilized for 'a priori' coding.' Any excerpts that were like the top-ranked responses were categorized together. For example, the top response, *patience,* was described by mothers as a trait necessary to learn and have when educating an autistic child. Similarly, mothers' responses of *perseverance, persistence,* and *respect* were seen as important traits for mothers to learn and have for educating their children (i.e. being persistent and not giving up on educational goals). Given the similarity in participants' definitions of these four responses (i.e. traits mothers need to learn for educating their child), they were coded together. Three distinct categories were created

using this process; (1) *Educational Engagement Tools*; (2) *Mother's Educational Engagement Traits,* and (3) *An Independent Future*. The first round of a priori coding accounted for 50 out of the 58 responses. The eight responses that did not fit under these two distinct categories underwent a second round of data-derived coding. This required non-selected excerpts to be read and categorized based on what was explicitly stated in the participant excerpts. For example, *educating the family* (i.e. teaching family members about autism), was identified by three participants as important but was not similar to mothers' definitions of the three categories above, therefore this new theme was identified and created in this secondary process. From the secondary coding, two additional themes were identified (1) educating the family and (2) society's role in autism acceptance. These two themes were composed of ranked responses and are important in fully understanding educational engagement among Mexican heritage families.

Table 7: Participant responses and saliency scores for each focus group question (N = 5)

Question 1	Saliency Score	Question 2	Saliency Score	Question 3	Saliency Score
Paciencia	3.0	Su Espacio	2.2	Rutina	1.4
Rutina	1.2	Valores	1.0	Adaptaciónes	1.0
Independiente	1.0	Educar a la familia	1.0	Primero Esto, Después el Otro	1.0
Conocimiento	0.8	Mascota	1.0	Reflejo	1.0
Adaptacion	0.8	Apoyo	1.0	Ser Alguien en la Vida	1.0
Terapia	0.8	Reto	1.0	Respeto	0.8
Futuro	0.6	Habitos	0.8	Ejemplos	0.8
Persistencia	0.6	Cambio	0.8	Paciencia	0.8
Trabajo en Equipo	0.6	Respiro	0.6	Motivación	0.8
Meterme en Su Mundo	0.6	Motivación	0.6	Aprendizaje	0.8
Desarollo	0.4	Trabajar a Su Modo del Niño/a o a Su Tiempo	0.6	Terapia	0.6
Aprender Su Limite	0.4	Aprender	0.6	Enseñanza	0.6
Celebrar Cada Paso	0.4	Paciencia	0.4	Calendario del Dia	0.4
Verlo Como Individuo	0.4	Dar Atención a Todos	0.2	Aceptacion	0.4
Darle Tiempo	0.2	Perseverancia	0.2	Consequencias	0.2
				Premio	0.2
				Tolerancia	0.2

Individual Interviews.

The individual interview data sought to understand MH parents' perceptions towards their practices of educationally engaging children with ASD in the home, to answer research question three, *What are MH parents' perceptions of educational engagement and practices?* To gain a descriptive understanding of educational practices, interview transcriptions were collected and analyzed via qualitative methods. The data analysis process for this research question is described below.

Qualitative analysis of the individual interviews used the transcriptions that were de-identified and uploaded to the secure server. The transcripts were coded using line-by-line inductive analysis to gain an in-depth understanding of educationally engaging perceptions and

practices of MH parents (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Any distinct experience that described a concept, belief, or issue, related to the research question was categorized into codes (Bazeley, 2006). After three coding sessions I created the final codebook and excerpts. In the first session, I sought to develop the initial codebook. In the first coding session, three transcripts (25% of the sample) were coded, and definitions added to the codebook to best represent the excerpts. The results from the focus group interviews (i.e. codes included *Educational Engagement Tools*, *Mother's Educational Engagement Characteristics*, an *Independent Future*) were referenced in this stage to help determine if similar topics across the various modes of data collected were found. The second session was focused on refining the codes. An additional transcript was coded, during which the researcher noted that some codes were either difficult to tease apart or fit into various categories. To clarify code definitions, the excerpts from all four transcripts were downloaded and read by code category (i.e. 'agency' excerpts were read all together). Particular attention was paid to codes that were double-coded (i.e. parents' educational beliefs and reflections on the educational system) as they signaled a potentially confusing or vague code definition. During this process, two codes were deleted due to significant overlap (i.e. parent-teacher educational beliefs, parents' educational beliefs), leaving 13 main codes and 10 subcodes. The final and third round of coding sought to finish the coding of transcripts. Code definitions and transcripts were uploaded to Dedoose, a collaborative coding software. The four initial transcripts were re-coded to reflect changes made to the codebook and the remaining six transcripts were coded. Once coding was finalized the transcript excerpts were downloaded from Dedoose to Excel and categorized by code to determine key findings. Frequencies of codes were also used to identify the most prevalent codes (Yin, 2018). In Excel, 13 codes were consolidated into five broader themes based on similar content. For example, the theme, parent versus

educators' perceptions of educational engagement, combined the code, definitions of family (i.e. mothers define what families mean to them), definitions of education (i.e. mothers define what education means to them), role of family (i.e. mothers describe the role of the educational system immediate/extended family in education), and role of education (i.e. mothers describe the role of the educational system within education) as all three provided perspectives to differences, similarities and conceptualizations of family versus school in educational engagement. Five themes were identified, (1) *parent versus educator's perceptions of educational engagement*, (2) *childrearing practices*, (3) *parent-educator partnerships*, (4) *supportive environments*, and (5) *the impacts of COVID-19 on child development*.

Video Recordings

Video recordings of families' daily activities were collected to understand how parents engage in educational activities in their day-to-day interactions. This section answers the fourth research question, *how do MH households enact educationally engaging practices in their daily lives*. Video data analysis employed a quantitative content analysis (QCA; Margolis & Pauwels, 2011). QCA allowed for a "systematic analysis of well-defined" video content by counting the number of appearances of a theme (Margolis & Pauwels, 2011, p. 265). Initial themes were created via a framework analysis where the "who, what, and where" of each video was recorded. I identified the individuals present in the video (who), summarized the main activity (what), and noted the location of the video (where) (Margolis & Pauwels, 2011). In addition, the length and primary language of the video participants were recorded as mothers reported bilingual (i.e. English, Spanish) language use in the household. To understand educationally engaging practices the code, 'educational strategies' from the individual interviews was utilized to identify educational engagement strategies. A detailed description of both analysis processes is below.

To help guide the video coding process, I utilized Boonk and colleagues' (2018) definition of home-based parental involvement – any actions or practices that parents employ in the home to promote learning (e.g. talk of educational aspirations, homework help). Participants' reports of 'educational strategies' from the individual interviews were used to understand educationally engaging practices. In the individual interviews participants were asked to describe and define educational strategies used in the home. Strategies were coded for all 10 families. After coding, the 'educational strategies' excerpts were downloaded and further categorized into strategies. The 'educational strategies' for each family participating in the video data were identified and used to code the video data. For example, Jacqueline, the mother in the Mendoza family described an educational strategy, stating, "*first he has to do whatever his responsibility is and then he can do something he likes, like play, have fun, or watch tv. I feel like that works."* This example is a common strategy introduced by intervention providers called, 'first this, then that.' From the mother's description, I summarized the strategy and titled the code 'first this, then that.' I added this code to a coding dictionary for this family and looked for video examples of this strategy throughout the Mendoza family's video data. Using this process, the Mendoza and Iglesia family had eight codes, the Lozano family had seven codes, and the Romano family had five codes. See Table 8 for a full description of the educational strategy codes by family. Once codes were created a Google form was used to facilitate video coding. Each video was identified (i.e. participant ID, video name) and the coder was prompted to (1) select all of the educational engagement strategies that appeared in the video recorded excerpt, (2) write down the timestamp for each identified educational strategy code and provide a brief summary of the video recorded interaction, and (3) write down any other noticing's or observations that were not coded as educational strategies. Once all videos were coded, the researcher separated each

instance of an educational engagement strategy and paired it to the timestamp and summary. Once all videos were coded for the presence of educational strategies, I downloaded an Excel sheet that featured the video timestamp and the description of each coded educational strategy to look for patterns and evidence of these strategies across families. A total of 78 educational strategy instances were recorded across all videos. From these strategies, five videos were selected to highlight in the results section due to their high prevalence among recorded strategies and across families. These strategies included, (1) *providing resources* (i.e. providing school supplies, sensory tools, or visuals to aid with educational goals), (2) *attending to the target child's mood* (i.e. strategies and actions mothers employed to prevent and manage their child's socio-emotional behaviors), (3) *supporting educational concepts at home* (i.e. educational strategies used at home to support educational goals), (4) *dynamic learning* (i.e. learning through play), and (5) *listening to Matthew's interest*.

Table 8: Educational strategies by household

Strategy	Frequency
Mendoza Family	
Listening to Matthew's interests	11
United family (i.e. playing board games, engaging in religious activities)	6
*Inquiring on Matthew’s feelings	4
Child as knowledge bearer (i.e. demonstrating mastery/ knowledge of a subject)	1
Encouraging Matthew to learn	1
Matthew attending school	1
Being there for Matthew (i.e. mother choosing to not work)	0
First this, then that (i.e. do your work and then you can play)	0
Helping with homework (e.g. sister or father)	0
Providing Resources (i.e. transporting or enrolling children in extracurricular activities)	0
Iglesia Family	
Attending to Brandon's mood	7
Differentiating Brandon's learning (i.e. slowly building up to a new skill)	5
Teaching Values (i.e. sharing, respecting others)	5
Dynamic learning (i.e. learning through play)	4
Rewards (i.e. providing incentives)	3
Supporting educational concepts at home (i.e. academic goals, educational videos)	2
Communicating with Brandon's educators (i.e. school district, educational team)	0
Providing Resources (i.e. creating social stories to assist with emotional development)	0
Lozano Family	
Attending to Javier's Mood (i.e. taking mental health breaks)	3
Providing Resources (i.e. sensory aids, AAC device)	3
*Encouraging Motor Skills	1
Encouraging Javier to Learn	0
Involved in School Activities (i.e. volunteering)	0
Supporting Educational Concepts at Home	0
Javier Attending School	0
Romano Family	
Providing Resources (i.e. designing visual learning aids)	6
Supporting Educational Concepts at Home	6
Attending to Jared's Mood	4
Dynamic Learning (i.e. learning through play)	1
Helping with Homework (e.g. Mom)	1

Note: *Code not expressed by mother during interviews but discovered during video analysis.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a roadmap for how the dissertation study was designed, conducted, and analyzed. The chapter included an explanation of my positionality within the study and provided a brief overview of the design of the study. This was followed by an introduction to the participants and an in-depth explanation of the recruitment process. The procedures for each of

the methods and a detailed description of the data analysis for each method and research question were also included. To best present the findings for this study the results and corresponding discussion from each research question are provided in discrete chapters. Chapter 4 describes how Mexican heritage families distribute daily household tasks. Chapter 5 describes Mexican heritage families' general perceptions of educational engagement. Chapter 6 describes Mexican heritage parents' individual educational engagement practices. Chapter 7 describes how Mexican heritage households enact educationally engaging practices in their daily lives. All chapters will serve to unpack how Mexican Heritage (MH) parents perceive and engage in educational practices with their autistic child(ren). In Chapter 8 I will provide a discussion and implications of results from all four research questions.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS FROM RQ1, DISTRIBUTION OF DAILY HOUSEHOLD TASKS

RQ1: How do MH Families Distribute Daily Household Tasks?

To determine how Mexican Heritage families distributed daily household tasks, the mothers (i.e. female head of household) of all ten families filled out the family accommodation scale, providing a numerical report of household members' engagement in daily household and educational tasks. The questions fell into three categories (1) caregiving activities (i.e. playing, feeding, disciplining, or caring for child/children), (2) parental engagement activities (i.e. attending IEP meetings, helping with educational tasks/schoolwork, communicating with teachers/providers, making decisions about educational/medical services, reading about autism), and (3) financial responsibilities (i.e. working extra or fewer hours for insurance, therapy, benefits). Participants selected any family or household members (i.e. mother, father/partner, sibling(s), grandparent(s), no one) that helped them complete each task. See Table 6 for a full

description of questions and frequencies. Both statistical analysis and individual interviews were incorporated into the reporting of this section to understand how Mexican-heritage mothers perceived and reported the support they received in completing the family's daily household activities.

As depicted in Table 6, mothers were overwhelmingly engaged in two of the three categories. In the first category, *caregiving activities*, all 10 mothers reported 100% engagement in all seven activities. Additionally, fathers/partners, sibling(s), and grandparent(s) also participated in these activities. It should be noted that four households were made up of one child and two parents. Two mothers reported no father/partner living in the home at the time of data collection. Siblings were the second most represented at 77% (Range = 0 - 5) with fathers/partners as the third most represented in this category at 46% (Range = 1 - 6). In the second category, *parental engagement activities,* mothers once again reported full engagement across all responses, except for making decisions about educational or medical services (98%, Range = 8 - 10). Fathers/partners were the second most represented at 27% (Range = 1 - 5), whereas siblings and grandparents were not well represented in this category. In the final category, *financial responsibilities*, most mothers reported ‘no one’ when responding to questions about working extra hours to access services (55%, Range = 8 - 2). However, of the households with affirmative answers, at least one family member, primarily the father/partner (44%, Range = 4 - 3), worked extra hours to pay for health insurance or therapy. In addition, 80% of mothers (Frequency (N) = 7) indicated they stopped working or worked fewer hours, once the child was diagnosed with autism.

Examining Caregiving Activities

To further understand the diversity in household members' participation in caregiving activities I ran a chi-square test. The text examined the link between the presence of siblings and participation in caregiving activities (i.e. playing, feeding, disciplining children) by non-mother household members (i.e. siblings, fathers, grandparents). Siblings were selected for the chi-square analysis due to a small representation of grandparents and non-father/partnered households exemplified in the data. Caregiving variables were re-coded into binary variables (e.g. father/partner, sibling, and/or grandparent feeding child = 1, mother feeding child = 0) to ascertain representation from non-mother household members in caregiving activities. Results from a chi-square test of independence revealed a significant relationship between the presence of a sibling and caring for children in the home., $X^2(1, N = 10) = 8.4, p = .004$. The presence of a sibling in the household increased the presence of a non-mother household member caring for child(ren) at home. No other significant results were found for the remaining caregiving activities.

The individual interviews helped to partially explain the significant results from the chi-square test of independence. Mothers in the study reported non-autistic siblings as an asset to their autistic siblings, describing them as playmates and advocates for autism awareness in their schools. One mother elaborated on the positive play interactions facilitated by her daughter,

> [Mi hija] ni siquiera se da cuenta de que lo apoya jugando, lo apoya involucrándolo con los otros niños en la comunidad.
> [My daughter] doesn’t even realize she is helping him by playing, helping him by involving him with the other kids in the community.

This mother described the positive play interactions her daughter facilitated between her brother and other children in the neighborhood by both playing and integrating him into play interactions with neighborhood kids, demonstrating how siblings can take on caregiving and therapy activities. Mothers also described positive experiences with husbands/fathers who supported

them in the caretaking load and helped with routine activities at home (i.e. *We divide the work, he picks up, cleans, does everything for the kids, irons, changes them, gets them ready so we can all leave together*[3]). While not as numerous these paternal examples demonstrated their support in the household and how they helped care for children.

The support mothers received from extended family members not living in the household were not captured in the accommodation scale but were described by mothers. Support included accommodating their autistic child's dietary needs at social gatherings (i.e. *I talked to my family about taking away gluten from [my child's diet] so we plan appropriate foods*) and supporting their social-emotional development. A mother shared how her sister helped her child overcome a fear of haircutting, stating,

> Mi hermana juega mucho con él. Siempre está tratando de hacer juegos de mesa, de apoyarlo a este modo. No dejaba que se cortara, que nadie le cortara el cabello, y entonces ella me ayudó a enseñarle que no era tan difícil, [dejarlo] jugar con la maquinita y a jugar con las tijeras.
> *My sister plays with [my child] a lot. She is always trying to play table games to help him in this way. [My child] didn't let his hair get cut, no one could cut his hair, and so she helped me teach him that it wasn't hard, [letting him] play with the machine and play with the scissors.*

This example described the playful relationship between the child's aunt and cousin and the support the aunt provided when teaching him to get over his fear of haircuts. These relationships between immediate and extended family described the beneficial experiences autistic children had with their extended families.

Examining a Lack of Household Member Engagement

Across all categories represented in the family accommodation scale, non-mother household members were not well represented. Within parental engagement activities, mothers reported that fathers/partners participated in household activities 27% of the time. In fact, fathers

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[3] Italicized sentences are original quotations from the transcripts translated from- Spanish to English.

participated in less than 50% of the caregiving activities. Of the eight families with a father in the household seven were employed in various blue-collar jobs (i.e. maintenance, janitor, truck driver). A chi-square test revealed no significant relationship between these variables (e.g. father versus mother's participation in working extra hours for autistic child). This may be due to a lack of variability in the sample, given most mothers reported being the primary caregiver for the child(ren) and most fathers the primary income-earner. A larger sample with more variability (i.e. single-parent households, both parents working, father as the primary caregiver, same-sex parents) may have produced significant results.

Mother's report from the individual interviews helped to explain participants' reports of a lack of involvement by fathers/partners in their autistic child(ren)'s day-to-day life. While participants recognized that work hours impeded involvement, mothers mentioned gendered expectations reinforced and contributed to perceptions that mothers should be the primary caretaker for their autistic children. One mother provided an example of gendered beliefs in her own home,

> Como yo no trabajo, yo soy la encargada de mi hijo. Yo pienso que su papá debería ayudar, pero ya me cansé [de decirle]. Me cansé de hacerle entender entonces sé que no voy a tener de él ninguna ayuda. Entonces pues yo soy la que cubre todas las necesidades de mi hijo.
> *Since I don't work, I am in charge of my son. I think that his dad should help, but I am tired [of telling him]. I'm tired of trying to get him to understand so I know that I am not going to have his help in anything. So I am the one that covers all the necessities of my son.*

This mother described how she has tried to ask her husband to be more involved, but he had not responded or changed his behavior. Therefore she had taken on the role of being her child's sole caregiver. She didn't want to expend more energy to get her husband to be more involved.

Summary

Results revealed that MH mothers are overwhelmingly represented across all caregiving (i.e. playing, feeding, bathing child) and educational (i.e. speaking to teachers, attending IEP meetings) activities. Within the financial responsibilities category, 80% of mothers responded that they worked less or stopped working once their child was diagnosed with autism. In addition, fathers were most represented when it came to questions asking who worked more hours to pay for therapy or health insurance. Mothers' reports in the individual interviews mirrored the findings of the family accommodation scale. They noted that their husband's work hours limited their ability to engage in household activities and provided examples of gendered expectations that reinforced their participation in caregiving and household activities. Meanwhile, the chi-square test demonstrated a significant positive relationship between the presence of a sibling and a non-mother household member caring for children at home. Integration of the individual interviews helped to unpack the results from the scale and chi-square analysis.

Discussion

Utilizing the family accommodation scale I identified the distribution of daily household tasks and educational activities in MH households as reported by mothers. The findings contribute to the existing literature by expanding on the family accommodation scale (Holloway et al., 2014). Holloway and colleagues initially called on researchers to explore the distribution of activities for household members as it pertains to decision-making around education and educational engagement. Examples provided by the authors included factors that impact children’s school placement and changes in engagement based on immigration status. This study included additional questions on educational engagement with a focus on activities that are associated with autism, such as attendance at Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings and

communication with service providers. Holloway et al.'s (2014) study examined the distribution of activities in households as reported by 145 mothers (58% Latino) of children with an intellectual disability (Holloway et al., 2014). Their finding's signaled mothers were significantly more involved across all activities (i.e. household, child interactions, education and service, parent learning) as compared to their husbands/partners. The results of my study indicate that the distribution of activities for educational engagement activities follows a similar pattern to the distribution of caregiving activities. This finding is partially explained by other studies showing that mothers rearing children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are highly engaged in all household activities (Crowe & Florez, 2006; Holloway et al., 2018; Lo, 2016; Morgan & Stahmer, 2021). It is also possible mothers are more engaged in educational activities (80% more likely to stop work or work less) with their children because fathers are taking more of the household financial responsibilities (45% worked extra/more hours). Existing literature finds that Latino fathers rearing children with IDD tend to be less involved in the day-to-day interactions of educational engagement and caregiving activities and more attuned to the financial needs of the child and household (Cummings et al., 2017; Frye, 2016; Terriquez, 2013) which further supports this finding. In sum, by utilizing and expanding on the family accommodation scale to include educational engagement activities we see that both caregiving and educational engagement tasks appear to follow similar patterns of distribution and support existing research.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS FROM RQ2, GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

RQ2: What Are MH Families' General Perceptions of Educational Engagement?

To examine how Mexican Heritage parents perceived and valued educational engagement for their autistic child(ren), five mothers participated in two focus groups (i.e. 2 - 3 per group) in the Summer of 2021. I used cultural consensus modeling (CCM; Grinker et al., 2015) to organize the focus group interview. Three distinct categories were created using the Level 1 analysis process; (1) *Educational Engagement Tools*; (2) *Mother's Educational Engagement Traits,* and (3) *An Independent Future*. An additional two themes were identified from participants' focus group conversations (1) *Educating the Family* and (2) *Societies' Role in Autism Acceptance*. These two themes were composed of ranked responses that were not part of the top responses to each question. However, their importance in fully understanding educational engagement among Mexican heritage communities was important to capture as they provide perspectives of how families engaged with their broader community and extended family.

Level 1 Analysis: Saliency Scores and A Priori Coding

First-level analysis of the saliency scores revealed which responses were highly rated by focus group participants. This analysis described how some Mexican heritage parents thought about educational engagement in their child's schooling. The transcripts of the focus group conversations, which underwent a priori coding, allowed for the creation of categories that grouped similar responses with the top-ranked response. The three categories allowed an understanding of the rationale behind participants' perceptions and highly valued responses. The interpretation of the top three responses is provided below.

First Category: Educational Engagement Tools.

Category 1, *Educational Engagement Tools* (Frequency (n) = 18 responses) is defined as any tools (i.e. strategies, objects, intervention services, service providers) that are important for the educational engagement of an autistic child. This category was created by grouping similar

responses to ‘rutina’ (Mean Saliency Score = 1.4, i.e. calendar of the day, habits). It included excerpts of educational strategies that mothers utilized with their autistic child to encourage engagement, objects that are beneficial for education, and mention of intervention services and service providers, including some examples of how families utilized these tools.

The first example under this category was the educational strategies that mothers employed in and out of the home with their autistic children. Mothers described establishing routines and habits to encourage responsibility and maintain their child on track when working on academic tasks (i.e. “*[My child] needs a routine, so he can have fun moments but also focus on his responsibilities as a student”)*. Mothers also noted how providing examples and modeling was important for helping their child learn new or difficult concepts (i.e. ‘*I show him what I want him to do or start doing so that he can do it. Examples always help him do things”*). Some of the participant responses directly referenced intervention practices, such as using the ‘first this, then that’ strategy to keep children on task and motivated (i.e. “*I tell him first we will put the clothes in the dryer and then we will go to the pool*”).

On the topic of balancing rewards (i.e. a visit to the park for a job well done) and consequences when maladaptive behaviors arise, one mother described her child’s interest in video games and stated,

> Lo dejo jugar media hora diaria cuando se porta bien, pero cuando se porta mal con sus terapistas, con la escuela, conmigo, esta es una de sus consecuencias que ¡uy! hasta le duele el alma. Le digo hoy no vas a jugar porque te portaste así, así, y así.
> *I let him play half an hour daily when he behaves, but when he misbehaves with his therapists, with school, or with me, this is one of the consequences that ugh, hurts his soul. I tell him today you are not going to play because you behaved like this, this, and this.*

Here we see how the mother utilized video games, which her child enjoyed, to reward good behavior while also balancing the amount of time he was allowed to play. The use of the video game helped to provide reinforcement for good behaviors and consequences for maladaptive

behaviors. In addition, a few mothers mentioned other objects that they liked to use to encourage or assist with employing an educational strategy. One example was the use of a daily calendar to keep their child knowledgeable about activities/appointments and as a visual object that could be referenced throughout the day to quell anxiety and maintain motivation. The second physical object was a pet, which the mother used to encourage social interactions and helped her child regulate his emotions (i.e. "I have told families they should get a mascot and see how it helps their child regulate themselves and gain a friendship"). The physical objects were paired with strategies such as motivation, rewarding behaviors, or social interactions to contribute to the arsenal of educational engagement tools mothers in this study employ.

The final excerpts in this category highlighted the importance of services and service providers. For example, therapy was described by parents as important in helping the child learn new concepts (i.e. "*He has had language therapy for a long time and it has helped him advance a lot*") and in helping the parent gain access to educational information about their child. One parent described their experience working as a team with fellow service providers, stating,

> Está el niño en terapias y el equipo de trabajo que conforma la escuela, que vendría siendo la maestra, bueno, todos los que participan en los IEPs sería este equipo- trabajo en equipo… Y están bien informados el uno con el otro. Información que cada uno de ellos proporciona al niño.
> *[My child] is in therapy and the work team at school is made up of the teacher, well, all that participate in the [Individualized Education Plans] would be this team - working in teams… And they are well informed with each other. Information that they each provide to [my child].*

Here the mother described how the teams of professionals at school were beneficial for the educational development of the child since they allowed for communication between various school personnel and the sharing of information. However, it should be noted that relationships with intervention services and service providers were complicated for families. The same mother that indicated their child benefited from access to language services, also spoke of the

importance of occupational therapy and recognized the importance of service providers while also indicating her reservations with therapies as her child entered adolescence, stating,

> Pero después empezó a ser como un estorbo, porque yo no quiero que mi hijo sea complaciente y la terapia de ABA te ayude a ser complaciente. Entonces yo quise que él tuviera ya ese límite y que se diera cuenta de que la complacencia no siempre tiene que ser. Porque cuando ellos crecen, ahí es donde radican los abusos de todo tipo.
> *But after it began to be a nuisance, because I don't want my child to be compliant and ABA therapy helps you be compliant. So I wanted him to have that limit and for him to realize that being compliant isn't something he always has to be. Because as they get older, that is where all types of abuses start to emerge.*

As noted here, while therapy and service providers are valued and important to families as educational tools, they also had a complicated relationship with these services as mothers factored potential, and future, risks into their decision-making.

All in all within *Educational Engagement Tools*, focus group participants described educational strategies that they employed with their autistic children, strategies they gained from intervention services, described physical objects they used in the home, and the complicated relationship that emerged with intervention services and providers. This theme exemplified the specific tools families used and how they used them in their daily life to encourage educational engagement.

Second Category: Mother's Educational Engagement Characteristics.

Category 2, *Mother's Educational Engagement Characteristics* (n = 15) described the traits, values, or beliefs that mothers indicated were necessary and/or helpful in acquiring to engage in educational activities and tasks with their autistic child. This category was created by grouping similar responses to 'paciencia' (Mean Saliency Score = 3.0) and included traits such as patience, knowledge, and determination.

Patience was described as an attribute that mothers needed as it allowed them to learn more about their child's autism diagnosis and how to help their child. Patience was the first thing

a parent should learn (i.e. *I always say patience is the most important thing when you want to learn something new*). One participant explained,

> La paciencia es para mí muy importante, porque muchas veces queremos acelerar situaciones o queremos muchas veces tratarlos como niños típicos y no. Y es- puede ser un error para nosotros entonces. La paciencia es para mí- es muy importante para entenderlo..
> *Patience for me is very important because many times we want to accelerate situations or many times we want to treat the [autistic child] like a typical child and well, no. And so- it can be an error for us then. Patience for me- is very important for me to understand him.*

In this excerpt, the mother described patience as a skill that allowed her to stop and reflect on her actions to gain further understanding of her child and the situation. Similarly, other mothers described the importance of patience by stating that not having it would equal '*disaster.'* The importance of patience for educational engagement was noted across all focus group questions, whether discussing educational strategies, beliefs about educational engagement, or at-home learning.

A second important characteristic included attributes related to determination, such as persistence (i.e. Using persistence to keep pushing the child to learn a challenging task), a challenge (i.e. Virtual schooling during COVID was a challenge), and motivation (i.e. Child lost focus quickly so the mother motivated him consistently). The traits listed here were all described by mothers as important to maintaining the child's motivation and time on task. One mother gave an example of the nuanced way she motivated her adolescent,

> Muchas veces los premios no significan nada para ellos, entonces tiene uno que empezar a hablar sobre la autoestima. Yo he estado manejando mucho su autoestima, preparandolo verdad? Preparándolo para el mundo exterior. Que no es nada fácil para ellos, sobre todo cuando empiezan a crecer. Entonces para mí motivarlo es en todos los aspectos.
> *Many times prizes don't mean anything to them, so you have to start to talk about self-esteem. I have started to work with him on his self-esteem preparing him, you know? Preparing him for the outside world. It is not easy for them, especially when they start to grow up. So I motivate him in all aspects.*

In this quote, the mother described how she had moved beyond extrinsic rewards and used internal motivation– self-esteem– to motivate her child. The mother in the excerpt used her determination to adapt to the child's needs, as she had noticed physical rewards were no longer helpful in motivating him. Utilizing a new strategy, to build her child's self-esteem, she capitalized on intrinsic motivation to maintain his engagement in educational tasks. This quote provided insight into how the mothers' traits, such as persistence and determination, served to support their children's needs and allowed them to enact educational engagement activities in the home.

A third trait under this theme is knowledge. Mothers talked about their need to 'aprender' (i.e. *to learn*) new things, learn how to teach their child and be open to learning new skills and new facts about their child. One mother stated,

> Pero yo a diario, diario aprendo y diario le aplaudo algo que hace bien. Tiene días buenos, tiene días malos pero a diario aprendo. Aprendo algo de él y trato de enseñarle lo mejor.
> *But I daily, daily, I learn and daily I cheer for him when he does something good. He has good days, has bad days but I learn daily. I learn something from him and I try to teach him the best.*

This mother described how she extended her academic knowledge alongside him, utilizing their time to learn about him and from him. Learning is also a daily process because it is embedded into the daily routine. Another mother explained how sometimes there are things you don't know, and so you learn how to do them to help your child (i.e. "*I didn't know how to teach and so I learned how to teach").* These examples demonstrate how parents learned new knowledge to effectively educate and support their children in learning new skills.

Within *Mothers Educational Engagement Characteristics* we learned that patience, determination, and knowledge are important. These characteristics allowed parents to maintain their child's academic motivation and increase their child's academic content knowledge.

Third Category: An Independent Future.

Category 3, *An Independent Future* described mothers' actions and beliefs related to raising an autistic child who will become independent. This category was created by grouping similar responses to 'su espacio' (Mean Saliency Score = 2.2) and included 17 excerpts in which mothers described their values and beliefs regarding their children's future as independent citizens. Within this category mothers described the importance of considering their autistic child's perspective. They reflected on how important it was to 'meterme en su mundo' (i.e. enter their world) or 'verlo como individuo' (i.e. see them as an individual). For example, one mother stated,

> Verlo como un individuo y no como, compararlo a otros. Porque cada niño con autismo es diferente, entonces no más porque uno lo puede hacer o no lo puede hacer no quiere decir que el otro es igual. Entonces tengo que aprender que es un individuo y no es como mis otros hijos o como los otros amigos de la clase.
> *See him as an individual and not like, compare him to others. Because each child with autism is different, so just because [one person] can do something or not do something doesn't mean that the other is the same. So I have to learn that he is an individual and he is not like my other children or like his other friends in his class.*

This mother described the importance of not comparing her child to other kids his age to maintain his individuality. Viewing him as an individual was important to help manage her expectations but also to maintain focus on his individual goals. Similarly, when describing entering 'his' world, the mother described the importance of learning about the child's interests and personality to better guide the autistic child in a society made for 'neurotypical' individuals.

Mothers also described educational strategies and beliefs that encouraged their children's independence and identified skills that taught their children in preparation for the future. The following example depicted how mothers valued independence,

> Pues sería la más importante independiente, porque pues más que nada uno como mamá, en cuestión de niños con autismo, pues lo que quisiéramos es que ellos llegaran a ser alguien en la vida. Llegar a nacer, a tener una vida de un niño típico.

> *Well the most important one would be independence, because well more than anything as a mom one, in regards to kids with autism, well what we want is for [our children] to be someone in life. To create, to have a life of a typical child.*

The mother stated how she would like her child to “be someone” and have the life of a ‘typical’ child. This description of her future child contributed to how the mother envisioned an independent future for her child.

Creating an independent future best exemplified the type of skills that parents taught their children to prepare them for the future. For example, one mother described the importance of teaching the child about changes in their body (e.g. puberty), another mother mentioned the importance of teaching their child values (e.g. religious traditions), and a third indicated the importance of not focusing too much on their autistic child (i.e. “making sure he is part of the family, not the center of the family”). The fourth mother described how giving a child their own space allowed the child to explore their own interests,

> Darle un cuarto para su creatividades o para lo que ocupe, que sea de ejercicio, de lo que esté interesado el niño o lo que necesite. Que tenga un espacio, sea una esquina de la sala o algo. Es importante para mi, para que se sienta el que él puede hacerlo como es y lo que necesita tener. No siempre tener que estar alrededor de alguien o de otras personas.
> *Give him a room for his creativity, or for what he needs, maybe exercise, whatever the boy is interested in or that he needs. To have a space, whether it’s a corner or the living room or something. It’s important for me so that he feels like he can do things as he is and what he needs. Not always have to be around someone or other people.*

This mother referenced giving her child a room to explore his interests, a space where he can be alone and feel like he has autonomy over his actions. The explanation above is described as a place to develop skills that lead to independence. Most mothers noted that as their autistic children grew into adolescence, encouraging independence and autonomy were important for their children’s future as adults which was represented in the skills mothers imbue.

Lastly, mothers noted educational strategies and beliefs they employed to encourage their children to learn independence. Examples included the importance of giving their autistic child

room to breathe, process information, and work on their goals at their own pace and comfort. For example,

> Trabajar al modo del niño, a su tiempo. Yo creo que eso también tiene mucho que ver con el respeto. Porque muchas veces como padres queremos empujarlos a hacer cosas en las cuales ellos no están todavía preparados y eso les crea ansiedad a largo plazo… Y mi hijo yo en un principio yo lo presionaba mucho, ahorita ya tiene 13 años y con el paso del tiempo me di cuenta de que él tiene su propio ritmo.
> *Work at the child's pace, on his time. I believe that is also something that has to do a lot with respect. Because many times as parents we want to push them to do things in which they are not yet prepared and that can cause anxiety in the long term…. And my child in the beginning I would pressure him a lot, now he is 13 years old and with time I have realized that he has his own rhythm.*

The mother reflected on how she changed her expectations and allowed her child to go at his own pace, particularly as her child reached adolescence to foster autonomy and independence. Similarly, another mother described the importance of respecting her child as they entered adolescence and started to rebel, an important milestone on the road to independence, stating,

> Pero pues me di cuenta- y los mismo terapeutas me dijeron- que la intención es que el niño se vuelva más independiente. Entonces sus reacciones sobre su propia personalidad, me ha costado mucho trabajo, pero lo he respetado. Y su rebeldía para mí es un logro porque puedo ver su esencia, lo puedo ver a él ya como un pequeño adulto.
> *But I realized- and the therapists also told me - that the intention was that [my] child would become more independent. So his reactions over his own personality have been very difficult for me but I respect him. And his rebelliousness for me is an achievement because I can see his essence, I can see him as a young adult.*

This mother's beliefs about respect, allowed her to value her child's rebelliousness, which in turn helped her to respect her child's development and his growing need for independence in adolescence.

Within *An Independent Future,* we see that mothers were uniquely aware of the importance of guiding their children toward becoming independent in the future. Mothers described creating designated spaces in the home, encouraging their children to become more independent by using educational strategies (i.e. setting rules, using calendars), and mothers themselves reflected on their child's future and took on their child's perspective to better guide

them towards autonomy and independence. The mother's strategies, reflections, and values helped to create a culture where their children were allowed to explore their interests and independently make decisions to better prepare them for an autonomous future.

Level Two Analysis: Inductive Coding

A second level of inductive coding revealed two additional themes that did not align with the “free listed” codes: (1) *Educating the Family*, and (2) *Society's Role in Autism Acceptance*.

Theme 1: Educating the Family.

Theme 1: *Educating the Family* (n = 4 responses). In this theme, mothers described the importance of educating their immediate and extended family to either enhance their family's knowledge of autism and/or gain support (i.e. emotional) from their extended family. Under this theme, mothers overwhelmingly described their efforts to ‘educar a la familia’ (*educate their family*). Mothers discussed instances of having to educate their own husbands and younger children about what an autism diagnosis was, as well as having to educate extended family members about autism when tough social situations arose (e.g., having to talk to family members about bullying behavior among young children).

For the first example, a mother who selected *educating the family* as a highly important response described misunderstandings she had with her extended family as an example of how she provided education,

> Yo creo que esa es una de las cosas más importantes y más difíciles, porque muchas veces piensan que uno como padre exagera o creen que los está uno sobre protegiendo cuando le está diciendo que este sonido le molesta, por favor que no lo haga o que no esté hagan ciertos rituales que uno está acostumbrado a ser y que a él le molesta. O el socializar- este cuando vamos a alguna reunión familiar, este mi hijo tiene su límite. O sea, no puede estar muchas horas socializando, tiene su tiempo y eso les costó mucho trabajo entenderlo porque lo miraban como una grosería. Y yo como una mala madre consintiendolo en lo que él quería. Yo creo que fue una de las cosas que me costó más trabajo hacerles ver y también que lo respeten pues. Osea, eso de educar a la familia, es

> que lo respeten. Ósea de la manera como es, con sus virtudes, sus defectos, pero es su forma de ser.
> *I believe this is one of the things most important and most difficult because many times they think that we as parents are exaggerating or they think that we are overprotecting them when we say that a sound bothers them, 'please don't do that' or for them not to carry out certain rituals that they are used to doing because it bothers him. Or socializing- when we go do a family reunion my child has a limit. I mean, he can not socialize for too many hours, he has a time limit and that was something that took them a long time to understand because they felt it was rude. And that I was a mean mom indulging him in what he wanted. I think that was one of the things that was the most difficult to get them to understand and to respect him as well. I mean, educating the family is making them respect [him]. I mean the way he is, with his virtues, his defects, but it is his way of being.*

This quote exemplified how this mother felt she was perceived as indulgent and a pushover by her family for speaking up for her son's needs. She noted that her child was also viewed in a negative light for being 'inflexible' and not engaging in family customs. However, she noted the importance of her role in educating family members, even if it took time and patience because it allowed them to better understand her autistic child's needs. At the end of her rationale, she powerfully reflected on how *educating the family* is about achieving respect for her child and getting her extended family to accept him for who he is, not who they want him to be.

The second example of this theme described one mother's experience *educating the family* prior to obtaining an autism diagnosis for her child,

> Como cuando mi bebé nació, desde que nació hasta los 2, 3 hasta los casi los 3 o 4 años, mi esposo estaba contra mí de que tenía algo mal y que yo era la loca y luego pues ya como a los cuatro años pude explicar de que no estoy loca. Tenía algo el niño. Antes era solo yo - después de que yo me puse a educar a todos en mi casa de la situación del niño, entonces pudieron entenderlo más y trabajar conmigo mejor para ayudarlo.
> *Like when my child was born, since he was born until about 2 or 3, even until 3 or 4 years old, my husband did not agree with me that something was wrong and he said I was crazy, and it wasn't until about 4 years of age that I could explain that I wasn't crazy. My child had something. Before it was only me - after I started educating everyone in my house about my child's situation, then they could understand more and work with me to help him.*

This mother explained that it was important to educate both parents and their children (i.e. cousins) that autistic children are 'different.' This mother demonstrated how educating the

family sometimes had to happen at home before educating others. In this instance, her husband's lack of acceptance impeded their ability to work together to support their child. Once her husband understood the diagnosis he was able to support the child.

A third mother within this theme, described her experience with her husband when they were in the process of receiving an autism diagnosis and after they had noticed a speech delay in their child,

> A mi esposo sobre todo me dice- estás loca? ¿Cómo crees? Que está bien, no tienes que presionarlo. Total que ya cuando lo diagnosticaron todavía seguía enojado porque dice que la doctora estaba loca y cosas así. Pero ya ahorita gracias a Dios ya sabe, ya después de tanto tiempo verdad. Ya lo acepta su diagnóstico y hasta él habla con gente de eso.
> *My husband, first and foremost, would tell me- are you crazy? How can you believe that? That he was fine, not to put too much pressure on him. So much so that when they diagnosed [our child] he was still angry because he said the doctor was crazy and things like that. But now thanks to God he knows, now after all this time, right? Now he accepts [our child's] diagnosis and he even talks to people about it.*

In this excerpt, the mother reflected on how her husband had to undergo a process to accept their child's autism diagnosis. She gave him time to accept the diagnosis and spoke favorably about how her husband now accepted the diagnosis and also educated others about autism. In another example, she described an instance of bullying that her autistic son endured with two of his female cousins in their home,

> Ahorita estoy en eso porque hace un poquito, Hace como un mes, tuve a mi sobrinitas aquí tienen la misma edad que él, pero me lo estaban haciendo bullying. Así que pues yo sí tuve que hablar con mis cuñadas y decirles,' ¿Saben qué? Ustedes tienen que hablar con las niñas y decirle que lo respeten o yo no los voy a aceptar en mi casa porque pues no voy a poner a mi hijo en una posición donde no se siente como en su propia casa.'
> *Right now I am dealing with this because recently, like a month ago, I had my nieces [in the home], they are the same age as [my son] but they were bullying him. So then, well I had to talk with my sisters-in-law and tell them, 'You know what? You need to talk to your girls and tell them to respect [my son] or I will not accept them in my home because I will not put my son in a position where he does not feel at home.'*

In this excerpt, we see the challenges this mother faced in educating her extended family about autism. She described how her nieces bullied her child. As a result, she had to educate her

sisters-in-law and compel them to quell this bullying behavior. Within this theme, we see how these mothers are burdened with the responsibility to engage in difficult family conversations about respecting others. These mothers have taken on the responsibility to educate their family members about autism and teach them how to be respectful and "bien educado," or well educated, within these unique circumstances.

Theme 2: Society's Role in Autism Acceptance.

Theme 2: *Societies' Role in Autism Acceptance* (n = 4) referred to instances where mothers described the broader role of society (i.e. local community, broader population) in broadly accepting autistic children into the local context. These mothers reflected on the power of their community (i.e. acceptance) and the mindsets they wished they could change to live in a tolerant and accommodating community. This was a theme that emerged from focus group question three, which asked for parents to reflect on educational strategies. One mother, identified below, was especially verbose. She had three out of the four excerpts below.

In the first excerpt, the mother described her wish for a world that was more accepting of her child's needs and spoke favorably about an experience she had at an accepting church,

> A pesar de que él no habla, que tiene su condición, lo aceptaron. No lo veían como un bicho raro. No lo veían asi, 'o no habla' o no esto- 'no entiende.' Para mí eso fue muy importante en la vida de él. Cuando yo dije, qué mal estaba al no acercarme a Dios, al no traerlo. Porque él aprendió a orar, aprendió a darle gracias a Dios, a pedir por su mamá todas las noches.
> *Even though he did not speak and he has his [autism diagnosis] they accepted him. They didn't see him as weird. They did see him like, 'oh he doesn't talk' oh he doesn't- 'he doesn't understand.' For me, that was really important for his life. When I realized how wrong I was to not get closer to God, to not bring him. Because he learned to pray, he learned to give thanks to God, to pray for his mom every night.*

This quote reflected the power that community acceptance had on this mother and her family. She stated that she had initially stayed away from church gatherings out of fear that the church community would not accept her son. She noted that her fellow church members did not view

him as weird and as a result, her son learned to pray, and they both grew in their faith. She also provided a second example, where she described a future for both of her autistic sons where tolerance was highly valued,

> Y pues la tolerancia. Qué es lo que a mucha gente le falta, lo que a muchos ser humanos le falta, la tolerancia, saber. La empatía también. De que, 'o, tiene autismo' y te miran mal tan sólo porque tienen comportamientos agresivos o porque empiezan a golpear la pared. Y ya mi vecina me está mirando feo y ya casi le habla a la policía porque piensa que lo estoy maltratando ¡imagínate!
> *And well tolerance. Which is what a lot of people lack, what a lot of human beings lack, tolerance, to know. Empathy as well. They say, 'oh he has autism' and they look at you badly just because he demonstrates aggressive behaviors or because he hits the wall. And then my neighbor is looking at me badly and practically calls the cops because she thinks I am abusing him. Imagine!*

Above she described the misconceptions around autism and how certain behaviors exhibited by autistic children could lead to stares, ill remarks from the community, or threats from police over perceived abuse. Her calls for tolerance were both personal requests for her children and systemic, societal change that had the potential to affect many other autistic children and their families. In her last example, this mother described her desire and drive to see her son, the eldest and an adolescent, become 'someone in life,' stating in her rationale,

> Porque no quiero que sufra, porque no quisiera que él fuera pendiente de alguien, porque yo quisiera que fuera alguien en la vida…
> *Because I don't want him to suffer, because I don't want him to be dependent on someone, because I want him to be someone in life.*

While brief, her response described a desire to see her child be independent. In other conversations, this mother spoke about wanting her child to be a 'typical kid' which can be interpreted as describing her desire for a world where her son can live independently and be supported in this endeavor.

For the final excerpt in this theme, a different mother reflected on her thoughts related to accommodations and adaptations for her son,

> Yo pienso que nuestros hijos siempre van a necesitar adaptación, porque ellos no funcionan de la manera que las demás personas funcionan. Entonces las adaptaciones pueden ser más sencillas, hacerlas en la casa, pero también en la escuela se requiere de que uno solicite también. Ese adaptación o acomodo al que le llaman. Yo creo que si uno no se enfoca en eso como aspecto principal, nuestros hijos van a estar sufriendo de estrés, de una sobrecarga sensorial, y de bullying, como estaba comentando Camila. Ellos necesitan definitivamente maneras de que ellos se sientan cómodos y puedan tener una vida feliz.
> *I believe that our kids will always need accommodations because they do not function in the same way that other people function. So the adaptations can be more simple, done at home, but also in school, they need to be asked for as well. These adaptations or accommodations, as they are called. I believe that if you do not focus on them as a primary aspect, our kids will suffer from stress, sensory overload, and bullying, like what Camila mentioned. [Autistic children] definitely need ways so they can feel comfortable and have a happy life.*

In this excerpt, the mother reflected on the need for accommodations both in and out of the home for both her son and other autistic children. She noted that autistic children have different needs which required addressing so as not to encounter bullying or increased stress. This mother, in championing accommodations, furthered the idea that they are part of a larger change that needs to occur in society, not just at the individual level.

Summary

Results of the first level analysis (e.g. identified via saliency scores and a priori coding) revealed three distinct themes related to educational engagement; (1) *Educational Engagement Tools* - description and examples of beneficial strategies employed by mothers and services/providers that further educational engagement goals, (2) *Mother's Educational Engagement Traits* - traits and values that mothers described as necessary for cultivating and employing as they engaged in educational activities with their children, and (3) *An Independent Future* - educational engagement strategies and beliefs influenced by mothers reflections on their autistic children's future. Second-level analysis (e.g. identified via inductive coding) revealed two additional themes related to education in a broader manner; (1) *Educating the Family* – mother's examples of providing education to immediate and extended family members on

autism, and (2) *Societies' Role in Autism Acceptance* - mothers reflections on their role educating the broader society about autism and a wish for a more tolerant and accommodating society.

Discussion

To understand perceptions of educational engagement among MH families, focus groups interviews utilizing a cultural consensus model (Grinker et al., 2015) to encourage participant engagement in data analysis were used. Perceptions of educational engagement by families contributed to existing research in two main ways.

First, this study notes that mothers' educational engagement interactions are guided by Latinx cultural models of education such as *bien educado* (Valdes, 1996) and *respeto* (Calzada et al., 2010) via results from the codes, *Educational Engagement Tools* and *Mother's Educational Engagement Characteristics*. Previous research on Latinx families, with and without autistic children, has noted the importance of understanding cultural notions of education (Cohen, 2013; Cohen & Miguel, 2018; Delgado & Ford, 1998; Lopez et al., 2022). Lopez and colleagues (2022) found that when parents expect children to exhibit *respeto* that child must behave well, they may not interrupt an elder, they must respond courteously with "please" and "thank you," they must be well groomed, and ask permission prior to acting. For adults, this may be demonstrated by showing deference to educators' opinions or suggestions. Similarly, *bien educado* describes parents' expectations that children display appropriate social and moral behaviors (i.e. cooperation, respect, self-reliance, obedience, affection, clear communication), and academic knowledge. In my study, mothers' descriptions of educationally engaging tools included the use of rewards to promote 'good' behaviors and the establishment of routines that teach responsibility, which is in line with promoting obedience and self-reliance. One mother described providing consequences when the child misbehaved during therapy and pointing out

his mistakes (i.e. *I tell him today you are not going to play because you behaved like this, this, and this).* In addition, mothers' descriptions of important traits such as cultivating patience in themselves and maintaining determination in pursuit of their child's goal also align with Latinx cultural models as they are similar to the moral behaviors (i.e. self-reliant or amiable) of *bien educado.* For example, mothers described learning new skills to support their child's education and future life, but no mothers associated educators or schools with these goals (i.e. *I have started to work with him on his self-esteem preparing him, you know? Preparing him for the outside world. It is not easy for them, especially when they start to grow up*)[4].

Another trait mothers described included knowledge, which was defined as them being open to learning new strategies and information from their child (i.e. learning new strategies to assist their learning) which is less in line with the suggestion that parents impart these values on their children. In addition, one assumption of *respeto* is that parents may be more likely to defer to educators' knowledge when making educational decisions for their children, which is not present in my data. Instead, mothers reported not being afraid to stop services when they felt it was no longer beneficial for their child or a good fit for their child's educational plan (i.e. *I thought that the school therapies were very good. I had that idea, and I was always fighting for new therapies and more supports… And I realized that well no*). Cohen's (2013) study notes that families rearing children with intellectual and developmental disabilities with beliefs that align with Latinx cultural values of education may see increased self-efficacy that leads to better service outcomes.

In addition, Cohen hypothesized that the relationship between *familismo* and parents rearing autistic children, requires nuance given differing expectations for educational

[4] Italicized phrases in brackets are English translations of participant excerpts.

engagement (Rosenbaum, 1998). This is exemplified by findings in the level two analysis, *educating the family* and *societies role in autism acceptance* Within these two findings families described the complex relationship with family. Mothers discussed having to educate their own husbands and younger children about an autism diagnosis, educating extended family members about autism, and mothers highlighted the importance of living in a tolerant and accepting society. Tenets of *familismo* include family cohesiveness and orientation, however, autistic children often face challenges in social situations due to difficulties with social interactions and building new relationships (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) which may lead to stigmatization from extended family and negatively impact the autistic child and immediate family's ability to participate in family gatherings. The enactment of *familismo* might look different (e.g. confronting family members, avoiding social family functions) within a family who cares for an autistic child.

The second contribution to our understanding of MH families' perceptions of educational engagement is that mothers' enacted practices are shaped by how they envision their child's future life. MH mothers detailed how their current educational goals, activities, and values for their child(ren) were planned in conjunction with expectations they had for their children to be independent and self-sufficient. Mothers described working towards independence by providing spaces in the home where children could engage in independent activities (i.e. exploring personal interests), imparting important religious traditions and instead supporting their children's desires to be alone or away from social situations (i.e. *It's important for me so that he feels like he can do things as he is and what he needs. Not always have to be around someone or other people)*. This finding among MH families aligns with the literature on parental expectations among Latinx families (Casillas et al., 2017; Hughes et al., 2008). For example, research by Casillas and

colleagues (2008) found that Latino parents' long-term goals involved cultivating independence in their children, which included the creation of short-term goals that improved their adaptive and academic abilities. This finding is also supported by broader autism research on parental expectations (Bush et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2019; Holmes et al., 2018). Research by Chen et al. (2019) has found that parents raising autistic children describe envisioning their child's future life. Their research found that parents were realists and held a tempered outlook when setting future goals. Chen and colleagues (2019) described how parents felt uncertain about what their children could achieve, so while parents hoped for their children to be self-reliant and independent, they were worried about the feasibility of achieving these goals. In research examining autistic adolescents' transitions into adulthood, findings suggested that children who were given chores and responsibilities to uphold by parents were associated with parents' expectations of future independent living (Holmes et al., 2018). This is important to highlight for two reasons. First, findings from my study show that parents' educational expectations and practices were curated to develop their autistic children's independence. Second, the participants in my study described activities and goals they are enacting with their children to encourage independence. While previous research has pointed to parents with higher income and education as drivers of higher educational aspirations/ expectations (Bush et al., 2017), my study finds similar results among a sample of low-income, MH families. When seeking to understand MH families' perceptions and practices of educational engagement, attention should be paid to how Latinx cultural models of education and parental expectations influence MH families rearing autistic children.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS FROM RQ3, INDIVIDUALIZED PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES

RQ3: How are MH Parents Describing their Educational Engagement Practices?

To examine individual mothers' perceptions of their own educational engagement and practices, individual interviews were carried out among all ten participants. Within the analysis, there were five key findings: (1) *parent versus educator's perceptions of educational engagement*, (2) *child-rearing practices*, (3) *parent-educator partnerships*, (4) *supportive environments*, and (5) *the impacts of COVID-19 on child development*.

Parent Versus Educators' Perceptions of Educational Engagement

Participants were asked to define concepts and roles related to family and education to better understand how parents conceptualized these roles in relation to educational engagement. Within mothers' definitions of education, the similarities and differences between their perceived role and that of their child's educators were salient. Mothers perceived their role as important for instilling values and providing encouragement to support their child's educational engagement whereas they viewed the educator's role as the provider of educational content and the person that connected them (the parents) to school and educational services. It should be noted that parents provided perceptions on educators and educational systems, but no educators participated in this study. Details of parents' perceptions are described below.

Connections between education and family values.

When defining family, participants identified members of the family unit (i.e. parents, children, grandparents, uncles/aunts, paraprofessionals/ aides) and the role that these family members had in supporting their autistic child. Mothers' definition of the role of the family included members who supported their autistic child (i.e. *support and the base of everything*[5]), members who provided resources for their child's development and bestowed their child with

[5] Italicized words are example participant excerpts that have been translated from Spanish to English.

love and affection. Family bonds were important and maintained by consistently present individuals that taught, supported, and nurtured the child. One mother described family in this manner,

> Más que lazos de sangre, son lazos de amor, donde se debe dar el apoyo, la unión, los buenos valores, el cariño, el amor, la ayuda. En realidad, así hemos crecido nosotros.
> *More than blood bonds, they are bonds of love, where you need to give support, unity, good values, affection, love, help. In reality, that is how we were raised.*

This mother noted that family members not only consisted of genetic affiliation but also included individuals who provided love, support, and nurturing learning environments for their autistic child. Participants connected their definitions of the family with their characterizations of education. Study participants believed that education began in the home and consisted of instilling values, rules, and good behavior. As one mother indicated,

> Educar también es educar desde casa, educar desde pequeñito, para mí esto es como la base del futuro de un niño… La educación la base se empieza desde casa, si el niño se le enseña desde casa, ya lo demás lo irá aprendiendo poco a poco.
> *Teaching is also teaching in the home, teaching when they are little, for me that is the foundation of a child's future… The foundation of education begins at home, if the child is taught at home than the rest he will learn little by little.*

The quote above exemplified how mothers considered home education as foundational for a child's development and aided subsequent learning that occurred at school. Participants further expanded on this belief, stating that education was gleaned from their autistic child's day-to-day experiences and interactions (i.e. *In school, at work, in the community in general, that is all education to me*). Participants also made a distinction between education at home versus school, stating that education occurring in the school provided children with skills for their future lives as adults (i.e. *I do agree that we provide a foundational education at home but his development in a future society, in work, he learns that at school*). In sum, within definitions between family and education, participants made clear that families nurtured and supported their autistic children. Any individual providing this type of consistent presence could be a member of the

family unit. Education was perceived as beginning in the home. It included instilling values and morals, which were further developed in school and through daily interactions with peers and adults.

Differentiating roles.

In defining and describing family and education, mothers were astute in differentiating between their role and that of educators. Mothers described a family member's role as one of support, encouragement, a guide or model (i.e. *It's telling my children that it is important to study, telling them that it is best for their future and to become better people*), and instilling behavioral values and morals (i.e. *The role of the family is to teach moral behaviors for the children and start to connect with them so they will be successful in life),* mirroring their definition of family. In addition, mothers indicated the family's role was to 'fight' for the child's best interest and manage day-to-day responsibilities. One mother added additional context to this part of the role stating,

> To fight for their education and support because not many - especially not many people that I know - that have a special needs child can afford all of the services that a child needs. So they need to be there for them to fight for what will make their lives a little bit better.

This mother discussed advocacy or fighting for needs and support, as an important feature and responsibility of her role as a parent.

In describing educators, participants believed they should provide children with specialized services (i.e. intervention, extra support, increased attention). Mothers also expected teachers to provide children with rules and guidelines, preparing them for the future academically, and giving children access to social interactions. One mother indicated,

> El rol de [la] escuela en educación es dar más que nada el conocimiento académico porque a eso van a aprender cosas que no pueden aprender en casa y este, y también dar pautas de normas. También los valores ... y más que nada es para que el niño empiece de

> una manera a entender lo que significa la sociedad. ¿Verdad? Porque. Porque una cosa es el núcleo familiar y otra cosa es ya exponerlos esté afuera de la sociedad y bueno, la escuela, el aula, el aula escolar es parte de su aprendizaje de cómo ser social.
> *The role of the school in education is to, more than anything, to give academic knowledge because that is why they go. They go to learn things they can't learn at home and also to give guidelines to rules of conduct. Also the values… and more than anything it's for the child to begin to understand what society means. Right? Because one thing is the nuclear family and another thing is to expose them to broader society and well, the school, the classroom is part of their learning to become social.*

This mother saw the school as responsible for providing academic knowledge, instilling behavioral guidelines, and providing social interactions, necessary for their child's development as a future citizen. Interestingly, many participants also indicated that part of the role of education was to facilitate parent involvement in education, as many believed that education was a team effort (i.e. *We work as a team, it would be me and the school)* and responsible for teaching them what they don't know.

Mothers differentiated their role from educators when describing what skills their children needed. One mother, who was homeschooling her child, described how as her child got older, she started to instill more applied skills to his day-to-day activities to prepare him for his adult life,

> Tú [la investigadora] te manejas sola. Tú vives sola y sabes cómo hacerlo. En cambio, él tiene mucho, mucho, mucho por aprender. Siendo su maestra combino todo eso, sus habilidades de vida, con lo que estamos aprendiendo cuando vemos ciencias sociales. No me enfoco nada más en lo que dice ahí, sino que lo paso a un contexto. Porque es bien difícil para los autistas imaginar contexto- cuando ya estás en el momento, no sabes qué hacer. Y lo que he aprendido de la terapia de lenguaje es que a él eso le ayudaba, lo ponían en contexto.
> *You [the researcher] drive by yourself. You live alone and you know how to. On the other hand, he has a lot, lot, lot to learn. Being his teacher I combine all of that, his like skills, with what we are learning when we study social studies. I don't just focus on what is written, I give it context. Because it is very difficult for autistics to imagine context- when you are in the moment, you don't know what to do. So what I learned in speech therapy was that that was helpful to him, putting it into context.*

This mother reflected on the future needs of her child and described how she implemented strategies learned from service providers to achieve her own goals of educating and preparing her adolescent son for his adult life.

In summary, mothers clearly differentiated the roles and expectations for family and education, by describing the increased role families play in instilling values, providing beneficial skills to their child outside of school, advocating for services, and reporting perceived detriments in education that impeded autistic children's learning and preparation. Whereas, education's role was to provide services and social interactions to children, as well as facilitate parental involvement.

In sum, the parent versus educator's perceptions code defined mothers' perceptions of themselves as members of a family and the role they enacted as caretakers for their autistic child(ren). This code also provided a look into how mothers differentiate their roles from other educators, educational systems, and families. Through examining definitions of education and family, and key instances of differentiation, one gains further insight into how mothers conceptualized parenting and education.

Child Rearing Practices

In this code participants described practical applications such as educating themselves on new techniques and therapies to better support their children, or value-based skills such as modeling lifelong learning to their children (i.e. *[My children] know I am trying to learn English. I am trying to teach them that it doesn't matter how long it takes to learn, what's important is to finish)*. Practical applications mothers employed included the use of resources (i.e. educational apps, visual aids, flashcards, calendars, sensory toys), creating routines for children, and

scaffolding or adapting learning. One mother also detailed how she incorporated life skills into her child's daily activities,

> I just keep working on his [occupational therapy], his motor skills, by cutting things. He's learning his math and he's learning to do something on his own, which is cutting the pizza. I feel like little things like that you can add it to his life routines, but if we keep them to - and again autistic children they're all a little different- there's not one thing for every child. But sometimes I feel like there are parents that completely safeguard their kids to where they really don't do a lot. So they're frustrated, the kids are frustrated, they sometimes want to learn how to do things.

Here the mother described how she utilized a simple action, her autistic child cutting a pizza or other objects, to enforce math and motor skill development. In explaining her reasoning, she described that autistic children may feel frustrated by overprotective parents' which encouraged her to enact this practice. Similarly, one mother described encouraging her child's curiosity by always answering questions he posed (i.e. *who are you going to vote for?*). In reflecting on this strategy, the mother indicated how important it was for her to encourage his questioning because it demonstrated his desire to "*know more*."

Participants' examples of value-based skills often required them to be responsive to the child's wishes or learning styles, such as attending to the child's interest to facilitate learning (i.e. *He learns a certain way that other children don't. My child learns by repetition*). Many mothers also followed their child's lead by paying attention to their changes in mood and indications they were feeling restless or frustrated (i.e. [*My child] is very sensitive so when he needs free time he asks or I offer if I see he is fidgeting a lot).* One mother described the ways she incorporated the child's interest in technology to further support his academic learning. Her child was interested in a game that allowed him to create videos of various topics, which she used to her advantage, stating,

> We're trying to do as much as I can - that I know that he does during school - and implement it into that. They're talking about the weather. So if he's doing a video where his stuffed animal is outside fighting with somebody, it's like, 'oh, but Jason, did you

> forget, this is a raining kind of fight?' or 'Is this going to be in a sunny kind of valley?' or he'll start talking to me about it. So implementing what I can, from what I know that's being taught that week at school into what he likes is the best part of helping him with his education.

As noted in the excerpt above, the mother incorporated academic content into the video activity that her son liked to use. In this way, she pursued her child's interests and supported his educational development. Other mothers described using visual aids, singing, and play activities to encourage their children to play as they learned. Participants also utilized positive affirmations to encourage their child's self-esteem. One mother recounted her efforts to show her children documentaries about doctors and presidents to promote career goal setting. Another mother described using positive messaging,

> Yo le digo a él, que él puede hacer lo que quiera hacer. Que él puede ser un doctor, puede ser un dentista. En algún momento él me ha dicho que a él le va a gustar dar terapias como las que él recibía. Entonces pues poco a poco lo voy motivando a que él tiene que ir pensando qué es lo que quiere ser en un futuro con su vida
> *I tell him that he can do whatever he wants to do. He can be a doctor, he can be a dentist. One time he told me he would like to give therapies like the ones he receives. So little by little I am motivating him to start thinking about what he wants to do in the future with his life.*

The excerpt above provides insight into the encouragement that children received from their families, even at a young age, so that they could begin to envision their future careers. To summarize, mothers' childrearing practices can be understood within two large domains. The first was practical strategies and activities enacted by mothers to reinforce academic or life skills, and the other implemented practices that were driven by values-oriented goals. Both served as important childrearing practices that mothers enforced in the home.

Parent-Educator Partnerships

The code parent-educator partnership demonstrated the positive relationships that participants often described between teachers, service providers, therapists, and other educational personnel within the interviews. Within this code, mothers described school engagement (i.e.

volunteering in the classroom, attending school events), parent-interventionist engagement (i.e. learning intervention strategies, collaborating on goals), and managing communication with educators. Mother's detailed descriptions are included below.

School Engagement.

School engagement refers to instances where mothers described collaborating, participating, and engaging in activities related to their child's school. Examples included parents volunteering in the classroom, assisting their child with homework, monitoring their child's school attendance (i.e. *I don't make appointments or outings that will affect his hours or take him out of class so that he doesn't fall behind or miss the day)*, acting as volunteers for school events (i.e. olympiad, field trips, coffee with the principal), and maintaining open communication with educators. Some participants described how their active participation in school activities (i.e. funding meetings, volunteering in the classroom) and therapy facilitated access to services (i.e. *As I began to get involved [in school], I started to see that [my child] had language therapy*). While other participants described engaging with school sites to exercise their role as advocates. One mother described her experience communicating her child's needs during IEP meetings, stating,

> Ellos también imponen y ellos te pueden decir, "no pues es qué quiero que el niño haga esto." Pero si yo veo que mi niño no tiene la capacidad yo puedo decir sabes que este documento yo no lo voy a firmar porque no estoy de acuerdo en tal meta… Entonces yo siempre en un IEP tengo esa habilidad, ahora sí que mi opinión cuenta. Yo siempre les digo no es que esto no, para mí no está bien, está cámbiala o póngale otra que él tenga, que él pueda hacer y entonces yo vengo y le firmó el documento.
> *[The IEP team] also imposes and they can tell you, "no, well it's because I want your child to do this." But if I see that my son does not have the capacity I can say, you know what I am not going to sign that document because I am not in agreement with that goal… So I always in an IEP have that ability, my opinion does count now. I always tell them no this one no, for me this one is not good, change this one or put another one you may have, that he can meet, and then I will come and sign the [IEP] document.*

In this excerpt, the mother implemented her right not to sign the IEP document since she believed unrealistic goals were being set for her child. She indicated that the educational team may try to impose their own goals but her refusal to sign the document allowed her to voice her opinions and concerns in the process. The actions described within school engagement facilitate opportunities for mothers to become involved in their child(ren)'s schooling and provided an opportunity to advocate for better educational outcomes.

Parent-Interventionist Engagement.

Similar to school engagement, mothers described strategies they employed and learned about from interventionists. They also described instances where they collaborated with an interventionist to make progress on their child's educational goals. Many participants described the importance of home therapists (i.e. ABA interventionists, occupational or speech therapists) for both their children's development and their own (i.e. *The therapists aren't going to be there their whole life, but they teach you and learn through them).* Participants also described the strategies they learned from interventionists and employed in the household. These included the use of rewards or prizes to encourage goal setting for children, the "first this, then that" strategy (i.e. first earn five stars, then we will go to the park), and social stories (i.e. creating a story to explain the changes caused by the pandemic). In addition, many mothers described how they worked in collaboration with interventionists to accomplish academic and emotional goals. One mother described this teamwork stating,

> Por ejemplo ahorita tenemos una meta con los intervencionistas de ABA, que tienen que tolerar el uno al otro porque el más grande no tolera el más chiquito ni el más chiquito tolerar el más grande. Entonces tenemos una meta que trabajar y que ellos aprendan a convivir. Y esa es una, yo siento que es una manera de educar porque él tiene que convivir con sus compañeros en la escuela, hay otros niños.
> *For example, right now we have a goal with the ABA interventionists, where [the children] have to tolerate one another because the oldest [child] does not tolerate the youngest and the youngest doesn't tolerate the oldest. So we have a goal to work and that*

> *they learn to coexist. And that is one, I feel is one way to educate because he has to coexist with his classmates in school, there are other kids.*

In the excerpt above the mother described working with the interventionists to enable her children to tolerate and coexist with one another. As expounded on in the description, she considered her goal an educational skill due to social and teamwork encounters her children faced at school. This code explains how parents collaborated with interventionists and service providers to learn new strategies to employ and enact academic and social goals for their autistic children in the home.

Parent-Educator Communication.

A topic that was relevant in reference to educators (i.e. service providers, teachers) was the participants' descriptions of parent-educator communication. Many mothers described the importance of continuous and reciprocal communication with their child's educators. The intentions behind this level of communication were two-fold. Mothers indicated that (1) communication allowed parent and educator to work on goals as a team (i.e. *[Teachers] have the IEP goals and they give us a list or goals, as a parent you decide what to work on and ask them for tips so that you can also work on the goals at home*) and (2) it provided the mothers with insights into the child's behavior outside of the home (i.e. *Any issue [an educator] might have with [my child], I want them to be at liberty to tell me. I tell them I won't get mad, I know my child, and I want them to feel confident that I will back them).* Mothers also described proactive approaches for facilitating communication with educators, stating,

> Yo le di mi número de teléfono y le dije cualquier cosa me puede marcar y siempre estoy disponible para las maestras de mis hijos que ocupen cualquier cosa. Trato de estar allí, verdad? Por ejemplo, ahorita con esta maestra que está mi hijo ya no le mandan cuaderno de lo que hace diario y en la otra escuela diario lo mandaban. Así que ahora yo tengo que preguntar. Le digo- si miro que a mi hijo está raro o algo- le digo "todo bien? Pasó algo?" Oh si no, ella misma me dice, "oh ahora estuvo un poco triste" o "ahora estuvo muy hiperactivo," pero siempre trato de estar abierta a sus comentarios.

> *I gave [the teacher] my phone number and told her to call me for anything and I told her I am always available for my child's teachers whatever they might need. I try to be there, right? For example, the current teacher my child has doesn't send home a notebook of what he does daily, and in the other school, they would send it daily. So now I have to ask. I say - if I see my child is off or something- I ask, "is everything ok? Did something happen?" Or if not she will tell me, "oh today he was a bit sad" or "today he was hyperactive," but I always try to be open to her commentary.*

As noted above the mother actively fostered a communicative relationship with her autistic child's teacher. The mother offered support and open availability to discuss any concerns or questions regarding her child. The mother was also quick to follow up on perceived changes in her child's behavior and relayed her receptiveness to the teacher's feedback. Mothers' characterizations of communication displayed the importance they place on communication and the ways in which they fostered communication with educators in their children's lives.

Within this code participants described engagement with school personnel and interventionists. Reciprocity between mothers and educators led to partnerships that enabled mothers to access more services, learn new strategies, advocate for their children, and observe student-teacher interactions. In addition, mothers explained how they managed their communication with their child(ren)'s educators, highlighting the benefits of consistent communication.

Supportive Environments

Within this code, participants provided their perspectives on creating supportive environments for their autistic children within the school context. Mothers discussed existing and supportive personnel, resources they desired for their children, as well as unmet expectations they experienced in creating supportive home environments. A full detailed explanation follows.

School and Educational Facilities.

This subcode examined the school environments, such as physical classrooms and schools, educators, and educational services that mothers either had or wanted but lacked the ability to access. As noted above participants discussed personnel, resources, and unmet expectations they either had or desired to support their child's educational environment.

Personnel.

Participants provided numerous descriptions of positive experiences with educators, school personnel, and therapy/therapists that lent to creating a supportive environment for their children. Participants described these educators as supportive, communicative, interested in their child(ren)'s lives, honest about student ability, and a trusted resource provider (i.e. *If there are deficiencies at home I will tell [the teacher] and she helps me by giving me materials to take home)*. One mother provided an example of how she engaged in open communication with her child's teacher, stating,

> Siempre le daban a mi hijo la atención que necesitaba, los apoyos que necesitaba. Y yo les preguntaba algo, siempre me daban buenas respuestas, no me hacían así como largas para contestarme. Pero siempre tuve hasta ahorita he tenido buena comunicación con sus maestras.
> *They would always give my child the attention he needed, the support he needed. And I asked them something, they always gave me a good response, they didn't make me wait too long to respond… But I have always, till now, had good communication with his teachers.*

As this mother noted, having a supportive teacher for the child and herself was a positive experience since she was able to ask questions and receive answers quickly. Thus allowing her to foster favorable relationships with many teachers. Other supportive educational personnel included therapists (i.e. language, occupational, speech), paraprofessional aides, who provided individualized attention to children, IEP case managers that helped parents create goals for their children's annual plan, and translators that helped to facilitate communication with parents (i.e.

[The new principal] acquired a translator from the district and it has made it much easier for me to understand and express the goals I have for [my child]). One mother experienced a therapist that went above and beyond to help her family with their goals, stating,

> Yo le dije a la muchacha de ABA, ayúdame vamos a ponerle metas de speech. Y yo sé que no es su trabajo, yo sé que no esté- no es lo que ustedes vienen a trabajar con él, le digo, pero yo necesito ese apoyo. Hablé con el supervisor y él me dijo, sabes que Dalia sí vamos a ponerle metas, vamos a ponerle, vamos a que el empieza.
> *I told the girl from ABA, help me, well make a goal for speech. I know that that is not your job, I know that it is not what you come to work on with him but, I told her, I need that help. I talked with the supervisor and he told me, you know what Dalia, we are going to make that goal, we are going to make it, let's get started.*

This mother asked for help from her ABA provider and created speech goals for her child, even though it was out of the scope of the interventionist's job duties. Both the interventionist and supervisor in agreeing to support the mother contributed to a supportive environment for both the autistic child and the mother, which is not just depicted in the code above via the examples.

Resources.

Participants detailed materials or services they wished their children could access at school or they could utilize to better support their children. For children, mothers requested increased access to therapy (i.e. language, occupational; *I think that the school needs to contract more therapists because in reality they only have one or two per school*), exceptionally trained teachers or aids, and classroom sensory corners for emotional regulation. Whereas mothers requested access to support groups or psychological support (i.e. *Psychological support for mom and dad. The school district should find a way to support us this way*) and wanting to be better included in their child's educational goals (i.e. *I would like to hear options of what I can do, how we can better help [my child]. We all know he has autism but what can we do about it?*). Mothers expressed that access to these resources would help with educational development and help children learn better (i.e. *A private teacher that would have all the pedagogical skills to*

reach [my child]). One mother described challenges her child faced with classroom availability at neighboring schools, stating,

> Yo tengo una escuela que es la que mi hijo le corresponde por su dirección pero en esa escuela no tiene ningún servicio de educación especial entonces tuvieron que mandarlo a otra. No tengo problema, no está tan lejos, pero lo ideal sería que siempre hubiera maestros preparados en cada escuela. Para que no batallaran.
> *I have a school that my son corresponds to due to his address, but in that school, they don't have any special education services so they had to send him to another [school]. I don't have issues, it is not that far but ideally, there would always be [pedagogically] prepared teachers in every school. So they wouldn't struggle.*

This mother described the issues that arose when parents were forced to choose between schools that are close to home and those with appropriate resources for autistic children. While in this case the alternative school worked out for her child, as the mother stated, supportive educational environments would allow for all schools to have the required personnel and resources for children. Within this section, participants described the types of resources and materials they wished to see in educational settings. Participants described personnel, sensory corners, and increased access to intervention as potential ways to support their children.

Parents Unmet Expectations of School Personnel.

Participants described experiences within the educational system (i.e. district) and with personnel (i.e. teachers, principals, IEP team, therapists) that they felt were not supporting their children. Mothers described disagreeing with teaching methods (i.e. *I tell the teacher I need her to help me teach [my child] more words. [She] focuses more- because it is easier for [her]- on him using the tablet all the time but that doesn't help him develop language*) and feeling unsupported and ignored by school staff. One mother summarized her feelings of frustration with the school when she noticed an absent provider during her child's intervention, stating,

> Y no sé si porque fue en línea, pero me di cuenta de que las maestras están ausentes en la terapia del lenguaje. Era un chiste. Entonces, no sé si porque fue en línea, pero yo

> pensaba que eso era muy importante, que Simon tuviera servicios en la escuela, que era algo básico.
> *I don't know if it was because we were online but I noticed that the teachers were absent from language therapy. It was a joke. So, I don't know if it was because we were online but I thought it was very important that Simon has services in the school, it is something basic.*

This mother explained that it was rude for her language therapist to be absent from a scheduled meeting. It was especially egregious as she felt the service provided a basic need for her child. Similarly, many other mothers expressed frustration with services that were not provided adequately, or school personnel that seemed to not care, as well as a perceived lack of communication (i.e. *The psychologist didn't even know. So I ask myself what is happening. Are you here to help me or not?*). Mothers had unmet expectations in creating or envisioning a supportive educational environment for their children. Participants perceived support or instructional disagreements within educational environments were a key focus of this subcode.

Mothers in this sample were not always satisfied with existing school environments and educators that supported autistic children and their families. This code provided a peek into mothers' expectations on how to improve existing systems and relationships. They described how school and educational facilities were home to existing personnel that are compassionate and caring to both students and families, resources such as services and materials that participants would like to attain for themselves and their children, and unmet expectations that mothers continued to face.

Impacts of COVID-19 on Child Development

The shutdown of schools in the U.S. due to COVID-19 in early 2020 led to disruptions of in-person learning for all students. Interviews with participants for this dissertation began in March of 2021, exactly one year after the initial shutdown. During data collection, mothers reported that students were in a mix of virtual (i.e. via Zoom) and hybrid (i.e. attending half-day,

three times a week) school instruction, with many set to return to in-person instruction in August of 2021. Therefore, changes in mental health, social interactions, and education were prevalent during the individual interviews of this study, and participants discussed their experiences with changes to their child's mental health, adaptations to social interactions, and challenges in educational settings during COVID.

Changes to Mental Health due to COVID-19.

Participants described observing changes in their child(ren)'s mental health. Some mothers referenced negative changes, such as an increase in anxiety levels (i.e. *He has a high level of anxiety because he wants everything to go back to normal but everything is still via Zoom)*, elevated stress due to virtual schooling, and challenges adapting to changes (i.e. waiting for the school bus during remote learning). Others observed positive effects on their child(ren)'s mental health, stating,

> Anteriormente yo, por ejemplo, no me ponía a jugar con él porque yo no tenía tiempo para jugar. Ellos van a la escuela de 8 hasta las 3 de la tarde y después de las 3 de la tarde, pues a comer y a bañarse a dormir y pues ahorita no…. Tenemos más tiempo para convivir en familia y anteriormente pues no.
> *Before, for example, I would not play with him because I didn't have time. They were in school from eight to three in the afternoon and after three in the afternoon, we would eat, and shower to sleep, and well now no…. We have more time to spend together as a family and before, well no.*

This mother described having more playtime with her child as the pandemic allocated more time at home, which allowed them to spend more family time together. Similarly, another mother described how spending more time with her children allowed her to notice mental health issues that had gone unaddressed in their autistic child (i.e. anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder). The increased time with her child allowed her to observe new mental health symptoms. This mother actively sought out a diagnosis with her pediatrician for these new mental health concerns. As demonstrated above, mothers' observations of increased mental health challenges

during COVID-19 were both positive and negative. In some instances, mothers observed increased levels of anxiety and challenges in adapting to a new normal. Other mothers found that increased time at home led to more family playtime.

Disruptions in Social Interactions.

Within this subcode mothers also noted the adverse impact COVID-19 had on social interactions for their autistic children. One mother detailed how prior to the pandemic the child had attended playdates and was actively engaged in peer-to-peer social interactions, but due to the pandemic, she halted these activities. Another mother described slightly different challenges to decreased social interactions, stating,

> La pandemia, a mí en lo personal, no me afectó mucho porque a ellos no les gusta salir. Pero me afectó porque ya no querían salir. Y otra vez hay que volver a programar y hacer todas las rutinas para que ellos vuelvan y quieran salir otra vez de casa. Y en ese caso fue estresante para los niños.
> *The pandemic, personally, didn't affect me much because they don't like to go out. But it affected me because they didn't want to go out. And now again I have to program them and make routines so that they will and want to go outside of the house. In that case, it was stressful for the kids.*

In the excerpt above the mother stated that her children aren't the type to voluntarily leave the house, but this worsened during the pandemic due to stay-at-home orders. Therefore the mother had to find a way to increase social outings, out of worry that they would regress and never want to leave. Not noted in this quote but stated during the interview, the mother described taking her children to a family member's ranch to walk outdoors and going on car rides when possible to maintain social outings. Within this code, participants described the challenges they faced in maintaining social interactions with their autistic child(ren). In some cases, mothers found innovative ways to maintain social outings and in others, families continued to face constraints.

Challenges to Children's Educational Settings.

In the final subcode of the Impacts of COVID-19 on Child Development, participants discussed the effects of the pandemic on their child's schooling and interrupted access to intervention and educational services. When referencing school, mothers described challenges to virtual learning. Examples included children struggling to pay attention to the screen for long hours and increased boredom which led to them walking away or distracting their siblings. In addition, mothers described an increased workload. Mothers sat next to their children during class sessions to increase engagement and took on a larger role in delivering course content (i.e. *Because now I am not just a mom I am also a teacher. So honestly it has been a big change*). In addition, mothers detailed large changes to educational services and interventions. These included the way intervention services were provided (e.g. substituting socialization goals with more time in a virtual general education classroom) and a reduced or loss of allotted time (i.e. *It wasn't the same, he used to get one hour of speech and one hour of occupational [therapy] a week but during Zoom, it was five minutes and five minutes)*. It is worth noting that mothers most affected by these changes reported a regression in their child's educational development. One mother described how the changes in service, both the way services were provided and the decreased number of minutes of these services, led her to develop new educational strategies,

> Yo pensé que las terapias en la escuela eran muy buenas. Yo tenía esa idea y siempre estaba peleando por terapias nuevas y por mayores apoyos. Y no sé si porque fue en línea, pero me di cuenta de que las maestras están ausentes en la terapia del lenguaje…. Y me di cuenta que pues que no. Que le ayudan más las terapias por fuera, que le ayuda más el ballet, la natación y que le ayuda más que yo esté con él el día a día.
> *I thought that the school therapies were very good. I had that idea and I was always fighting for new therapies and more supports. And I don't know if, maybe, because it was online, but I realized that the teachers were absent in language therapy… And I realized that well no. That the outside therapies were more helpful, ballet [and] swimming, and that it's more helpful for him for me to be with him daily.*

This mother described shifting her mindset from feeling positive about school supports to feeling like school resources hindered her child's development. Whereas, prior to the pandemic she advocated for increases in school services, the opportunity to observe virtual school services led to disillusionment with both educational practices and her child's teachers. As a result, the mother had a renewed focus on extracurricular activities which she believed benefited her autistic child's development. Many of the mothers described their frustrations with the education system, which included an increased workload for the parent, changes to educational services and interventions, and a shift in the child's learning goals.

The effects of COVID-19 on autistic children's development education are still being determined, but this code provided insight into how the pandemic affected MH families and their priorities related to how they educated their autistic children. The code, impacts on COVID-19, described the different ways the pandemic impacted children's mental health, social interactions, and education. Participants described the benefits of the pandemic, including increased family time and the ability to pay better attention to their child's mental health. Many more mothers described the negative effects of the pandemic on their child's development, including increased educational responsibilities for them, negative changes to children's mental health, decreased opportunities for social interactions, and challenges to accessing adequate educational services and interventions.

Summary

Results from this section included five key findings including (1) *parent versus educator's perceptions of educational engagement,* (2) *childrearing practices,* (3) *parent-educator partnerships,* (4) *supportive environments,* and (5) *the impacts of COVID-19*. Within the first theme parents defined the concepts and roles pertaining to family and education, and the

similarities and differences between mothers' perceptions of their role versus that of an educator to help elucidate perceptions of educational engagement. In the second theme mothers described practices they implemented during childrearing. In the third theme mothers described the relationship between themselves and their child's interventionists and school, while also providing examples of how they facilitated communication with educators which helped illuminate understanding around engagement practices. Mothers' perceptions of supportive educational environments informed the fourth theme, as they described current personnel who were supportive of their child's educational advancements, reflected on resources they desired for their children, and discussed unsupportive systems and staff in education. Within the final theme mothers described the educational and socioemotional impacts of COVID-19 on their autistic children. Mothers detailed how negative and positive changes to their child's mental health, losses in social interactions and development, and changes in their child's educational services and settings. All five of these themes provided insight into how education and educational engagement perceptions and practices were conceptualized by MH mothers.

Discussion

Utilizing individual interviews this study described the educational engagement perceptions and practices of MH mothers rearing autistic children. There are three key findings in the individual interview data.

First, mothers' conceptualizations of the family unit were broader than traditional notions of a family (i.e. a family of four joined by DNA) which expands traditional educational engagement definitions, particularly within special education research. Researchers theorizing parental engagement among students in general education have noted the importance of expanding engagement from a focus on parents to extended family (i.e. aunts, uncles,

grandparents), community members, and school staff in efforts to highlight home-school partnerships (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Mapp, 2012). Specific to Latinx families, values of education such as *familisimo* (i.e. strong family support that prioritizes the collective's needs) have been documented to increase extended families' involvement in child-rearing practices and may enhance service outcomes among IDD families due to additional familial support (Cohen, 2013; Lopez et al., 2022). Mothers in this study mirror these findings as their definitions of the family were inclusive of individuals who supported their autistic child, provided resources for their child's development, and bestowed their child with love and affection while maintaining a consistent presence in their lives. Mothers' descriptions of members who were part of the family unit included parents, children, grandparents, uncles/aunts, paraprofessionals/ aides, and interventionists; genetic affiliation was not required. However, research on educational engagement in autism and intellectual disabilities tends to focus on the parent and occasionally extended family but does not expand to interventionists or aides present in the home (Acar et al., 2021; Burke, 2012; Goldman & Burke, 2017). It should be noted that families rearing students with disabilities are at an increased risk of stress and divorce (DePape & Lindsay, 2015; Lima-Rodríguez et al., 2018). It is possible that participants in this study may be adapting their definitions of family to include service providers and non-traditional family members as a protective factor against these negative outcomes. Therefore, it is important for researchers in special education to consider how their families incorporate non-traditional family members into their support network. A future study may seek to examine families with a non-traditional household configuration (i.e. multi-generational, single parent, extended or rotating household membership). The study could examine the household distribution of educational, caregiving,

and social activities among non-traditional household members. As well as conduct interviews to understand the motivation and decision-making around engagement in these daily practices.

A secondary contribution to the research is that mothers held clear beliefs and expectations for educators and parent-educator engagement. Mothers in the study were clear about the expectations and roles they placed on educators. Within the school engagement code, mothers described volunteering in school, assisting the teacher with requests, engaging in activities (e.g. attending olympiad, field trips), and attending meetings. Many of these activities are considered traditional activities in parental involvement (i.e. Epstein's definition of volunteering; 1995). In addition, mothers described being vigilant and driven in meeting their child's educational goals such as not allowing their child to miss school or leveraging their opinions during the IEP process (i.e. *So I always in an IEP have that ability, my opinion does count now. I always tell them no this one no, for me this one is not good, change this one or put another one you may have, that he can meet, and then I will come and sign the [IEP] document)*. They also described engaging in strategic communication with educators (i.e. *I gave [the teacher] my phone number and told her to call me for anything… I told her I am always available for my child's teachers)* and learning new skills based on the child's needs (i.e. *I didn't know how to teach and so I learned how to teach* [during virtual learning]). Past research on advocacy strategies employed by Latinx families rearing autistic children has also found frequent communication and having a firm knowledge of their child's rights as advocacy strategies employed by parents (Burke et al., 2018). However, Burke and colleagues (2018) also note barriers to advocacy for families include feeling unheard by educators/administration and having services rescinded due to funding. Additional studies also find that parents, while actively engaged in supporting their children's academic outcomes (i.e. reading a book to their child),

worry about their ability to access support due to language barriers, or feeling isolated in their efforts (Carreón et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2016; Urkmez et al., 2023). The sum of these experiences are important to consider since my study notes that mothers are engaging in communication strategies that allow them to seek out services and are doing so via clearly articulated and conscious decision-making strategies that have not been previously captured in the autism literature. This includes a MH mother leveraging her signature on the IEP to align the school' educational goals with her child's needs or a parent fostering trust by 'backing' the decision her child's teacher makes in the classroom. While MH mothers in my study describe challenging experiences and unmet expectations with educators, interventions, and schools, their detailed examples of engagement practices and perceptions provide an additive understanding of daily engagement practices in MH households.

The final contribution the individual interviews provide is an understanding of the educational and socioemotional impacts of COVID-19 on MH families rearing autistic children. The proposal for this dissertation was approved in January 2020, two months prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. As such, this study's research questions, and interview protocols did not feature questions related to COVID. However, through the course of the individual interviews, mothers would bring up the pandemic as it affected their daily routines, interactions with educators and schools, and the provision of intervention and therapy. Challenges reported by mothers as a result of the pandemic included the interruption and reduction of services and disruption in the development of their child's social interactions. Benefits discovered during the pandemic included increased time spent as a family that strengthened familial bonds (i.e. parents described a less hectic schedule and daily routine). Existing literature during this time frame (i.e. March 2020 - July 2021) confirms the findings in this study. Past autism studies show that

parents reported increased stress due to a lack of services and therapies, as well as concerns over isolation and changes to routine (Manning et al., 2021; Tokatly Latzer et al., 2021). Only one study, examining Filipino families with autistic children during the pandemic, relayed positive findings related to the pandemic, such as cultivating a collaborative approach to keeping the autistic child engaged in school, and cultivating new activities and hobbies due to restrictions (Cahapay, 2022). By capturing this point in time for these ten MH families rearing autistic children I can contribute to a collective understanding of the COVID-19 impacts. In addition, my study is one of the first to examine COVID-19 impacts on MH families rearing autistic children since autism research has largely focused on families living in Latin America (Amaral & de Vries, 2020; Pérez et al., 2022; Valdez et al., 2021) and large-scale surveys with racially/ethnically diverse populations in the U.S. (Genova et al., 2021; Kalb et al., 2021; Panjwani et al., 2021)

To conclude, MH mothers' descriptions of their educational engagement practices contributed to existing research in three ways, (1) diversifying definitions of a 'family' unit, (2) sharing MH mothers' beliefs and expectations for educators and parent-educator engagement, and (3) describing the educational and socioemotional impacts of COVID-19 on MH families rearing autistic children.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS FROM RQ4, EDUCATIONALLY ENGAGING PRACTICES IN THE HOUSEHOLD

RQ4: How do MH households enact educationally engaging practices in their daily lives?

The final aim of the study required collecting video data to examine how MH families capture educationally engaging practices in their households' daily lives. Four mothers recorded the daily educational activities and practices of their autistic child(ren) and households. They

captured visual examples, locations, and household members' participation in educational activities. The first section of the video data results provided linguistic profiles for each family and summarized the main features of the videos such as the length of time, language use (i.e. Spanish, English), locations filmed, and activity settings (i.e. main activity engaged in by participants). For a descriptive profile of each family see Table 5. The second section described key educational engagement strategies. The codes for this section were created based on mothers' reports of educational strategies utilized in the home and gleaned from the individual interview. To theoretically guide the coding process, Boonk and colleagues' (2018) definition of *home-based parental involvement*, actions or practices by caregivers that promote home learning, was referenced. Detailed demographic information for each of the participating families is below.

The Mendoza Family

Matthew[6], the autistic child, was a simultaneous bilingual, having received Spanish and English language exposure prior to 12 months of age (Hambly & Fombonne, 2012). Matthew was able to speak fluently in Spanish and English and demonstrated access to complex language. For example, Jacqueline, his mother, might ask him if is interested in eating and he would respond, "Si, pero primero quiero enseñarte algo / *Yes, but first I want to show you something*." Indicating his ability to respond to questions and pivot to a second topic of conversation. Matthew was also able to read fluently in English and displayed dexterity in code-switching, changing from Spanish to English when trying to explain key concepts with unfamiliar words (i.e. Aqui dice cuanto *pressure* crea / *It says here how much <u>pressure</u> is created).* Jacqueline was a frequent conversation partner for Matthew, speaking to him primarily in Spanish, using English word insertions only when necessary, and rarely seen translating for Matthew.

[6] All names referenced are pseudonyms to protect the privacy of participants.

The Mendoza family recorded 25 videos for a total of 69 minutes and 13 seconds. Of the videos recorded 23 were primarily recorded in Spanish, one featured primarily English, and a final video featured no verbal language (e.g. watching a video as a family). Video participants included the target child, Matthew (N=25), Jacqueline (N=25), Carmen (N=9), and Diego (N=4). All video interactions occurred in the home, the kitchen table (N=11), living room (N=9), and bedroom (N=5). Activity settings included play (i.e. board games, N=4), engaging in conversations (N=8; i.e. talking about Matthew's feelings, interests, and daily life), transitioning between activities (N=2), engaging in religious activities (N=5), book reading (N=2), and utilizing digital media (i.e. watching tv or the tablet; N=4).

The Iglesia Family

Brandon, the autistic child, was sequentially bilingual, having been exposed to only Spanish for the first 12 months of his life and English thereafter (Hambly & Fombonne, 2012). Brandon was minimally verbal, which meant he was able to respond to multiple choice questions, could repeat phrases or words that were modeled for him (i.e. Can I have bubbles, please?), count to the number ten, and state short phrases unprompted (i.e. I get happy face!). Brandon also had access to an augmentative and adaptive communication device (AAC), but the video recordings did not capture high levels of usage. Videos displayed educators (i.e. teacher, interventionists) primarily speaking to Brandon in English, while his mother Diana spoke to Brandon in both English and Spanish (i.e. Sientate allá [Brandon], please, over there / *Sit over there [Brandon], please, over there*). Diana would often state her questions and phrases to Brandon in both languages.

The Iglesia family recorded 13 videos, for a total of 75 minutes and 50 seconds. Of the videos recorded seven were recorded primarily in Spanish, five in English, and one with no

language (e.g. child silently attending a virtual class). Video participants included Brandon (N=13), Diana (N=10), Michael (N=6), and Emily (N=6). In addition, two interventionists were featured in the videos. Both interventionists assisted Brandon and Michael, every day (e.g. Monday - Friday, 8 am to 12 pm), in the home to assist with schooling and basic tasks (i.e. eating, behavior management). Brandon's teacher was also 'present,' virtually, in a few videos, as he attended class via Zoom during the pandemic. Brandon's aide appeared ten times, his teacher was present three times, and Michael's aide appeared six times. Video locations included the park (N=3) and home (N=10). Locations in the home included a work desk in the living room corner (n=5), the outside patio (n=2), living room (n=2), and kitchen table (n=1). Activity settings included school activities (e.g. math facts, zoom classroom; N=5), play (i.e. playdough, board games; N=3), art (i.e. painting; N=2), reading a book (N=2), and eating together (N=1).

The Lozano Family

Javier, the autistic child, was simultaneously bilingual as he received Spanish and English language exposure prior to 12 months of age (Hambly & Fombonne, 2012). He was non-verbal and used an AAC device to communicate. The AAC device was set to English and allowed Jared to communicate his needs and wants (i.e. I want french fries) unprompted. He also utilized gestures/ body language (i.e. pointing, stomping feet if unhappy), sign language (i.e. signed yes), and vocalizations (i.e. yelling if frustrated) to communicate with his mom. His mother, Marisol, spoke both English (i.e. You have to wait) and Spanish (i.e. Quieres ir al parque? / *Do you want to go to the park?*) to Brandon, often asking questions that could be answered with a few words or in one sentence/word. Brandon was able to respond to Marisol's questions regardless of the language used, Marisol was not captured translating her questions or remarks.

The Lozano family recorded eight videos, for a total of 6 minutes and 15 seconds. Of the videos recorded, six featured Spanish with nonverbal language (e.g. gestures, vocalizations, signing), two were in English, one displayed Javier using an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device, and one featured only nonverbal language. Video participants primarily included Javier (N=8) and Marisol (N=8). An additional two participants were featured three times, a young boy, and an adult man, but Marisol did not report a partner or additional children. Video locations included indoor and outdoor spaces, such as the kitchen table (N=3), outside the apartment (N=1), the family car (N=2), and the park (N=2). Activity settings included eating (N=2), transitioning between activities (e.g. walking to the car, driving; N=3), and play (e.g. Loteria, playing on the play structure; N=3).

The Romano Family

Jared, the autistic child, was simultaneously bilingual as he received both Spanish and English language exposure prior to 12 months of age (Hambly & Fombonne, 2012). Jared was able to read in both English and Spanish, as videos depicted him reading books and comprehension passages aloud in both languages. He was also able to appropriately respond to topics of conversation and add information that contributed to furthering the discussion. For example, when Genoveva, his mother, described how Jared likes to speak Spanish more than English, Jared states "deberiamos de vivir en Mexico, es mas bonito/ *we should live in Mexico it is prettier.*" Jared does have some difficulty with fluency, as videos depicted him stuttering at times, or losing his focus when reading. However, this did not interfere with his ability to be understood. Genoveva, his frequent conversation partner, spoke to Jared in Spanish and only used English when necessary (i.e. to convey homework instructions). If using English Genoveva would typically translate her phrases to Spanish when speaking to Jared.

The Romano family recorded eight videos, for a total of 74 minutes and 49 seconds. Of the videos recorded five were primarily in Spanish and three were primarily in English. Video participants included Jared (N=8), Genoveva (N=8), James (N=1), and Melissa (N=1). Video locations were in the home (N=8) including, Jared's bedroom (N=1) and the kitchen table (N=7). Activity settings included school activities (e.g. literacy, homework, math, N=6) and book reading (N=2).

Examining Educational Engagement Strategies

Educational engagement strategies were identified from mothers' reports of educational strategies utilized in the home during the individual interview. Mothers were asked to describe their educational strategies to support their autistic child(ren). The answers to this question were then coded, to determine key educational engagement strategies mothers were already employing in their households. Given the myriad of theoretical frameworks and philosophies around parents' involvement in education, I utilized Boonk and colleagues' (2018) definition of home-based parental involvement, actions or practices by caregivers that promote home learning, to guide my understanding of home-based strategies. In the subsequent paragraphs, I will define educational engagement strategies using the mothers' excerpts and describe video examples gleaned from the participant's video recordings.

Strategy 1: Providing Resources.

The first strategy, providing resources, came from the mother's indication that providing school supplies (i.e. *supporting him with the materials [teachers] ask for*), sensory tools to help them maintain calm, visuals to aid with their educational goals (i.e. *I'll write or draw [an academic topic] so that he learns and remembers it much faster)*, or materials that aided with their emotional understanding were viewed as an important support and educational strategy. For

example, Diana, from the Iglesia family, described working alongside interventionists to provide her children with “historias sociales,” or social stories. These social stories described the changes occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic. The changes were hard for her children to understand and adapt to, the social stories helped the children make sense of the abrupt switch in daily routines,

> Hacerles saber porque no estábamos saliendo a la clase, a la calle, porque no estábamos teniendo clases en la escuela, y que las clases iban a hacer aquí y que los maestros iban a ser diferente.
> *Having them understand why we weren't going to class, [for an outing], why we weren't having class in school, and that the classes were going to be [at home] and the teachers were going to be different.*

In the excerpt above we see how Diana, provided a resource to her children to aid them in understanding changes in school and society, thereby supporting their emotional understanding and helping them cope with the pandemic.

Marisol from the Lozano family had a unique perspective on ‘providing resources’ since her son, Javier, communicated non-verbally and displayed maladaptive behaviors. Marisol described her use of sensory tools to provide breaks and manage Javier’s mood while engaging in schoolwork. In addition, Javier had an AAC device, which she provided, stating, “es algo que nos ha ayudado mucho para que se frustre un poco menos/ *it is something that has helped us a lot so that he gets frustrated a little less.*” Within the providing resources code, mothers described the importance of providing a variety of resources for their autistic children. Using visual aids, helping to create social stories, providing communicative devices, and even the provision of school supplies are all manners in which mothers described supporting their children’s educational pursuits.

Vignette 1: Brandon and His AAC Device.

Within the Lozano family's video data, providing resources was coded 50% (Frequency (n) = 3) of the time, and within the Romano family 75% (n = 6). Video examples of the Lozano family showed Javier using his AAC device and videos of the Romano family depicted Genoveva sharing pre-printed reading comprehension stories in Spanish, Jared practicing his math facts, and Jared practicing his penmanship with pre-filled phrases. See Figure 1 for examples from video stills.

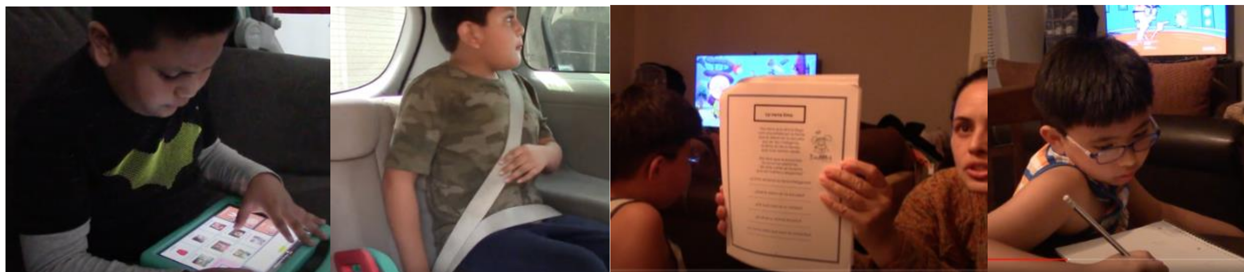

Figure 1: Engaging in 'providing resources'
(L - R) Javier uses his AAC device, Javier is ready to go to the park, Genoveva shows off Javier's reading comprehension worksheets, and Jared works on a math facts sheet made by Genoveva.

To depict this code, Javier Lozano, who used an AAC device for verbal communication, is seen using his device which was provided by his mother. In the recording, Javier and his mother are sitting on the couch in their living room. Marisol is holding the camera and pointing it at Javier. Javier is looking off into the distance, perhaps a tv, when Marisol asks him what he wants. Javier grabs his AAC device, inputs his passcode, and presses a button that says, "I want french fries, please," twice. He then follows this up by saying I want a Big Mac, Coke, and Chicken Nuggets to which his mother says ok. Javier then puts his AAC device back down next to him. While the video depicts a quick interaction between mother and child (i.e. 30-second video clip), the ease with which the child maneuvers his device and the simplicity with which he provides his input on preferred food choices, matches with Marisol's depiction of the device, a tool to help with his communication and ease his frustration. In everyday activities, the provision

of this resource helps Javier communicate his desires and needs. See Video 1 for a link to the clip referenced above, both English and Spanish subtitles are available.

Video 1.

Brandon and his AAC device video depicting 'providing resources'
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNn_0cS9ZUY

Strategy 2: Attending to Target Child's Mood.

In describing the second strategy, attending to the target child's mood, the mothers described the strategies and actions they employed to prevent and manage their child's socio-emotional behaviors. Mothers described challenges their children faced such as frustration, challenges regulating their emotions, difficulties with social tasks, engaging in maladaptive behaviors (i.e. hitting, scratching), and sensitivity to changes in routine. To help their child overcome or prevent these behaviors mothers described adapting their support to their child's ability (i.e. *we don't pressure too much the capacity of [my son], like we go at his level, at [his]ability*) or noting child's behavioral cues to intervene with relaxation techniques (i.e. *If I see [my son] is moving around a lot I will squeeze his head or body a little, that helps him relax*). Genoveva, from the Romano family, also described how she helped her son Jared become better at sharing with others while decreasing his frustration. A necessary skill for his future, stating,

> Antes no sabía compartir, antes él tenía como un grado de frustración muy, muy, muy corto. Y todo eso se necesita para trabajar, por ejemplo, en una compañía que se trabaja en equipo. Y todo eso tratamos de ayudarlo, en todas las áreas académicamente.
> *Before he didn't know how to share, before he had like a frustration level that was very, very, very short. And all of that is needed for work, for example, in a company that works in teams. And all of that we try to help him with, in all academic areas.*

Here, Genoveva described how she helped her child manage his frustration, stating the importance of emotional control and required in teamwork settings. She described this assistance as part of how she helps him in *all* academic areas, noting the importance of this strategy in her

child’s education and signaling her attention to his future needs. Within this code, the mothers in the study described the attention they paid to their children’s moods and behaviors and described the strategies and practices they employed to help their children manage and support their emotions.

Vignette 2: Calm Hands with Brandon.

Attending to the target child’s mood was seen in three out of the four families, it occurred 54% (n = 7) in the Iglesia family, 38% (n = 3) in the Lozano family, and 50% (n = 4) in the Romano family. Videos showed interventionists checking in on children (e.g. ‘you, ok?’), Diana asking questions or leaving the room when noting agitation, Genoveva staying calm when Jared was frustrated over a math problem, Genoveva shifting focus to a new topic to overcome Jared’s frustration, Marisol inquiring on Javier’s feelings, and Marisol modifying activities to keep Javier calm. See Figure 2 for examples from video stills. Given the participation of interventionists within this code, it should be noted that mothers in this study had inclusive definitions of family. Any individual who consistently provided loving, supportive, and nurturing learning environments for their autistic child was considered a family member. Examples of family members by participants included parents, children, grandparents, uncles/aunts, and paraprofessionals/ aides.

Figure 2: Engaging in ‘attending to target child’s mood’
(L - R) Javier is upset Marisol is taking too long to get to the park, Marisol inquiries about Javier’s mood, Brandon’s interventionist reminds him to have calm hands, and Diana notes Brandon’s discomfort with her presence during class.

The exemplar video opens with Brandon and his interventionist sitting at a small desk. The desk has a tablet that is displaying a story, an AAC device, a small fan, a toy minion, and a small whiteboard that says, “I am working for… [sun]” and spaces for happy faces to be drawn. Brandon has his head down and noise-canceling headphones on, while the interventionist looks at him, asking comprehension questions (i.e. do you think Sofia liked that answer?) and reading the story aloud. Throughout the interaction, Brandon occasionally looks at the screen, mainly when prompted, but spends most of the time with his head down or looking away indicating his lack of interest in this activity. At timestamp 00:00:42, Brandon starts to rock his body and head, knocking on the desk and making noises, at timestamp 00:00:49 he sounds agitated, and his interventionist points to the tablet and asks him, “Brandon, how does [the character] feel?” Brandon at first says “happy, bye-bye” which is important to note because in other videos saying ‘bye’ can be a sign of discomfort (i.e. says bye, and the mother will walk away or pivot activity). In this scenario, the interventionist manages to regain his attention by increasing her pitch and intonation to denote excitement, as she says, “she was excited.” The change in pitch coupled with the phrase, “I love how you’re answering questions,” demonstrates the interventionist’s strategies to quell Brandon’s frustration with the activity and broadly shows how she attends to his mood. The interventionist employed a few different strategies. For example, she asked him questions related to his real-life (i.e. Brandon does Mommy sometimes say no?), and drew a happy face when he did something well (i.e. you get a happy face for listening so nicely to the story. Towards the end of the video, at timestamp 00:02:30, Brandon’s frustration with the activity increased and he nudged the face of the interventionist with his elbow. The interventionist told him to “try again” and prompted him to remember how happy faces are achieved. She tells Brandon to remember, “calm hands, calm body” which Brandon repeats out

loud, as they both fold their hands in front of them. Throughout the video, we see the interventionist engaged in reward-based activities, engaging questions, modeling behavior, and switching her intonation to manage Brandon's mood, which makes it a great example of strategies families utilized in the home. See Video 2 for a link to the clip referenced above, both English and Spanish subtitles are available.

Video 2.

Calm hands with Brandon video depicting 'attending to target child's mood'
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxhbtXuQEVc

Strategy 3: Supporting Educational Concepts at Home.

The third strategy, supporting educational concepts at home, was defined by mothers as home strategies used to support educational goals set by their child's educators. Mothers described 'trabajando de la mano' or working together with educators to meet school goals. Description from mothers included keeping continuous and reciprocal communication (i.e. *goals the school sets, we also work on at home*), using educational media (e.g. apps, tv shows, movies) to reinforce academic topics, explaining educational topics in-depth to reinforce school lessons, and reviewing homework (i.e. *I sit beside him, we review what he is learning in school and do his homework)*. Mothers were attuned to their child's learning style and discussed modifying their approach to adapt to their children. For example, Genoveva from the Romano family described how she followed her child's pace when reviewing homework, taking care to provide breaks, and describing concepts from school in novel ways. She stated,

> Repasar una y mil veces lo que hace en la escuela. Mi hijo no aprende en la escuela. Yo se que cada nino es diferente, pero Jared no aprende en la escuela, aprende conmigo.
> *Go over one and a million times what he does in school. My son does not learn in school. I know that every child is different, but Jared does not learn in school, he learns with me.*

In this statement, Genoveva stated both her strategy, reviewing school concepts at home and her perception that this strategy was an integral part of Jared’s learning. In addition she believed her son learned from their home interactions, not from school. Similarly, Diana Iglesia described how after school, she would display an educational video based on the academic topic (i.e. *they stay entertained, learning addition, learning subtraction, learning the basics)* her children had reviewed, since the grade level of her children was similar (i.e. kindergarten - first grade). Thereby providing them with a different modality to review the day's academic topic. This code described the strategies that mothers utilized to support educational concepts from school in the home setting.

Vignette 3: Sibling Bedtime Story.

Supporting educational concepts at home, occurred in videos recorded by the Iglesia family 15% (n = 2) of the time and 75% (n = 6) of the time in the Romano family. Videos depicted Diana doing math problems with Brandon, checking homework answers, interventionists asking reading comprehension questions, Genoveva working on reading comprehension with Jared, and Jared reading a story with his sister Melissa. See Figure 3 for examples from video stills.

Figure 3: Engaging in ‘supporting educational concepts at home’
(L - R) Brandon and Diana working on math, the Iglesia children reading a book with their two interventionists, and Jared reading a book with Melissa.

The example video featured the Romano family, and opened with Genoveva, the mother, speaking about her approach to reading. Jared and Melissa, his sister, were both seated on a bed,

with pajamas on, and Jared had the Dog Man book in his hands. The video opens with Jared reading but is quickly interrupted by Genoveva who, hidden behind the camera, explained that her children regularly read at night, and if her daughter was not tired from school they also read during the day. Jared starts to read again but his mother tells him to wait, she explained that they read about 20 minutes a day and that typically Melissa is the one who reads with him because she has good pronunciation and speaks English well. She stated that only if Melissa was busy will she read with Jared. Genoveva then tells them, "*read my children, as usual*." Jared begins reading from Dog Man as Melissa looks over his shoulder. Melissa occasionally looks at her mother behind the camera with a slight smile. At timestamp 00:01:24 Melissa points to a page in the book saying, "aver que dice aca/ *let's see what does it say here,*" attempting to redirect Jared where he has missed a line. Similarly, at 00:01:34 she points to where he has skipped another line (i.e. *here you are*). Then at 00:02:25, Jared misspoke, saying distract, which Melissa catches and sounds out the proper word, "distraaa-c-ted," which Jared repeats correctly. This back-and-forth between siblings continued for the remainder of the video (shortened for clarity). While the video depicted small inferences by Melissa in both English and Spanish, it displayed how the Romano family incorporated educational concepts in the home. The video depicted Jared working on his reading and fluency while being actively observed by his sister and passively observed by Genoveva. Genoveva's explanation of why the daughter is the preferred reading partner during reading activities also points to the conscious decision-making that goes into a simple reading activity. This video demonstrated how families support educational concepts at home. See Video 3 for a link to the clip referenced above, both English and Spanish subtitles are available.

Video 3.

Sibling bedtime story video depicting ‘supporting educational concepts at home’
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-CSlQNsrqE

Strategy 4: Dynamic Learning.

The fourth strategy, dynamic learning, was best defined by Diana from the Iglesia family. She described dynamic learning as *‘learning while playing.’* Examples of dynamic learning included creating and singing songs (i.e. *he learned his math facts through song*) or playing a game (i.e. reviewing academic topics). The key point mothers emphasized with this code was how “uno tiene que estar viendo como aprende el nino/ *one has to pay attention to how the child learns*.” Diana from the Iglesia family provided a rich description of how she employed dynamic learning in her home, stating,

> Por ejemplo, si estamos aprendiendo el ABC, ‘cómo habla el pato? y ‘cómo se pronuncia el pato’ y ‘qué letra lleva el pato?’ Entonces así como que ya ella, mi hija, y mi hijo van entendiendo cuál es la letra y cómo se pronuncia. Pero lo hacemos jugando, cantando, como de otra manera no precisamente que se note que tu tienes que aprenderlo.
> *For example, if we are learning the ABCs, ‘how does the duck talk?’ and ‘how do you pronounce duck’ and ‘what letters are in duck?’ So that is how she, my daughter, and my son start understanding what the letter is and how it’s pronounced. But we do it playing, singing, a different type of way so that you don’t necessarily notice you have to learn it.*

Diana notes that through ‘dynamic learning’ her children can review and learn educational topics, such as their ABCs, in a manner that incorporates play and distracts them from the seriousness of the task. As seen via the description of this code, dynamic learning is described by mothers as learning via play and is an educational strategy used to individualize learning.

Vignette 4: Learning to Share.

The code, dynamic learning, was featured in 31% (n = 4) of the Iglesia family videos and 13% (n = 1) of the Romano family. In the Romano family, videos showed Genoveva providing Jared with topical examples to describe new vocabulary. For example, when defining ‘parlinchinas,’ or a *chatterbox*, Genoveva explained how she is a chatterbox because she will talk

to anyone which prompted Jared to recall his grandma, another *chatterbox*. In the Iglesia family, videos depicted the interventionists playing board games to teach math and social skills, the Iglesia children reviewing colors as they play with play dough, and Brandon painting to increase his fine motor skills. See Figure 4 for examples from video stills.

Figure 4: Engaging in 'dynamic learning'
(L - R) Brandon is at the park with his family learning social-emotional skills, the Iglesia family practicing sharing, Brandon working on fine motor skills, and Genoveva using real-life (fun) experiences to expand Jared's reading comprehension.

The Iglesia family was selected to exemplify dynamic learning. The video opened at the park with Diana, the mom, behind the camera, the two interventionists, and the two male, autistic children (i.e. Brandon - eldest, Michael - youngest). In the video's opening shot, Michael was standing on a grassy field with a bubble maker in his hand. Interventionist A was narrating (off camera) and saying that she and Brandon are catching bubbles, while Interventionist B asks Brandon if he would like a turn at blowing bubbles. Interventionist A tells Michael to blow (i.e. Dale!), he looks at her and she tells him to make her bubbles, to which he begins to wave the wand, and bubbles flow out. Meanwhile, Interventionist B (entering the frame) can be heard telling Brandon to ask Michael for a turn (i.e. *What do you say to Michael?).* Brandon goes up to Michael and says, "I'd like a-," and Interventionist B reframes Brandon's phrase, stating, "I want my turn, good job." All the adults can be heard cheering, to positively encourage this interaction. Brandon begins to blow bubbles and Interventionist B reminds him to share if Michael asks for a turn. Michael can be seen in the video kicking and yelling, "hi-yah" while Brandon takes a turn

popping bubbles and blowing bubbles. At timestamp 00:01:17, Interventionist B mentioned to Brandon that it was Michael's turn and the brothers approached each other. Interventionist A tells Michael to ask Brandon for a turn, while modeling potential phrasing, and Michael says, "*It's my turn, Brandon.*" When the brothers successfully share the bubble maker, the adults, positively encouraged them, and Diana can be heard saying, "good job." The interventionists continued to encourage the brothers to play. Michael blew bubbles for Brandon, then it was Brandon's turn to blow bubbles for Michael. Important context for this video is Diana's previous interview where she stated that an important educational goal for Brandon, and Michael, was for them to learn to share and grow more comfortable in their interactions. Diana had stated that this was a goal she, alongside her interventionists, were actively working towards. The video described here depicts this goal in action, the interventionists model language for the brothers to share the bubble maker, and the adults encouraged successful transfers of the toy. In addition, the brothers were encouraged to blow bubbles for one another, engaging in direct play. As defined in this code, playing with bubbles at the park, provides a fun activity and allowed the adults to further the social-emotional goals they are working on. This video provided a great example of how families engaged in dynamic learning. See Video 4 for a link to the clip referenced above, both English and Spanish subtitles are available.

Video 4.

Learning to share video depicting 'dynamic learning'
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBbZki-sZn8

Strategy 5: Listening to Matthew's interests.

The fifth, and final strategy, was defined and demonstrated by Jacqueline from the Mendoza family. The strategy, listening to Matthew's interests, came from Jacqueline's statement that she supported her child by listening to him, she stated,

Lo escuchó cuando me platica sus intereses, lo que está aprendiendo, lo que va hacer.
I listen to him when he talks about his interests, what he is learning, what he will do.

As stated above, Jacqueline felt that listening to her child's interests was an important educational strategy. In a subsequent excerpt, she described how part of the reason it was important was that she felt that she could not support Matthew in other areas, such as homework (i.e. *In terms of helping with homework, because of the language [barrier], my husband and my daughter are who support him the most)*. Therefore, Jacqueline described how listening to Matthew's interests was an important part of her role in supporting his learning.

Vignette 5: Dinosaur Discussions.

Of the Mendoza families' video data, listening to Matthew's interest occurred 44% (n = 11) of the time. Videos showed how Jacqueline listened as Matthew talked about science, explained academic concepts learned in class, discussed dinosaurs, described his toys or games, and provided an overview of the tv shows he was watching. See Figure 5 for examples from video stills.

Figure 5: Engaging in 'listening to Matthew's interest'
(L - R) Matthew explains a new science concept to his mom, Matthew talks about birds, and Matthew shares snake facts from a tv show.

One specific video featured Jacqueline and Matthew conversing about dinosaurs in his bedroom. In a previous video, Matthew told his mother he would like to be filmed talking about and showing off his dinosaurs. Jacqueline agreed to his suggestion and set a date for the next day. In the dinosaur discussion video, the main speaker was Matthew and he spoke mostly

Spanish, with some English insertions (i.e. mating, dinosaur names). His English insertions mostly occurred when he did not know the translation of the word in Spanish. Both the language captured in the video and the conversation style between these two family members were representative of other videos within this code. At the beginning of the video, we see Jacqueline and Matthew in his room, both sitting on his bed, while his sister Carmen is standing behind the camera filming their interaction. Matthew states that he might use English in their conversation because there are words about dinosaurs he does not know in Spanish. Throughout the video, Matthew talked about different dinosaurs (i.e. triceratops, velociraptors, protoceratops), their physical features, and facts that he had learned from books. Meanwhile, Jacqueline asked him questions, like where certain toys were located, how he learned his facts, and whether his teachers taught him about dinosaurs. Matthew is very receptive to his mom's questions, answering them efficiently, and their body language depicted a very comfortable relationship. During the discussion, Jacqueline affirmed Matthew's knowledge both with her questions and her body language, while Matthew seemed very relaxed and happy to demonstrate his knowledge. See Video 5 for a link to the clip referenced above, both English and Spanish subtitles are available.

Video 5.

Dinosaur discussions video depicting 'listening to Matthew's interest'
https://youtu.be/YCsTQIkxjkM

Summary

Results from this section included five key strategies, (1) *providing resources* - mothers creating or providing materials to their children such as school supplies or sensory tools, (2) *attending to the target child's mood* - strategies and actions employed to prevent and manage their child's socioemotional behaviors, (3) *supporting educational concepts at home* - strategies

used in the home to support educational goals set by their child's educators, (4) *dynamic learning* - engaging children to learn as they play via song or fun educational activities, and (5) *listening to Matthew's interests* - supporting Matthew by listening to him discuss topics of interest. Each strategy featured the mother's definition, a summary of how each family engaged in the strategy, and a representative, in-depth example of a family enacting the strategy.

Discussion

Through video recordings of MH households, this study was able to capture how families enact educationally engaging practices. Families captured varied daily activities related to educational engagement. Mothers in the study employed a variety of strategies, such as dynamic learning (i.e. *learning while playing*), providing and creating resources for children to review educational concepts, and engaging in literacy, math, and science homework. In addition, strategies such as listening to their child's interests demonstrated how mothers increased communication and educational engagement, as well as strengthened their relationship with their children. Children in the study also displayed a spectrum of bilingual language, ranging from verbal, spoken, language (i.e. ability to take conversational turns, translate from English to Spanish, conjugate, take on others' perspectives) to minimal and/or non-verbal language (i.e. repeating short phrases, using scripted/rote phrases, one-word responses, gesturing/grunting). Existing research on Latinx families, with non-autistic children, has documented similar activities employed in the home (Coba-Rodriguez et al., 2020; Suizzo et al., 2014). For example, research by Coba-Rodriguez and colleagues (2014) reported the involvement activities among 17 Latina mothers of preschool children, included engaging in direct teaching, reading books together, using daily activities to practice numeracy, and assessing their child's knowledge. Additionally, research by Soltero-Gonzalez and Gillsanders (2021) suggests that during the

pandemic Spanish-speaking mothers, primarily Mexican heritage, were forced to use innovative strategies to motivate and engage their children, disability status not provided, in academic activities (i.e. play based math or literacy activities). Their research findings mirror the strategies employed by mothers in my study and suggest that Latinx mothers engage in similar activities with autistic and non-autistic children using a variety of verbal language. Capturing Latinx parent's engagement practices is helpful since there is a positive relationship between parental involvement and social (i.e. play interactions) and academic (i.e. language, literacy, math) outcomes (McWayne et al., 2004; Sonnenschein et al., 2016). Therefore, findings in this section, through video-recorded observational data provide key insights into how Latinx families with autistic children engage in educational strategies.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

This study aimed to understand how Mexican heritage (MH) parents perceive and engage in educational practices with their autistic child(ren). Using a convergent parallel design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) I addressed this aim with data collected from ten Mexican heritage mothers living in a southern California border town. I used the ecologies of parental engagement framework (Barton et al., 2004) to define educational engagement which influenced the research questions and findings. This led to a study design that sought to understand parental educational engagement at two levels: (1) from a broad demographic understanding using survey data to understand mothers' reports of who completes daily household responsibilities; (2) from an individual and family level perspective using in-depth interviews, focus group data, and video recordings of daily routine activities to understand what that academic engagement looks like. Through these methods and analysis, I learned how Mexican heritage engage with their autistic child(ren) and how they conceptualize educational engagement. They described and displayed tools and educational strategies utilized in the household such as establishing routines, scaffolding learning, modeling academic concepts, and providing resources (e.g. visual aids, sensory tools, reading comprehension packets) to support their children's academic outcomes. They also discussed traits and values that were important to use during educational activities such as having patience, being persistent in pursuing educational goals, employing positive affirmations, and attending to changes in their child's mood. MH mothers also held clear views on supportive (e.g. communicative, having a vested interest in their child, providing access to professional development) and unsupportive (e.g. feeling ignored, missed appointments) educational environments and personnel. In the following sections, I will interpret the findings and discuss the implications and limitations of the study.

Research on Latinx and culturally diverse families rearing autistic children find that families face challenges when it comes to parental engagement (Geenen et al., 2001; Jung, 2011; Rios & Burke, 2020). This includes school personnel rating parent involvement among culturally diverse families lower in comparison to White families and lower than culturally diverse parents own perceptions of their involvement (Geenen et al., 2001; Jung, 2011). In addition, researchers have reported increased barriers to involvement among culturally diverse families, such as families engaging in a passive role with educators (e.g. maintaining agreement, avoiding confrontation), differences in communication styles, and limited access to knowledge and understanding of the special education system (Jung, 2011; Rios & Burke, 2020). However, across all four research questions, this study found that MH families and mothers utilize a variety of educational tools and strategies to engage their children in educational tasks (e.g. dynamic learning, communicating with educators, offering sensory activities). These mothers also hold distinct beliefs about what a supportive environment looks like for their autistic child (i.e. communicative personnel, collaborative goal setting, nurturing child-educator relationships) which serves to counter deficit parental engagement narratives.

Additional studies examining Latinx and culturally diverse families find that facilitators for educational involvement include access to resources and knowledge about special education services, positive parent-school communication, and culturally aligned therapy goals (Burke et al., 2018; Dubay et al., 2017; Rios & Burke, 2020). This study found that families' reports of supportive educational engagement practices align with the above research. The contribution of this study lies in the expansion of existing research by providing examples of traits and values MH mothers use to guide academic interactions (e.g. affirming their child's knowledge and skills, having patience, listening and building upon their interests) and adding video recorded

data from MH households to unpack educational strategies utilized in the home and in non-formal learning environments (e.g. dynamic learning at the park, supporting educational concepts during bedtime). These findings will counter deficit notions of educational engagement among MH families and provide parent centered strategies, tools, and values that can help schools and educators increase parent educational engagement among Latinx families. Study findings will also support educators and interventionists to understand and value MH parents' cultural models of education and how they prioritize cultural values. These are all currently unaddressed needs in the field (Dubay et al., 2017; Hughes et al., 2008; Rios & Burke, 2020).

Contributions to Research

This study contributes to the field of special education in three ways. First, by utilizing the Ecologies of Parental Engagement (EPE) framework this study provides an inclusive theoretical framing with which to understand parental engagement, although additional considerations need to be made for autistic families. Second, it highlights one way to advance 'diversity' by using critical sociocultural theory (Holloway et al., 2018) to collect and analyze data, helping to diversify autism research. Third, it provides an example of the utility of theoretical frameworks in autism research studies by explicitly describing and employing theoretical frameworks in all parts (i.e. design, defining the research topic, and during data analysis) of the study. I argue that the use of theoretical frameworks improves transparency and rigor in autism research. All contributions will be discussed below.

Lessons from Utilizing a Parental Engagement Framework

Barton and colleagues (2004) EPE framework helped me to conceptualize parent engagement as an interactive process between parents, schools, and school actors and acknowledged engagement as a process (i.e. pre, during and post engagement), parents as

knowledgeable and resource-rich actors, and the community and social-historical dynamics where engagement occurs. I envisioned a two-way process between the home and school where parents and educators worked together to co-create educational engagement practices. Findings such as educational engagement tools in the second research question, parent-educator partnerships, and supportive environments in research question three do speak to co-creation between parents and educators. For example, the use of the "first this, then that" strategy which is an education strategy gleaned from intervention but employed by mothers in the study is one example of the synchronicity between home and school. However, diving deeply into mothers' perceptions and practices, while also accounting for cultural models of education, led to findings where mothers engaged in educational practices without the influence of educators or school systems. This is best depicted in the parents versus educators*'* perceptions of educational engagement code in research question three, where one mother stated that education occurring in the home was the foundation of their child's education. This quote helps to elucidate how mothers' personal values and perceptions may be distinct from their interactions with school or school actors, which would allow for a parental engagement framework that centers parents versus schools when describing educational engagement. In addition, the finding *listening to Matthew's interest*, where one mother described the importance of encouraging her child's curiosity and questioning occurred outside of the school system and wasn't mediated by school goals, but was part of a value system Jacqueline, the mother, was promoting. Parents' membership in their cultural communities and their experiences navigating the service system directly influence how they engage in educational practices. Families' and parents' personal experiences navigating service, educational, and home systems, are unaccounted for in the EPE framework, as it centers interactive processes between families and school or school actors

(Barton et al., 2004). and would require a new theoretical framework with which to understand parental engagement (Barton et al., 2004). This study demonstrated that families engage in strategic, intentional, and thoughtful educational strategies without the influence of the school system. Researchers must re-envision parent engagement frameworks to include parents as active, agentic educators for their children.

Advancing 'Diversity' with a Critical Sociocultural Lens

This research study utilized a critical sociocultural theoretical perspective in the implementation of the study (Holloway et al., 2018). Utilizing critical sociocultural theory helps to advance 'diversity' in research in two ways. First, the use of this theory encourages the collecting and reporting of detailed participant data that demonstrates nuance within ethnic groups. Second, applying the theory to research affords researchers important background knowledge that can strengthen the analysis of participants' experiences and perceptions. Critical sociocultural theory prioritizes parents' cultural models of parenting (S. Harkness & Super, 1996; Whiting & Whiting, 1975) by describing culture as constructed and modified via interactions (Nasir & Hand, 2006) and collaborative knowledge (Wenger, 2011) where membership is gained through cultural values (i.e. language, ideology; (Holloway et al., 2018). In my study, I prioritized collecting descriptive demographic data (i.e. country of origin, age of immigration, language practices, or income) to understand the diversity of experiences within my sample (i.e. single vs partnered, multiple children vs only child). This data also signaled potential community membership for mothers (i.e. access to language, educational/ intervention services). This information helped to orient me, as a researcher, on how participants might experience various educational and healthcare systems. For example, mothers in the study were primarily Spanish-speaking and living in Southern California. These characteristics can inform their

experiences in two ways, (1) their proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border and access to a large Latinx population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) may lead to better access to bilingual language services, and (2) a lack of English language fluency may be a barrier to accessing educational services for Latinx families (Zuckerman et al., 2014). In this study, parents' lack of English language was not central to findings, more so mothers discussed their desire to support their child to improve the child's language so that they could more effectively communicate their needs. The video data showed how parents used bilingual and multi-modal language. This example helps to depict how critical sociocultural theory helps to provide insight into families' diverse backgrounds but also allows the researcher to attend to the nuance in participants' experiences when describing examples and sharing their perspectives. Considering calls for special education research to diversify their participant pool (Dukes & Lamar-Dukes, 2009; García & Ortiz, 2013), I would also call on researchers to consider how critical sociocultural theory can challenge/enhance 'diversity' in the field.

The Utility of Theoretical Frameworks in Special Education Research

In the implementation of this dissertation study, I utilized various theoretical frameworks with the intention of demonstrating the utility of theory in special education research. Journal editors in the autism field have noted an increase in qualitative article submissions but face challenges in determining 'quality' among submissions due to weaknesses in clarity, issues with replicability and rationale, and insufficient documentation of methods (Bölte, 2014; van Schalkwyk & Dewinter, 2020). Scholars have also noted the difficulties in recruiting minoritized populations to participate in research due to distrust and a lack of culturally relevant research (George et al., 2014; Maye et al., 2022). Using theoretical frameworks to guide research does not erase distrust or inherently improve research quality but it can lead to novel ideas, reframing of

past research, and transparency around the study design and findings that improve research quality. For example, in this study, I was explicit about the theoretical frameworks I was employing and how they were being used to orient the reader about my research approach. There were three main areas where theories were employed, (1) to guide my conceptualization of the research problem (i.e. critical sociocultural theory; Holloway et al., 2018), (2) to guide my topic of interest (i.e. ecologies of parental engagement; Barton et al., 2004), and (3) to guide my analysis of a data source (i.e. home-based parental involvement; Boonk et al., 2018).

First, as described in the previous section, critical sociocultural theory (Holloway et al. 2018) was used to guide my understanding of the research problem and participants in this study. To orient the reader to my approach to research it is essential to clearly state guiding theoretical principles in my work. Second, the selection of parental engagement as my topic of interest required delving into a body of literature that has been highly theorized (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). As noted in Chapter 2 of this study, terms such as parental involvement, parental engagement, family engagement, and parental advocacy have all been used to describe educational engagement. Clearly defining educational engagement in my study, by referencing ecologies of parental engagement (Barton et al., 2004), provides the reader with parameters for what constitutes engagement and it supported data analysis by providing a foundation in which I analyzed parent experiences and child-rearing practices. Third, when analyzing video data recorded in the home, I sought to balance mothers' reports of strategies utilized in their homes while also relying on existing research to orient my coding. In this section, using home-based parental involvement (Boonk et al., 2018) helped focus my observations of educational practices, by examining existing research (Durand, 2011; Fantuzzo et al., 2013; Sibley & Dearing, 2014) to understand what practices and activities have previously been documented and may (or may not)

show up in my data. All in all, these three theoretical frameworks helped orient my approach and data analysis and provided a starting point for the reader to interpret and understand my findings and interpretations. Future research should consider thoughtfully incorporating theoretical frameworks in the design of culturally relevant research to improve rigor and transparency in the research design.

Implications

Based on the results of this study there are eight suggestions for research and practice.

1. Researchers should engage in asset-based, culturally relevant research.
    a. Using additive, strengths-based, theoretical frameworks researchers should seek to increase diverse participant participation, increase quality and transparency surrounding qualitative and quantitative research methods, and focus on the strengths of minoritized populations (Bölte, 2014; George et al., 2014; van Schalkwyk & Dewinter, 2020).
2. Future research should examine the role of MH fathers and single parent households.
    a. While this study focused on input from mothers primarily in two-parent households., future research should seek to better understand the perception and practices of educational engagement among MH fathers and single parent households. Given my study findings showing that fathers participated in caregiving activities 46% of the time and 27% in parental engagement activities, future studies should interview fathers to understand how they conceptualize caregiving and parental engagement activities to better understand how fathers are involved in their children's education.
3. Researchers studying Latinx families rearing autistic children should utilize and further explore cultural models of education (e.g. *bien educado*, *respeto*; Lopez et al., 2022).

a. Given focus group findings aligning with Latinx cultural models of education researchers should attend to how cultural models and values mediate educational engagement practices. This is particularly important as findings indicate that cultural models and values may be more important, versus school or school actors, when making decisions around educational engagement practices. Further exploring how families utilize cultural models may allow researchers to better understand research findings and align implications for practice in culturally meaningful ways.

4. Service providers and interventionists working with Latinx families rearing autistic children should understand culturally relevant models of education.

    a. Service providers should examine how their intervention and service models are culturally engaging and responsive to Latinx families. Past research has shown that Latino parents are less likely to feel their service provider was sensitive to their values and customs (Magaña et al., 2015). In addition, findings in this study show interventionists are considered part of the family unit when they are a consistent and supportive presence in the autistic child's life. This indicates a powerful and integral position where service providers can assist parents in aligning educational goals and cultural values across school and home.

5. Future research should utilize inclusive theoretical models for understanding families and educational engagement.

    a. Older educational engagement theories (Kim & Sheridan, 2015; Mapp, 2012) may limit or bias findings around family due to outdated ideas about families and household structures. Findings in this study noted parents include non-related individuals as part of the family unit if they are a supportive and consistent presence

in their families life. Research that allows parents to define family may provide more nuanced findings to the educational engagement literature.

6. Schools and service providers should expand their conceptualizations of family.
    a. Educators and interventionists should create opportunities for non-traditional family members to engage in education by using more inclusive language (i.e. caregivers, household members) and asking families to identify essential caregivers in the child's lives, as assumptions or adherence to a 'traditional' family structure limits opportunities to educationally engage autistic children and their families.
7. More research should be undertaken to examine bilingual families rearing non-verbal, minimally verbal, and AAC-using autistic children.
    a. There is a lack of representation (Drysdale et al., 2015) of non-speaking, bilingual autistic children in the autism literature. Future research should seek to understand and describe the language profiles of autistic non-verbal and minimally verbal bilingual children, utilizing discourse or conversational analysis. As well as, examine the relationship between non-verbal, minimally verbal children and academic outcomes via quantitative analysis.
8. Changes to IDEIA 2004 policy to encourage the incorporation of cultural models of education.
    a. The current IDEIA 2004 policy, calls attention to the need for an increase in school personnel that reflect of the demographic diversity of the student body, as well as an overrepresentation of limited English proficient students placed in special education. Incorporating cultural models of education in the training of school personnel, and

encouraging teachers and therapists to ask questions, listen, and learn about their families could lead to students and families being better served at school.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the small sample size of participants. While there is an effort to gain perceptions and experiences from MH parents to broaden the scope of the work, the small pool of participants indicates that these findings are not generalizable. However, it is important to recognize that research among Mexican heritage families, specifically within ASD and low-income communities is important to conduct regardless of sample size given reports indicating the lack of diverse participant representation in ASD research (Jones & Mandell, 2020; Pierce et al., 2014). In addition, due to COVID-19 many of the methods utilized were adapted and modified to comply with health and social distance mandates. Complying with mandates was particularly important as research on COVID-19 reports a higher susceptibility among Latinx populations due to comorbid conditions and pervasive health disparities (Harkness et al., 2020; Hooper et al., 2020; Moyce et al., 2020). There were also research limitations due to the health and social distance mandates. The mandates required a research-participant interface that relied heavily on technology, which may influence participation in the study as participants unfamiliar with technology may seek not to participate. An additional concern was participants feeling uncomfortable engaging in conversations online, therefore care was taken to be amenable to participants, making sure interviews were conducted based on their availability and providing remuneration for their participation to increase openness and trustworthiness. Lastly, this study did not seek out participants from the educational sector. Initial attempts were made to gather perceptions of educational engagement from educators. Two separate attempts were made to recruit teachers and interventionists for participation. The first time was in the summer of 2021, I

initiated contact with three educators that were recommended to me by mothers participating in the study. All three educators did not respond to my initial or subsequent emails (2-3 attempts). My second attempt was in January 2022, where I again tried to establish contact with all three educators but received no response and decided to move forward with just parent participation. It is possible that a lack of educator participation was due to data collection occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic. Much has been written about the stressful conditions educators faced during the pandemic (Baker et al., 2021; Esteves et al., 2021; Hargreaves, 2021). Research has shown increased stress and anxiety among the educational workforce due to changes in teaching modalities during distance learning, as well as pressure faced to transition back to in-person instruction while receiving limited support against COVID infections (Baker et al., 2021; Hargreaves, 2021). In addition, teachers reported feeling demoralized by their lack of involvement and input in decision-making processes concerning COVID and changes to teaching and instruction (Esteves et al., 2021). These negative impacts may have contributed to educators having a lack of availability and low bandwidth for participating in this study. However, even with the limitations described above, I believe the knowledge gained in this study is beneficial to the border research community.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand how ten Mexican heritage families perceived and engaged in educational practices with their autistic child(ren). Results from this study found that in MH households mothers are the primary participants in caregiving and educationally engaging activities, families' perceptions of educational engagement are informed by Latinx cultural models of education, and families' goals and activities are shaped by their reflections on their child’s future life. Findings also showed diverse definitions of a ‘family’ unit which

included immediate and extended family, and non-DNA related individuals (i.e. *More than blood bonds, they are bonds of love)*. Additionally, my study described MH mother's beliefs and expectations for educators and the educational and socioemotional impacts of COVID-19 on MH families. Lastly, findings demonstrated that MH families enacted varied educational activities in their daily life and demonstrated how MH families utilized bilingual and multimodal language in educational interactions in the home.

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Appendix A: Parent Demographic Survey

1. ¿Cuántos hijos, hijas e hijastros tiene usted? (Escribe el numero)
How many sons, daughters, or stepchildren do you have? (Write a number)
2. ¿Podría decirme la edad de cada uno de ellos y si son niño o niña?
Please list the age and sex of each child.
4. Quién vive normalmente con usted en su casa?
Who currently lives with you in your home?

5. ¿Está su niño o niña inscrito en intervención temprana?
Is your child currently enrolled in early intervention?

 5A. Si respondió "Si" ¿En qué tipo de intervención temprana está matriculado?
 If yes, what type of early intervention are they receiving?

6. ¿Esta su niño o niña inscrito en la escuela?
Is your child currently in school?

 6a. ¿En qué tipo de escuela está matriculado? Se trata de clases regulares en una escuela típico, una clase especial en una escuela típico, o está matriculado en una escuela separada?
 If yes, what type of school are they enrolled in? (General education, special education classroom in a general education school, or in a special education school)

7. ¿Esta su niño o niña recibiendo servicios especiales en la escuela? Por ejemplo, esta su niño o niña trabajando con una maestra ayudante or recibiendo ayuda de un logopeda o especialista de lenguaje? *Is your child currently receiving services for special education in their school? For example, do they have an aid, do they receive push in or push out services from an interventionist?*
8. ¿Esta su niño o niña recibiendo servicios en una clínica?
Is your child currently receiving services in a clinic?

 9.A. ¿Qué servicio de clínica es?
 If yes, what is the clinic service?

10. ¿Esta su niño o niña recibiendo otros servicios fuera de la escuela o de la clínica?
I*s your child receiving a different service that is not at school or at a clinic?*

[INSERT FAMILY ACCOMMODATION SCALE HERE]

34. ¿Cuál es el nivel de educación más alto que usted ha completado?
What is the highest level of education you have completed?
35. ¿Está usted trabajando actualmente?
Are you currently working?
36. ¿De qué trabaja, que es lo que hace?
What is your current occupation?
37. ¿Dónde trabaja usted?
Where do you work?
38. ¿Cuál es su edad?
How old are you?
39. Esta usted casado/casada o viviendo con pareja?
Are you married, single, or living with a partner?

40. ¿Cuáles son los ingresos familiares anuales antes de las tasas?
What is your gross annual income?
41. ¿Cuál es la lengua principal que se habla en su casa?
What is the primary language you speak at home?
42. ¿Se habla en la casa en alguna otra lengua?
Do you speak another language in the home?
43. Si es que si, por favor especifique:
If yes, please indicate below which language.

[ONLY RESPOND IF SELECTS YES TO PARTNER/HUSBAND]

A. ¿Cuál es la raza o etnicidad de su pareja o esposo(a)?
What is the race/ethnicity of your partner or husband?
B. ¿Cuál es el nivel de educación más alto que su pareja o esposo(a) ha completado?
What is the highest level of education your partner/husband has completed?
C. ¿Está su pareja o esposo(a) trabajando actualmente?
Is your partner/husband currently working?
D. ¿De que trabaja su pareja o esposo(a)?
What is his current job?
E. ¿Dónde trabaja su pareja o esposo(a)?
Where does he currently work?
F. ¿Cuál es la edad de su pareja o esposo(a)?
How old is your partner/husband?

Appendix B: Family Accommodation Scale

1. ¿Quién juega con su niño o niña?
Who plays with the child(ren)?
2. ¿Quién da de comer a su niño o niña o está atento mientras come?
Who feeds the child or observes that the child(ren) eats?
3. ¿Quién ayuda con la disciplina y el control para su niño o niña?
Who helps with the discipline and control for your child(ren)?
4. ¿Quién está pendiente de su niño o niña en la casa?
Who takes care of the child(ren) at home?
*5. ¿Quién está pendiente de su niño o niña antes de la escuela?
Who takes care of the child(ren) before school?
*6. ¿Quién está pendiente de su niño o niña después de la escuela?
Who takes care of the child(ren) after school?
7. ¿Quién pide las citas con los médicos para su niño o niña?
Who makes appointments with medical providers for the child(ren)?
*8. ¿Quién pide las citas con los de terapia para su niño o niña?
Who makes appointments with therapists for the child(ren)?
*9. ¿Quién lleva a su niño o niña a estas citas?
Who takes the child(ren) to these appointments?
*10. ¿Quién asiste a las citas de IEP de su niño o niña?
Who attends the IEP meetings of your child(ren)?
*11. ¿Quién ayuda a su niño o niña con las áreas escolares o de aprendizaje?
Who helps the child(ren) with educational or learning tasks?
*12. ¿Quién ayuda a su niño o niña con la tarea de la escuela?
Who helps the child(ren) with schoolwork?
13. ¿Quién organiza ratos para que su niño o niña juegue con amigos?
Who organizes play dates?
14. ¿Quién habla con los/las terapeutas sobre su niño o niña?
Who speaks with therapists about the child(ren)?
15. ¿Quién habla con los/las maestras sobre su niño o niña?
Who speaks with teachers about the child(ren)?
16. ¿Quién toma las decisiones sobre los servicios médicos para su niño o niña?
Who makes decisions about medical services?
17. ¿Quién toma las decisiones sobre los servicios educativos para su niño o niña?
Who makes decisions about educational services?
18. ¿Quién, si es que alguien, lee sobre el autismo?
Who, if anyone, reads about autism?
19. ¿Quién si es que alguien habla con amigos y familiares sobre el autismo de su niño o niña?
Who, if anyone, speaks to friends or family about your child(rens) autism?
*20. ¿Quién si es que alguien habla con maestras o terapistas sobre el autismo de su niño o niña?
Who, if anyone, speaks to teachers or therapists about your child(rens) autism?
21. ¿Quién si es que alguien, está trabajando o trabaja horas extras para pagar el seguro médico para su niño o niña?
Who, if anyone, works or works extra hours to pay for medical insurance?

22. ¿Quién si es que alguien, está trabajando o trabaja horas extras para pagar la terapia para su niño o niña?
Who, if anyone, works or works extra hours to pay for therapy for your child?
23. ¿Quién si es que alguien ha dejado de trabajar o está trabajando menos horas para poder cuidar a su niño o niña?
Who, if anyone, stopped working or is working less to care for the child(ren)?
24. ¿Quién si es que alguien ha tomado un trabajo porque ofrecía beneficios necesarios para cuidar a su niño o niña?
Who, if anyone, has taken a job because it offered necessary medical benefits to help with care for your child?

Appendix C: Focus Group Interview Protocol

Investigator Instructions

For each question participants will utilize a 3x5 note card to respond. They may use as many notecards as they like, for as many responses as they have. One card will equal one DISTINCT response. Short phrases or words are preferred as they will be able to explain their answer later. After this step, each parent will read each of their responses/cards to the whole group. Parents will then be asked to individually select the responses they personally feel best answered each question, from all those stated and rank them in order of 1-5 on a sheet provided to them (i.e. 1= most important). Next, each participant will be asked to read their top five responses and describe why it was selected. Then, the focus group will work together to select the top five responses for the group and rank them in order of importance. Finally, parents will be asked to group the items into themes, based on similarities or other factors. For each step of this process parents will be asked to explain their group ranking, and reasoning for themes. The interviews will be transcribed and analyzed to understand reasoning and perceptions. At minimum one researcher and one graduate assistant will be present to aid any participants that may require assistance hearing questions or annotating their answers. In addition, at least one researcher will be bilingual in English and Spanish.

English

1. Please tell me what words or phrases come to mind when you think about how you educate your child(ren) with autism.
2. How do you define learning in the home?
3. What strategies do you use when you educate your child at home?
4. How do you participate in your child’s school?

Spanish

1. Por favor dígame las palabras o frases que le vienen a la mente cuando piensa en como educar a su niño/a(s) con autismo.
2. ¿Cuáles palabras o frases le vienen a la mente cuando piensa en el aprendizaje en la casa?
3. ¿Cuáles palabras o frases le vienen a la mente cuando piensa en las estrategias que utiliza para educar su niño/a con autismo?
4. ¿Qué palabras o frases describen cómo cultivar y desarrollar una relación con los maestros de su niño/a(s) con autismo?

Appendix D: Parent Individual Interview

Hoy hablaremos sobre la educación, sus creencias sobre la educación, como apoyan a su niño/a(s) con autismo en su educación, y lo que hace en la casa para promover la educación. *Today we will discuss education, your perceptions about education, educational support you provide your children with autism, and what household practices you utilize to promote education.*

Perceptions

1. Como define a la palabra educación? *How do you define, education?*
2. Basado en esta definición que piensa que es el rol de la familia? *Based on this definition what do you think the role of the family is?*
    a. Probe: Como define la familia? *How do you define family?*
3. Ahora pensando en la escuela, cual es el rol de la escuela en la educación? *Thinking about school, what is the role of school in education?*
4. Me puede describir la relación que ha tenido con las maestras/os? *Can you tell me about the relationship you have had with teachers?*
5. Basado en sus experiencias educando a su hijo/a(s) como es parecido a la manera que educan las maestras(os)? *Based on your experiencing educating your child how is it similar to how teachers educate?*

Support

6. Como apoya a su hijo/a(s) en la educación? *How do you support your child(ren)s education?*
7. Quien piensa usted que debería de apoyar un niño con autismo en la educación? *Who do you believe should be an educational support for a child with autism?*
    a. Probe: En la familia? La comunidad *In the family? In the community?*
8. Me puede dar un ejemplo de cómo esta persona debería de ayudar? (Repite por cada persona que menciona). *Can you give me an example of how this person should help? (Repeat for each individual mentioned).*
9. Cuales estrategias educacionales le han servido como apoyo para su niño/a(s) con autismo? *What educational strategies have provided support to your child with autism?*

Practices

10. Me puede describir un poco sobre su rutina diaria ahorita con su niño/a(s) con autismo? *Can you describe your daily routine as it relates to your child with autism?*
    a. *Cuando empezó la pandemia (COVID) como cambiaron las rutinas diarias?*
11. De las actividades que ha mencionado cuales piensa que son importante para la educación de su niño/a(s) con autismo? *Based on the activities you have mentioned which do you believe are important for your child's education*?
    a. Me puede decir porque XXX actividad es educacional? *Can you describe why XXX is educational?*
    b. *Desde que empezó COVID han cambiado su percepciones desde COVID.*
12. Cuales son unas metas educacionales que tiene para su niño/a(s) con autismo? *What are some educational goals that you have for XXX (target child)?*
    a. Como apoya usted a su niño/a(s) con autismo para alcanzar estas metas? *How do you support XXX (target child) to reach these goals?*
        i. Probe: Quien más podría ayudar? *Who else might help?*
        ii. Probe: Me puede dar un ejemplo de cómo pueden ayudar? *Can you give me an example of how they would help?*

Appendix E: Parent Video Recording Instructions

Usted ha sido seleccionado para la tercera parte de nuestro estudio "Mejorando Posibilidades." En Esta parte del estudio queremos entender las actividades educacionales que ocurren en casa, entre un hijo(a) con autismo y sus padres. Estamos interesados en aprender más sobre las actividades educacionales que usted y su hijo(a) con autismo hacen para interactuar. Cualquier actividad o rutina se puede grabar mientras que este junto con su hijo(a) y dure más de 5 minutos. Participación en esta parte requiere que grabe una interacción con su hijo(a) con autismo por lo menos una vez al día, por ejemplo grabar 20-30 minutos una actividad que están haciendo juntos. Si tiene la oportunidad de grabar varias interacciones en un día, por favor toma la oportunidad de grabar cuando pueda.

You have been selected for the fifth phase of the Improving Odds study. This phase of the study seeks to understand child and parent educational interactions at home. We are interested in learning about the educational activities in which you and your child with autism are interacting. These can be any type of activities or routines that you and your child do together and last at least 5 minutes. We would like for you to film at least one time per day, for example one joint activity for 20-30 minutes. However, if you have the opportunity to film more times throughout the day, please do.

Ejemplos de actividades que puede grabar:
Examples of possible activities to film:

Padre/Madre y Hijo(s) jugando con legos	Padre/Madre y Hijo(s) teniendo una conversación
Padre/Madre y Hijo(s) jugando futbol	Padre/Madre y Hijo(s) jugando con carros
Padre/Madre y Hijo(s) dibujando o coloreando juntos	Padre/Madre y Hijo(s) cocinando juntos
Cenando en Familia	Padre/Madre y Hijo(s) leyendo un libro juntos
Madre y Hijo(a) trabajando en un proyecto de la escuela juntos.	Padre/Madre y Hijo(s) bailando juntos

Father/Mother and Child(ren) playing with legos	*Father/Mother and Child(ren) having a conversation.*
Father/Mother and Child(ren) playing soccer	*Father/Mother and Child(ren) playing with cars.*
Father/Mother and Child(ren) drawing or coloring together.	*Father/Mother and Child(ren) cooking together.*

Family eating dinner together.	*Father/Mother and Child(ren) reading a book together.*
Mother and Child working on a project together.	*Father/Mother and siblings dancing together.*

Sabemos que usted conoce a su hijo mejor, entonces si hay otras oportunidades o lugares donde pueda grabar que no están escritas arriba, haz favor de incluirlo en la grabación. Lo importante es que grabe interacciones educacionales con su hijo(a) con autismo en lugares y situaciones de la vida diaria.

We trust that you know your child best, so if there are other opportunities or places to film that are not included above, please feel free to do so. We would like for you to film you and your child interacting in daily educational practices together.

Si un miembro de familia o conocido que no ha consentido ser parte del estudio se presenta durante la grabación se tendrá que parar la grabación. Cuando el familiar se haya despedido, puede resumir la grabación de video y terminar de filmar.

**If a non-family member who has not consented to the study is present during the recording, please stop the video recorder. You may resume the video recording after the individual leaves. **

Instrucciones para manejar la cámara de video se le darán y un papel con instrucciones se dejara con usted. Un representante del estudio estará con usted el primer día que empiece a grabar, para explicar el proceso y inicializar la cámara de video. Después del primer día usted tomará el cargo de instalar la cámara y grabar las escenas de interacción.

Instructions for operating the video camera will be provided and left with you. A representative from the study will come on the first day of filming to explain the process, and set up the camera, however you will have to do this on your own the nine remaining days of the study.

Un representante estará ahí el primer día para enseñarle los funciones, como instalar la cámara y para responder a cualquier pregunta que tenga. Pero, si es que después tiene más preguntas sobre el estudio, la cámara, o que grabar puede llamar o mandar un texto a Jessica, (559) 970-7620.

As stated, the representative will be there on the first day to set up and to answer any questions that you may have. However, if you have any questions about the study, the camera, or questions about filming, feel free to call or text Jessica (559) 970-7620.

¡Muchas gracias por su participación! ¡Esperamos aprender sobre sus interacciones!

Thank you in advance! We look forward to learning about your interactions!

Appendix F: Parent Video Recording: Debrief Questions

Instructions: When the researcher returns to pick up the video camera and recordings, they will follow up with a short viewing of the film clips that were recorded. The researcher will ask questions 1-4 for each of the documented clips.

1. Me puede dar un resumen de lo que está pasando en este video? *Can you summarize what was happening in this clip?*
2. Cuál fue su razonamiento en decidir grabar esta interacción? *What was your primary reasoning for filming this interaction?*
3. Este video enseña una interacción académica típica? *Is this a typical academic interaction?*
    a. Probe: Si si, como. Si no, porque no? *If yes, how so. If not, why not*
4. Menciona la estrategia educacional XXX me puede platicar más sobre esa práctica? *You stated XXX educational strategy can you tell me more about that practice?*
    a. Probe: Note XXX me puede platicar más sobre esa práctica educacional? *I noticed XXX can you tell me more about that practice?*