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Llegando a Ser un Papá

(Becoming a Father)

By

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requirements for the degree of

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in

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to families and their children.

May we come together across different disciplines to continue to find ways to help all families, especially the neediest and those seen as untraditional, in order to give children the best opportunities possible for leading healthy and fulfilling lives.

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Sixth, I'd like to thank my wife Jenn, who has helped with every step of the way – from being my sounding board to writing instructions for focus groups to making me a late night cup of coffee. I am truly grateful for such an amazing partner.

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Abstract

Improving the health of low-income communities requires a multifaceted approach that includes health care, education, social services, and economic support. The targets of these multifaceted interventions vary, but families are commonly targeted, particularly the mother and child, when it comes to child health interventions. Mothers and fathers each play key roles that influence whether children face health problems, and if so, how children face those problems. These parenting roles are particularly important during the first 5 years of a child's life, and continue to be important into adolescence and adulthood. However, when it comes to parenting information and support, most interventions have been directed toward mothers, while fathers often lack the support they need.

This study was conducted to begin to lay the groundwork of information needed for fatherhood programs to be able to expand the services they offer to reach more fathers, particularly Hispanic fathers. The goals of this study were to identify some of the parenting needs of Hispanic fathers and to help expand minority fathering programs in the San Francisco Bay Area. The specific research questions that guided the research were: 1) What information do Spanish-speaking fathers in the East Bay want to know about raising their young children aged 0-5 years old? and 2) How can the community at-large provide better support to Hispanic fathers?

The project was a qualitative study with secondary analyses of two focus groups comprising a total of 11 Bay Area Spanish-speaking fathers that were part of a larger project of both English and Spanish-speaking focus groups of parents in cities across the United States. The aim of the larger project was to ask parents with young children what topics they would like to be covered in a renewed edition of a parenting video series. A modified grounded theory approach was utilized in the analysis of the two focus groups.

Results of the analysis identified a model of different stages of fatherhood, a model we called the "5 Stages of Fatherhood Identity Formation". This model helped organize overarching themes that emerged from focus groups and also helped organize different points of intervention for Hispanic fathers.

Part I – Literature Review: Llegando a Ser un Papá (Becoming a Father)

Introduction

Improving the health of communities requires a multifaceted approach including health care, education, social services, and economic support. Increasingly, disciplines are stepping outside their silos of expertise and beginning to create a harmonious web of support for community needs. When beginning a new project or expanding on previous efforts, there are infinite possibilities for who, when, how, and where the consortium of public health entities can aid a community. In the realm of children's health there are a variety of ways to help support children's needs. Focusing on families, communities can have the greatest impact on children's health if they start at the very beginning of children's lives and begin supporting the family unit before birth.

Why here? Pregnancy and the parents' health, as well as the social and physical context in which they live, are the first interactions a child will experience. And with growing support from the field of epigenetics, a family's environment before, during, and after the pregnancy is playing an increasingly important role in the child's health and development. Over the years, much research and attention has been given to the maternal side of this equation and little focus has been given to fathers, despite increasing literature supporting their importance. Even less focus has been given to fathers from different cultural backgrounds. This literature review will focus on the role of parents, particularly fathers and their relationship to children's health and development. A special focus is dedicated to finding research on fathers from different cultural backgrounds, predominantly African-American and Hispanic fathers. This review will start with some statistics on the current state of children across the United States and in California and end with a discussion on how communities in the Bay Area are supporting fathers.

The inspiration guiding this research is embedded in the fact that family structures are changing and the roles fathers fulfill in both traditional and untraditional family settings are also shifting. This is further complicated by the ever-changing American demographics and a growing Hispanic population. In order to keep up with supporting families through these changes, this research will focus on the role of Hispanic fathers and what they want to know to support their children's health and development. The final focus of this research will be on Spanish-speaking fathers in the San Francisco Bay Area that have young children and how the community at-large is supporting these fathers.

A Caveat: Use of the Word Father

Historically, research on fathers has focused on married biological fathers and stepfathers. More current research is expanding the definition of fathers to include non-cohabitating biological fathers and cohabitating non-biological fathers, the latter of which is considered a more modern "social father," which can be defined as an unmarried romantic partner of the mother. These broadening definitions of a father are an important consideration since as of 2012, 41% of all births in the US were outside of marriage (Hamilton, Martin, & Ventura, 2013). About 40% of all children will live with one of these social fathers by the age of 12 years old. In the Hispanic community, both foreign and U.S.-born Hispanic women between the early 1990s and mid-2000s have had an increase in non-marital childbirth rates. So it is important when examining fatherhood research to note that terminology for who is considered a "father" may be used loosely. As research continues in this field, it is important to keep considering the expansion of this idea of a "father" since the tasks or roles that may be associated with fathers might well

be fulfilled by any parental figure. So while many sources do not specifically define what is meant by a “father”, this paper will broadly use the term father as the male most involved in caregiving and committed to the wellness of the child. Differentiation will be made, where possible, regarding living situation, biological relation, or other relevant factors as they pertain to the information cited.

State of Fatherhood in the US and California:

The United States is well known for its diversity and is inherently a population that is continually in flux given immigration patterns and changes in birth rates across populations. In order to improve the public health of communities, it is important to be vigilant of these varying community demographics and trends. This section will cover some of the shifting socioeconomic forces have led to a changing environment for children, including the expectations society places on parents, particularly fathers.

In 2012, American families had over one-third of children living in single-parent households, and that number has been rising over the years. Also on the rise has been the percentage of children living in high-poverty, at 13% in 2012. (*Data Book: state trends in child well-being*, 2014). So as the nation moves away from the traditional married-couple household, more children are living in mother-only and father-only households, with the latter reaching its highest percentage yet at 8% (5.6 million) in 2012 ("Data by Location | KIDS COUNT Data Center," 2015). There has also been an increased economic shift in which it is now more beneficial for some mothers in two-parent households to continue working instead of the fathers, resulting in more stay-at-home fathers. And in families that cannot afford to use child care services, or at least choose not to use such services, the father may have to watch over the children during the mother's working hours (Casper & O'Connell, 1998; Riley & Glass, 2002). Many of these increasing changes in family structure begin to give insight about why the number of hours that fathers spend with children on weekdays and weekends has been increasing. Looking specifically at Latino fathers, they tend to spend more time with their children on weekends than Black or White fathers, particularly in the areas of household and personal care activities (Yeung, Sandberg, Davis-Kean, & Hofferth, 2001). Other reasons include fathers spending more shared custody hours with their children and changing technological capabilities that allow more encounters between fathers and children (Coleman, Garfield, & Amer Acad, 2004). So as communities look forward to supporting families and their changing structures, it is important to consider providing more support for fathers and their increasing roles in families. The effects fathers have on families and the type of support that fathers need can vary from culture to culture. This paper will focus on the needs of the Hispanic community, but many other communities, particularly the African-American community, warrant just as much attention in future studies.

Nationally and in the State of California, there is a growing Latino population and more than a third of children that live in Latino households are in families where parents lack a high school diploma. In California, 52% of children are Hispanic and 40% of those children are in single-family households ("Data by Location | KIDS COUNT Data Center," 2015). So, most single-parent children in California are in Hispanic families, estimated to be around 1.8 million children. This is at least 3 times higher than for any other race/ethnic group. Add to this the fact that 64% of California Hispanic children are in households below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, and one can begin to understand the gravity of the situation -- in the state of California, it is mostly Hispanic children in single-parent households, mostly Hispanic children in low-income families, and mostly Hispanic children in households where the parent lacks a high school diploma. So looking to the needs of the most populous ethnic or race group of California children, it is important to find ways of supporting these Hispanic families and children. One way of providing this support is through fathers and the increasing roles they play in families.

Current Statistics and Trends in Fatherhood

Between 2006 and 2010, the CDC conducted a survey that included basic descriptive statistics on father involvement with children. This study looked at approximately 62 million fathers between the ages of 15 and 44 years old. Part of the analysis on father involvement was based on whether children were under age 5 or aged 5-18, and on whether fathers were cohabitating or non-cohabitating with children (Jones & Mosher, 2013). This paper will focus in on fathers with children under the age of 5. The data presented in these tables is looking at fathers aged 15 to 44 years who have children below the age of 5 years. There are limitations to these studies because the study does not control for region, employment, income, or other factors that may influence participation in parenting. The only factor that is considered is whether parents cohabit with their children. *(Note: If there is an * it means the number did not meet the study's standards of reliability or precision)*

Table 1 - How Often Fathers Ate Meals with Their Children in the Last 4 Weeks

(n=12,614)

Characteristic		Not at all	Every Day
	Total	Percent Distribution	
Cohabitates with one or more children	Hispanic or Latino	1.4	63.9
	White	0.3	73.9
	Black	*	78.2
Does NOT cohabit with his children	Hispanic or Latino	58.0	8.6
	White	35.2	*
	Black	31.0	12.6

As can be seen from *Table 1*, Hispanic fathers are less likely to eat daily meals (or more likely to not eat all) with their children under 5 years old when compared to black or white fathers. This is true among both Hispanic fathers that cohabit (63.9% eat daily meals with children) and non-cohabit (58% do not eat at all) with their children.

Table 2 - How Often Fathers Helped Care for Their Children in the Last 4 Weeks

(n = 12,614)

Characteristic		Not at all	Every Day
	Total	Percent Distribution	
Cohabitates with one or more children	Hispanic or Latino	7.6	45.0
	White	2.1	60.0
	Black	6.5	70.4
Does NOT cohabit with his children	Hispanic or Latino	65.7	7.3
	White	38.6	6.6
	Black	34.2	12.7

Hispanic fathers are also less likely to help care for their children when compared to White or Black fathers. By care, this study meant helping with dressing, bathing, diapering, or toileting their children. Cohabiting Hispanic fathers were least likely to do these tasks on a daily basis (45%) when compared to

Black or White fathers. Among non-cohabitating Hispanic fathers, 65.7% had not done these tasks at all over the last 4 weeks, again falling behind both White and Black fathers.

Table 3 - How Often Fathers Played with Their Children in the Last 4 Weeks

(n = 12,614)

	Characteristic	Not at all	Every Day
	Total	Percent Distribution	
Cohabitates with one or more children	Hispanic or Latino	0.5	74.1
	White	*	82.7
	Black	*	82.2
Does NOT cohabitate with his children	Hispanic or Latino	52.3	10.0
	White	29.7	6.6
	Black	24.8	16.5

When it comes to playing with children, cohabitating Hispanic fathers were least likely (74.1%) to play every day with their children when compared to Black and White fathers. Non-cohabitating Hispanic fathers were most likely to have not played with their children at all in the last 4 weeks (52.3%) when compared to black or white fathers.

Table 4 - How Often Fathers Read to Their Children in the Last 4 Weeks

(n = 12,611)

	Characteristic	Not at all	Every Day
	Total	Percent Distribution	
Cohabitates with one or more children	Hispanic or Latino	31.8	21.9
	White	8.4	30.2
	Black	18.5	34.9
Does NOT cohabitate with his children	Hispanic or Latino	70.0	*
	White	36.1	3.2
	Black	47.4	7.8

In terms of reading to their children, both cohabitating and non-cohabitating Hispanic fathers were not reading to their children as much as white or black fathers. 31.8% of cohabitating Hispanic fathers and 70% of non-cohabitating Hispanic fathers did not read at all to their children in the last 4 weeks, both much higher percentages than White and Black fathers.

Briefly looking at fathers with school-aged children (aged 5 – 18 years), the lack of involvement continues among Hispanic fathers, particularly in the areas of taking children to activities, talking to children about the child's day, and helping with homework. However, little focus was given to data for older children for the purposes of this literature review.

Overall, this study highlights some key areas where Hispanic fathers can be supported. Hispanic fathers might benefit from parenting information on eating, playing, and reading with their children, in addition to increasing participation with daily caregiving tasks for their children under the age of 5 years. However, this study has many limitations since it was not able to control for important factors like employment and income level. Also cultural factors may influence fathers' participation in these tasks.

Thus this study should be considered only in relation to many other sources of input and is by no means a comprehensive look at fathering in Hispanic communities.

Family Structure

Many studies have examined households with two married, biological parents, but as was shown earlier in the US and California demographics, these households are declining – in 1970, 85% of children lived in two-parent households, but as of 2009, only 69% lived in two-parent households. But this number includes cohabitating parents, regardless of biological or marital status. Narrowing in on the number of households with married, biological parents, there were only 57% as of 2009 (Kreider & Ellis, 2011). So as the American society continues to move away from this conservative family structure that has been seen as the cultural norm, it is still thought to be essential for the proper upbringing of children (Popenoe, 1993). Part of the reason why the two-parent biological household has been preferred to other family structures, like the single-parent structure, is due to its protective factors for children (Carr & Springer, 2010). Studies have shown that two-parent households have a protective influence on adolescent mental health (Barrett & Turner, 2005), drug use (Hoffmann, 2002), early sexual behavior (Upchurch, Aneshensel, Mudgal, & McNeely, 2001), and access to health care (Gorman & Braverman, 2008). Many of these protective influences are thought to be due to economic, cultural, and psychosocial benefits of having a two-parent household (Carr & Springer, 2010). But few of these studies focus on differences of family structure within the Hispanic families.

One study that does identify trends in Hispanic family structure, shows that Hispanic women, like the rest of the nation, are experiencing an upward trend in non-marital childbearing (Kennedy & Bumpass, 2008). Another study showed how Hispanic mothers that were cohabitating, divorced, or single, showed more negative and intrusive behaviors than married Hispanic women. Also, cohabitating Hispanic mothers had lower cognitive stimulation of their children. Even fewer studies highlight the benefits that fathers have within the family structure, particularly within the Hispanic culture, and the benefits that they bring to the family.

Father Impact on Child Health

Infant Morbidity and Mortality

One example where fathers are thought to play a role is in infant mortality rates. For many years it has been known that children of unmarried mothers have a higher infant mortality rate than those of married mothers, possibly influenced by the availability of financial, social, and emotional resources (Matthews & MacDorman, 2013). Studies have shown that the presence of involved fathers of any type, married or unmarried, is a good predictor for better child health (Carr & Springer, 2010). Simply having a father listed on a birth certificate, can give an infant a four times greater likelihood of living past the age of one year (Gaudino, Jenkins, & Rochat, 1999). . The social, economic, and numerous other benefits fathers provide can thus have a significant impact on children's health. So in discussing the effects fathers have on family, it is important to understand some of the different effects fathers have on children's health. The next few sections will highlight some of the health effects fathers have on the family.

In situations where fathers come to visit their premature infants in the hospital, the preemies had better weight gain in the hospital and better behavioral and developmental scores in the first 18 months of life. Looking at African-American fathers, their involvement with their premature infants also enhanced the

cognitive and behavioral abilities of the child. As children get a little older (aged 0-4 years), fathers tend to engage more in tactile and stimulating activities with their children (Coleman et al., 2004).

When fathers are not present for the birth of their child, there are higher rates of low birth weight, very low birth weight, premature birth, very premature birth, and small for gestational age births. (Alio, Kornosky, Mbah, Marty, & Salihu, 2010).

Nutrition

Fathers' presence around the time of birth can help encourage mothers to breastfeed by simply advocating for breastfeeding and having more knowledge about the matter (Susin et al., 1999; Wolfberg et al., 2004). One interventional study from Brazil on 600 couples looked at the effects of when mothers and fathers participate in educational intervention that consists of a breastfeeding educational video, a leaflet, and an open discussion – all just after the birth of their child. Both mothers and fathers had their knowledge tested months after viewing the video 2 months afterwards. Fathers' knowledge was important because for couples where the father knew more after the intervention, there was a 1.8-fold higher chance of breastfeeding exclusively after one month and a 1.9-fold higher chance of breastfeeding after the third month (Susin et al., 1999). Another similar study in the US looked at the effects of a breastfeeding promotional intervention on fathers; 74% of women whose partner attended the class vs 41% of women whose partner did not attend the class breastfed more, again showing the influence fathers can have as advocates for encouraging woman to breastfeed (Wolfberg et al., 2004). So education of fathers' perspective on breastfeeding is important because just as much as fathers can support breastfeeding, they can also not support breastfeeding and negatively influence the mother's decision on breastfeeding. One study showed how a mother's perception of her partner's attitude toward breastfeeding influences her choice of infant feeding method. For example if she thought her partner had a negative attitude toward breastfeeding, then she would likely not choose breastfeeding (Freed, Fraley, & Schanler, 1993).

The role fathers play in infants' introduction to new foods after breast- or bottle-feeding is still not well known. One study showed how fathers play an important role in supporting the mother's decisions when it comes to food and fluid introductions. Father's also served as a filter of information from outside sources (K. E. Anderson, Nicklas, Spence, & Kavanagh, 2010).

The effects fathers have on nutrition in the first few years of life is still an area that generally needs more studies, especially when it comes to looking at fathers' role in different cultures. While no studies were found on early life feeding influences of Hispanic fathers, one study on African American families showed that as non-maternal caregivers, like fathers, grandmothers, and licensed caregivers, were more involved with feeding, there was an obvious decreased likelihood of continued breastfeeding and an increased likelihood of infants or toddlers consuming juice or whole fruit (Wasser et al., 2013). This study shows how early life feeding practices by different caregivers, including fathers, can begin to influence a child's sugar intake and potentially lead to obese children. Future studies are needed that focus on fathers in different cultures and how their feeding practices for their infant and toddler children may vary.

As children get older, into the school-age range, many more studies have looked at the effects fathers have on children's obesity rates. For example, in families where the father does not cohabitate with the children, children have body weight issues, thought to be related to social class, father's obesity, and the gender of children (Menning & Stewart, 2008). Also, fathers of middle school-aged children tend to be more involved in recreational activities than mothers (Coleman et al., 2004). Looking to studies that analyze cultural differences, English-speaking Hispanic fathers that lacked social support were more likely to have overweight/obese children when compared to white fathers (Watt, Martinez-Ramos, & Majumdar, 2012). However, it is not simply a matter of fathers being present, involved, and supported, it is also important to look at the nuanced practices of fathers interacting with their children.

For example, one study looked specifically at Mexican-American families with 8 to 10 year old children and conducted a survey on parental feeding practices with the mothers and fathers of 174 children. The study identified four schemas of parental feeding practices: positive involvement in child eating practices, pressuring a child to eat, using food to control child behavior, and restricting the amount of food a child eats – all four of which were related to children’s BMI. While mothers and fathers had similar feeding styles, they differed in the degree to which they reported practicing each feeding style and whether or not those feeding styles correlated to differences in their children’s BMI scores. Both mothers and fathers that put more pressure on their children to eat had children with lower BMI scores and conversely families had children with higher BMI scores if they restricted the amount of food they gave children. And while both mothers and fathers would report positive involvement in their child’s eating practices, it was only correlated to lower child BMI scores when the mother would report the positive involvement. Similarly, only when fathers reported using food to control children’s behavior would it be correlated to lower child BMI scores. (Tschann et al., 2013). Why these specific feeding practices were more correlated with mothers or fathers was unclear and more studies are needed. Unfortunately, this was the only study found to look specifically at Hispanic father feeding practices, and was limited to parents of school-aged children. Thus more studies are needed that look at some of the finer cultural nuances of parenting within different cultures.

Mental Health

During children’s school-age years of 5 to 17 years old, fathers also play a role in helping their child’s gender identity development, improving their child’s social competence, decreasing child depressive symptoms, decreasing child delinquent behavior, and generally improving child psychological well-being (Coleman et al., 2004; Dubowitz et al., 2001; Williams & Radin, 1999). For example, when children do not live with both parents, they have three times the risk of having an affective disorder (Cuffe, McKeown, Addy, & Garrison, 2005). Another study looking at middle school-aged African-American children, fathers help buffer the effects of stress on both boys and girls and kept children from externalizing their stress symptoms (Grant et al., 2000).

Dubowitz et al (2001) looked at 855 6-year-olds in high-risk White and African American families (i.e., history of abuse, low-income, foster care, or other demographic features). In this study, 79% of the study’s children had a father figure in their life such as a biological father, other male relative, or an adult male friend. This study found that children who reported more support had a stronger perception of competence and social acceptance, in addition to having fewer depressive symptoms. The study also found that children who identified their father figure as their biological father had fewer depressive symptoms (Dubowitz et al., 2001).

Thus while fathers have been identified as having a significant role in their children’s mental health, it is unfortunate that no studies were found that look specifically at Hispanic families and how the child’s mental health can be influenced by a father-child relationship.

Sexual Health

Mothers are traditionally seen as the sexual health educators in families, but fathers are just as important in children’s socialization. For example, one study found that increased father-daughter communication may delay engaging in sexual activity and reduce frequency of sexual intercourse encounters (Hutchinson & Cederbaum, 2011). While no studies were found in relation to fathers and child sexual development in Hispanic communities, in African American communities, male adolescents were positively influenced by both mothers and fathers. The more parent-child communication there was, the greater use of

condoms, less permissive sexual partners, and fewer sexual partners there were for these adolescents (Harris, Sutherland, & Hutchinson, 2013).

Father Impact on Child Development and Education

Early Childhood Development

Attachment theory says that attachment to parents, particularly the mother, starts in the first few months of life, as the primary caregiver meets the needs of the infant through food and safety. Attachment then forms with this primary caregiver and that person functions as a safety anchor, allowing the child to explore the world. Separation anxiety is when the individual serving as the safety anchor is no longer available (Bretherton, 1992). Early separation anxiety has been correlated to problems later in life. One study, looking at African American, European American, and Mexican American high school students found that all three ethnic group adolescents reported more positive sense of self-esteem and less antisocial behaviors if they were securely attached to mother or father. There were no significant differences in attachment to mother or father (Arbona & Power, 2003). Thus this study sheds some light on the early questions of attachment theory that focused on maternal child bonding and left questions on whether a father could fulfill this role for children. The lack of differences between mother and father attachment supports the idea that father-child attachment can and does occur just as well as with mothers.

Academics

One study looking at African-American adolescent girls (average age 12) found that the quality of the father-daughter bond not only positively influenced the girls' self-esteem, but also was positively girls' academic engagement (Cooper, 2009). Another study looking at African American boys showed a two parent household structure and that fathers' education level were positive predictors of GPA, but fathers' high expectations were negative predictors of GPA (Hines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013). The positive predictors were expected and supported previous findings, however fathers' high expectations being a negative predictor went against previous findings. The significance of this study is that most of the previous research was not in African American communities. Thus while more research needs to be done to verify this finding, this study highlights the importance of analyzing father-child relationships within cultural settings.

Looking specifically at the little father-child research within the Hispanic community, one study showed that both mothers and fathers of Mexican origin had their parenting practices and cultural orientation influence both boys' and girls' academic outcomes. Fathers in particular had significant influence over the academic path boys would take while the mother influenced both boys and girls. Fathers' warmth correlated with lower problem classroom behavior for boys, while fathers' harshness was positively correlated to more association with problem peers for boys. Lastly, both mothers' and fathers' acculturation was correlated to boys' greater problem classroom behavior and association with problem peers (Dumka, Gonzales, Bonds, & Millsap, 2009). The fact that fathers tend to have significant effects on only boys from this study may be a result of fathers being more involved with the upbringing of sons or simply the result of cultural factors. Also looking at the acculturation finding which supports previous research, a variety of mechanisms could potentially explain why parents who are more acculturated have more problems with their children. One proposed mechanism presented in the paper was that as parents become more acculturated, they no longer enforce cultural norms like respecting authorities and being "*bien educado*" (well brought up and polite). Another proposed mechanism was that as parents are more acculturated, they were less likely to be new immigrants and less likely to expect children to uphold

family obligations due to parental sacrifice. Looking to another study that also looked at acculturation, Latino fathers' acculturation was positively correlated with fathers' likelihood to participate in children's schooling (Terriquez, 2013). Both of these studies highlight the importance of looking at fatherhood from different cultural perspectives – and levels of acculturation – to best understand the dynamic relationship that exists between parent and child.

Father Impact on Child Life Trajectory

Looking to the big picture, certain areas like children's educational/economic success, drug abuse, and legal troubles are all factors where fathers can have a huge impact on the overall trajectory of their child's life. When fathers are involved, their level of involvement is positively correlated with children's improved academic performance and higher college entrance exams which both lead to higher educational background and greater economic success (Coleman et al., 2004). On the other extreme, when fathers are absent from the home or have low levels of involvement, children are at increased risk for substance abuse, delinquency, and incarceration – problems that are exacerbated if a father has never been in the child's household (A. L. Anderson, 2002; Bronte-Tinkew, Moore, & Carrano, 2006; Harper & McLanahan, 2004). In another study looking at children's ability to adapt, teachers evaluated the stability of a child's home living situation. The study found that lower child home stability ratings were associated with father's absence from the home. As a result, these children had a greater chance of adaptation failure as a result of being in an unstable home. Child adaptation failure here is defined as having borderline or clinically deviant behavior problems and poor or failing academic functioning (Richters & Martinez, 1993).

Focusing in on child trajectory effects within different cultures, one study looking primarily at fathers in African American and Hispanic families found results, consistent with the previous studies, where the amount of father involvement was inversely correlated to the amount of child delinquency (Coley & Medeiros, 2007). Another study that focused on African-American girls' drug refusal self-efficacy found it to be associated with the quality of the father-daughter relationship (Boyd, Ashcraft, & Belgrave, 2006). Sadly, little to no research has been done on the relationship between Hispanic father-child relationships and many of these life trajectory outcomes. Again this shows the need for more research of father-child relationships and the long term effects of these relationships within different cultures.

More research into the long term effects of father-child relationships within different minority populations can show communities and governments where the need lies in supporting fathers and their changing roles within different family structures. The next section will focus on some of the different roles fathers fulfill in their families.

Father Roles in Child Upbringing

Parents' roles have been evolving over the last few decades and the parenting roles fathers choose to take on can vary by a number of factors that include cultural background, time and assimilation to American culture, and educational background. One study in the San Francisco Bay Area looked at fathers with a child between the ages of 0 to 5 years old. In a survey fathers indicated what they saw as their primary role within the family and the results can be seen in this table. There were 204 fathers in this study and the ethnic breakdown was: white (37%), Hispanic (26%), Asian (18%), African American (9%) and other (9%). Parenting was the most common role fathers indicated, and being a role model was the next most commonly indicated role. While this study included a variety of fathers from different cultures, it was not very representative of other areas of the country or state. Another limitation of this study was that it did not look into differences within or across cultural backgrounds.

Table 5 Respondents Identify Their Primary Role As A Father (n = 197)

	<i>N (%)</i>
Parenting	153 (78)
Role model	104 (53)
Pay the bills	86 (44)
Care giver	80 (41)
Disciplinarian	77 (39)
Head of the house	76 (39)
Teacher	71 (36)
Mother's support	60 (30)
Providing transportation	58 (29)
No role as father	4 (2)

Source: (Buckelew, Pierrie, & Chabra, 2006)

There is no similar study looking at African American or Hispanic fathers with children in the same age range, but there are some studies looking at older children. One study with African American fathers identified their roles as providing support and affection, teaching values and skills, protecting their children, caring for them when sick, and being the disciplinarian (Dubowitz, Lane, Ross, & Vaughan, 2004). Another study looked at Latino mothers' and fathers' caregiving with school-aged children in two-parent households. This study in the Southwestern U.S. looked at 159 Latino families with an average education level of 11th grade, an average age of mid-30s, and an average household income of \$33,000. The study found that mothers spent significantly more time with children than fathers. Mothers spent more time with physical care, doctor visits, doing household chores with the child, and communicating with the child than fathers. While many studies have shown that Latino father involvement is often significantly lower than that of the mother, this study found a less significant difference between mothers and fathers; the amount of time fathers spent caring for children was about 70% of the time that mother's spent caring for their children (Hossain, Lee, & Martin-Cuellar, 2015). Other studies have shown that Latino fathers tended to be more involved with their school-aged children than white or African American fathers (Hofferth, 2003). But the simple reality is that, just like American society broadly, fatherhood in the Latino culture is in a state of change.

One study looked at literature on fatherhood through an anthropological, sociological, and psychological lens, with a focus on Latin America. The study found support for a decline in patriarchy due to contemporary feminist movements and changes in the labor market that have allowed for the boundaries around gender roles to be more blurred. While some studies refer to the modern, more egalitarian fathers as "new fathers," this study found it more appropriate to call them "transitional fathers" which reflects the transitional needs and realities of family life and the division of labor between sexes. Additionally, while modern fathers are emotionally closer to their children, more progress still needs to be made as fathers still face a variety of social pressures and barriers. The traditional thoughts of masculinity in the Latino culture are that of the "macho man," where men do not cry, are competitive and strong, rational, not emotionally involved, and strive to be the best. On the other hand, the contemporary father is more involved with family and does not feel his masculinity threatened because in this new setting, his male

identity depends on both his performance at work and with his family. In closing, the study emphasizes the need for deconstructing gender stereotypes and the difficulties imposed by societies that resist such change. Not only will this help facilitate exchanging parenting roles between mothers, fathers, and other caregivers, it also serves to be an “excellent opportunity for children to internalize the principles of equality” (Krimberg von Muhlen, Saldanha, & Neves Strey, 2013). So even within the Latino culture, there is still much variability and transition in the roles fathers play and thus not necessarily one predominant set of the roles that Latino fathers tend to encompass. One possible way to look at fatherhood and the roles fathers are currently engaging in is by looking at specific roles and how fathers may be taking on more or less within these roles. The next few sections will discuss a little more in depth what fathers’ relationships are to some of these roles.

Breadwinner vs Caregiver

In the beginning of this paper, it was briefly mentioned that in some situations, it is more beneficial financially for mothers to work than fathers. While traditionally, fathers have been seen as the primary breadwinners, changes in parent’s education levels, employment, and economic situations have shifted the roles of breadwinner and caregiver within families. One study looked at fathers that stay home to provide childcare and the economic factors that would influence whether they work or stay home to care for children. The study found that in times of economic uncertainty (recession years) families would decide on who worked and who stayed home with the children based on relative economic earning power, or in other words, the parent who earned more worked and the parent who earned less stayed at home with the children. However, in nonrecession years, the significant factor was how much overall money the family made. So if the family made enough money, the family would pay for childcare and the father would work. Otherwise, lower income families would simply have the father stay at home. In these nonrecession years, the earning power of each parent was not a significant factor in deciding whether or not fathers would be the child caregiver (Casper & O’Connell, 1998). Thus it is important to continue monitoring the dynamic structures of families and the roles fathers play in relation to not only their individual economic situations, but also on the macroeconomic level of the countries and trends in families.

Another study looked at cross-national parental satisfaction in parents’ roles as breadwinner and homemaker. And while traditional structures of a father as the breadwinner and the mother as the homemaker had higher family satisfaction compared to other family structures, men reported more satisfaction when they were more involved with housework and childcare. There was little variation across countries, which included 31 countries from Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the United States. Generally, the more developed a country was, the more satisfaction there was in families. Part of the reason for this was that development and family policies that supported father involvement in household responsibilities were associated with greater family satisfaction in both traditional and non-traditional family structures (Forste & Fox, 2012). While this study included Latin American countries, an exclusive study looking at Hispanic families was not found. So while both of these studies may be generalized to Hispanic families, more research is needed to see how Hispanic fathers are fulfilling their roles as breadwinners and as caregivers with respect to their cultures.

Disciplinarian

Fathers often assume the disciplinarian role, and even though fathers are currently trending away from this role, it is still an important factor to consider when looking at fatherhood. One study looked at how more fathers are diversifying their paternal roles, moving away from being responsible for controlling children’s aggressive behavior and trending toward paternal functions of warmth and involvement.

Unfortunately, this also has caused fathers to have less perceived power and authority, and fathers have compensated by increasing their psychological control over children, which has been shown to be harmful to children (Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). Another study looking at parent-to-youth violence, mentions the difficulty in where to draw the line between abuse and discipline. Often assessments of parent-to-youth violence will include power-assertive parenting behaviors that cause physical or psychological pain – even if parents still believe such action to be normal discipline. This study also found that in families where fathers are more stressed, there was a greater association between parent-to-youth aggression; and father-to-youth aggression, mother-to-youth aggression, and community violence all were associated with increased youth behavior problems (Margolin et al., 2009). Thus while the role of disciplinarian may be in transition between mother and father, it is important to consider the impact a parents' actions can have on the physical and psychological well-being of their children. The next sections, will look as discipline in the context of different cultures.

One study looked at parenting practices and developmental expectations in Mexican and US fathers with children aged 1 to 5 years old. There were 96 participants, half from an urban area of the Midwestern U.S. and half from an urban area of Guadalajara, Mexico; over 88% of fathers in both groups were married. The study found no significant differences between US and Mexican fathers, but did find a difference between low SES and high SES families. In both countries, low SES fathers were less likely to be nurturing and more frequently used discipline (spanking and yelling) when compared to fathers from high SES backgrounds. This study hypothesized that that cultural differences are less of a factor in younger children than older children and that family income was a more significant predictor of parenting practices (Fox & SolisCamara, 1997). However, a larger study looked at 1257 married or cohabitating fathers from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study with an indexed child of 3 years old. The ethnic breakdown of the fathers was 31% white, 40% African American, and 29% Hispanic. This study found that Hispanic fathers were least likely to spank or engage in psychological or physical aggression with their children when compared to white and African American fathers. This study also found that married African American fathers were at greater risk for some forms of paternal child abuse when compared to cohabitating African American fathers. Lastly, the study found that paternal employment and earning were not associated with the risk of fathers' physical abuse of children (Lee, Guterman, & Lee, 2008). The two studies show that families' SES, cultural, and structural background can all influence a father's role as disciplinarian.

In addressing how to support fathers with discipline, one study with African American fathers of 8-year-olds found that while many of these fathers saw discipline as one of their roles, they felt uncomfortable in this role (Dubowitz et al., 2004). Thus one potential area for intervention is helping fathers be more comfortable with healthy and effective ways of disciplining their children.

No literature was found on how to best support Hispanic fathers in regards to their role as disciplinarians. The next section will discuss some the ways communities are currently supporting fathers.

How Fathers Are Being Supported

Currently there is a national push toward increasing father participation with families. The National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) is an organization that was founded in 1994 to improve the well-being of children by increasing father involvement. NFI provides information and support for communities trying to support fathers. They have worked with community-based organizations across the United States, particularly in the states of Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Virginia. They have also worked with incarcerated fathers, military fathers, and state and county agencies. NFI supports these agencies and organizations by providing printed materials, workshop and curriculum kits, and training on fatherhood

skill-building. National efforts like NFI have helped to support many local organizations to work with fathers.

Looking specifically at the San Francisco Bay Area, in 2001 the Bay Area Fathering Indicators Data System (BAYFIDS) Project tracked and analyzed the impact of local fathering programs. There were many key findings from this study that have shown possible next steps to supporting fatherhood initiatives.

Table 6.

PROFILE OF FATHER PARTICIPANTS*	
Age	Ethnicity
16 or Younger: 10.0%	Hispanic: 45%
Over 30: 57.5%	White: 10%
	African American: 10%
	Asian American: 5%
Poverty	Children
>80% Below 1999 Poverty Line	1 Child: 45.0%
	2 Children: 35.5%
	3 or more: 22.5%
Literacy and Numeracy	Marital Status
Read below 6th grade level: 20%	Married: 50%
	Separated or Divorced: 25%
	Never Married: 45%
Educational Attainment	Other
Years of schooling: 10%	Cohabitate with children: 50%
Without GED or HS Diploma: 60%	Have sole custody of their one child: 40%
Some College: 10%	
Employment Status	
One full-time job: 51.4%	
One part-time job: 15.7%	
Unemployed: 37.8%	
Involved in the informal economy: 47.0%	

*Percentages will not add to 100%; Means reported, unless otherwise stated.

Source: (Gadsden & Rethemeyer, 2001)

First, while there was some diversity amongst the fathering programs, most fathering programs generally focused on low-income, noncustodial fathers. While these services are very valuable and help target a large population of absent fathers, one area in which these programs can expand is to help fathers that are custodial parents but may not be as engaged as they can be. This is important because as Table 6 shows, 50% of the fathers attending fatherhood programs are actually married and 50% of attending fathers cohabitate with their children. Another important reason to help custodial fathers is because 40% of the participating fathers that only have one child have sole custody of that child. Other valuable numbers to focus on from the table include: 45% of father participants are Hispanic, over 80% of the father participants are below the poverty line, 60% do not have a GED or HS diploma, and only 51% have a full-time job. Also, while not a large percentage, it is still worth noting that 10% of these father participants are 16 years old or younger. Some of the challenges the father participants faced can be seen in Table 7.

Second, this study looks describes the fathering programs available and a valuable comparison can be made to the types of programs available and the father participants they serve. As of the spring of 2000, there were about 154 programs in the San Francisco Bay Area that offered some type of support for fathers (the study did not estimate the total number of fathers reached from these programs). Of these programs, only about 10% have a cultural orientation, usually with an African American, Asian American, or Latino focus. However, these culturally-oriented programs are nowhere close to matching the number of the culturally diverse fathers attending these programs. Table 6 showed that 45% of father participants were Hispanic, 10% were African American, and 5% were Asian American. Additionally, of the 154 programs, many of these organizations did not consider themselves primarily as a social services organization and did not self-identify as having fathering programs. Thus while they did technically offer services for fathers, they did not publicize themselves this way. Some of these organizations include schools, child care centers, and adult education programs. As a result of these

Table 7.

Challenges:
• Inability to read/write at sufficient levels • Insufficient time for family and child/children • Joblessness and poverty • Drug and alcohol abuse • Lack of support from family and friends • Need for legal assistance with custody issues • Lack of knowledge needed to obtain government assistance

Source: (Gadsden & Rethemeyer, 2001)

organizations not identifying themselves as offering services to fathers, potentially interested fathers are not taking advantage of resources available to them. So while there are technically 154 programs serving fathers in the San Francisco Bay Area, they are not adequately addressing the need for education and support services for fathers in the community. Fatherhood programs can increase their advertising and appeal to fathers in order to improve the number of fathers utilizing these programs. Also by increasing their focus toward serving fathers, fatherhood programs can apply for more grants and other sources of funding that will allow for these programs to better serve fathers.

Third, funding for programs is lowest for those supporting young, minority, noncustodial fathers that have limited education and employment. So while all the fathering organizations can benefit from additional resources, these particular programs can benefit the most.

Fourth, another issue affecting fathering programs is staffing. Finding professionally-trained staff with expertise in the field of fatherhood is difficult and further compounded by the fact that few of these individuals are qualified to lead father group interactions. As a result, there is a high turnover rate for male staff members among all fathering organizations. This is likely even more of a problem in culturally focused organizations.

Fifth, some organizations do not see themselves as fatherhood advocates. In some cases, the employees' primary focus on outreach and support for mothers can serve as a barrier to fathers being involved with the organization. For example, many staff at child centers and schools often discourage fathers, particularly noncustodial fathers, from being involved in programs and activities. These negative attitudes towards fathers are another potential area for improvement.

Lastly, there are some legal barriers for non-biological fathers being involved with children. While these individuals may be the acting father figure in children's lives, most educational and child care agencies are not legally allowed to let non-biological fathers, with no legal relationship to the child, be involved in the child's education or programming. This can be a huge barrier to motivating these fathers to be more involved in these children's lives (Gadsden & Rethemeyer, 2001). While these policies are often in place for child safety, it is important to be vigilant of opportunities for advocating for changes to these policies where appropriate.

Looking specifically at needs of father participants, this BAYFIDS report highlighted a few key findings. First, there is a need for diversity in supporting all types of fathers. Because many of these programs lack coordination with each other, there is no comprehensive approach to fulfilling the variety of fathering needs. Second, the largest group of fathers in the Bay Area are young, low-income, noncustodial fathers. While many want to be positively involved in their children's lives, these fathers face numerous barriers. Some of their barriers include: limited education and employment potential, difficulty in relationships with the mother of their children and the maternal extended family, lack of support from the father's own family, and being overwhelmed with the role of being a new father at a young age themselves. Unfortunately, most fathering programs supporting these individuals have the lowest funding. Third, the father's physical and mental health is rarely addressed, although it is a key component to helping fathers in what can be a very tumultuous time in their lives. Lastly, some of the key barriers to father involvement include time constraints, institutional and attitudinal barriers, low educational background, and to some extent discouragement from peers, families, and structural authoritative figures. The time constraints are a greater barrier for low-income fathers that may hold multiple jobs and prevent them from attending any regularly scheduled programming (Gadsden & Rethemeyer, 2001).

A smaller needs assessment study was done in San Mateo County, a county in the San Francisco Bay Area. This study surveyed 204 multi-cultural fathers with children less than 5 years of age and conducted focus groups with 80 fathers. The study found that fathers wanted more father-child activities, park and recreational activities, better schools, parenting classes, support groups, better childcare, and general legal assistance. Despite this study taking place three years into an extensive effort to improve services and

support for fathers in the county, only half of the fathers felt the county was doing a good job supporting fathers (Buckelew et al., 2006).

Unfortunately, no studies were found in the San Francisco Bay Area assessing the needs of Hispanic or Spanish-speaking fathers, which brings me to my research question.

Research Question

The BAYFIDS study (Gadsden, Rethemeyer, & Pennsylvania Univ. Philadelphia. National Center on Fathers and Families., 2001) was the last and most comprehensive look into fathering in the San Francisco Bay Area; since then there has been little research to follow-up with these findings. Looking specifically at the findings indicating that low-income, minority fathering programs were the most underfunded organizations in the Bay Area, I decided to focus my efforts on addressing the needs of this community. Taking the findings from the BAYFIDS study, the research highlighting the importance of fatherhood, and California's growing Hispanic population, I decided to look specifically at low-income Hispanic fathers and their needs in relation to parenting young children. So the research questions that will guide my inquiry are:

1. What information do Spanish-speaking fathers in the East Bay want to know about raising their young children (age 0-5 years)?
2. How can the community at-large provide better support to Hispanic fathers?

Our research project will begin to lay the groundwork of information needed for fatherhood programs to be able to expand the services they offer to reach more fathers, particularly Hispanic fathers. In order to accomplish this, our research project will analyze and code transcripts from multiple focus groups with San Francisco Bay Area Spanish-speaking fathers using a modified grounded theory approach – all in hopes to help gather a more complete picture of the Hispanic fatherhood experience, and how to help support stronger, healthier Hispanic families.

Part II: Llegando a Ser un Papá (Becoming a Father)

Background

Improving the health of low-income communities requires a multifaceted approach that includes health care, education, social services, and economic support. The targets of these multifaceted interventions vary, but families are commonly targeted, particularly the mother and child when it comes to child health interventions. Mothers and fathers each play key roles that influence whether children face health problems, and if so, how children face those problems. These parenting roles are particularly important during the first 5 years of a child's life, and continue to be important into adolescence and adulthood. However, when it comes to parenting information and support, most interventions have been directed toward mothers, while fathers often lack the support they need.

In this paper, the term “father” will be used broadly to mean anyone who identifies as male and has either fathered a child or has been involved in caregiving for a child. The latter is important for capturing the changing structures of families in today's society. The traditional mother and father that are both married and the biological parents of their children is well studied, but the proportion of US households that fit this description is shrinking (Hamilton et al., 2013; Kreider & Ellis, 2011), so new research on fathers must now capture the many variations of fathers. For example, some fathers might be cohabitating vs non-cohabitating with the children, a biological vs non-biological parent, and married vs unmarried to the child's mother – just to name a few variations.

Other relevant changes in today's society include increasing numbers of father-only households, increasing stay-at-home fathers, and changing cultural proportions of the US population (Casper & O'Connell, 1998; The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2015). The Hispanic population is growing nationally, and in the state of California, the Hispanic population is the predominant racial/ethnic group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014), however little research has been done in regards to fatherhood within the Hispanic population.

The research that has been done on fathers has shown that fathers have a tremendous impact on child health, child development, child education, and child life trajectory (Arbona & Power, 2003; Boyd et al., 2006; Carr & Springer, 2010; Coley & Medeiros, 2007; Dumka et al., 2009; Terriquez, 2013). A father's presence or lack of presence alone can make a difference; one study showed how simply having a father listed on a birth certificate was associated with an infant having up to a four times greater likelihood of living past the age of one year (Gaudino et al., 1999). One possible explanation for this is that fathers increase the available financial, social, and emotional resources available to support the family (Mathews, Curtin, & MacDorman, 2000). Other areas of child health where fathers have an impact include child nutrition, mental health, and sexual health (K. E. Anderson et al., 2010; Dubowitz et al., 2001; Harris et al., 2013; Hutchinson & Cederbaum, 2011; Wolfberg et al., 2004).

How fathers are involved with their children's upbringing can vary by location or culture, (Dubowitz et al., 2004; Hofferth, 2003; Jones & Mosher, 2013). However, what current studies like this currently lack are areas to which interventions might be targeted.

Besides cultural influences, many other factors might influence a father's level of engagement with his children. One important factor is how fathers view their roles within the family, especially given the changing family structure dynamics. One study in the San Francisco Bay Area found that fathers identified their top three roles as parenting, being a role model, and paying the bills (Buckelew et al., 2006). How fathers view and develop these roles can be influenced by many factors, including their role models and the support they receive when they are first-time parents.

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on the importance of fathers and how communities can support them. One study, the Bay Area Fathering Integrated Data System (BAyFIDS) study, looked at the state of fathering programs in the San Francisco Bay Area and found that most programs served low-income, non-custodial fathers (Gadsden & Rethemeyer, 2001). While this is an important group of fathers, additional focus must be given to custodial fathers since 50% of fathers attending the programs are either married or cohabitate with their children. The study also found that only 10% of fatherhood programs had a cultural orientation, many programs suffered from staffing issues, and programs that offered services to parents did not see themselves as fatherhood advocates.

This study was conducted to begin to lay the groundwork of information needed for fatherhood programs to be able to expand the services they offer to reach more fathers, particularly Hispanic fathers. Since the 2001 BAYFIDS study, little research has pursued this study's findings. The goals of this study were to identify some of the parenting needs of Hispanic fathers and to help expand minority fathering programs in the San Francisco Bay Area. The specific research questions that guided the research were:

1. What information do Spanish-speaking fathers in the East Bay want to know about raising their young children aged 0-5 years old?
2. How can the community at-large provide better support to Hispanic fathers?

Methods

Study Design

This project was a qualitative study of Hispanic fathers with young children and was accomplished by analyzing two focus groups with Spanish-speaking fathers in the San Francisco Bay Area. These focus groups were part of a larger project that totaled 13 focus groups with English and Spanish-speaking parents in cities across the United States. The aim of the larger project was to ask parents with young children what topics they would like to be covered in a renewed edition of a parenting video series. The parenting video series is incorporated into a variety of parenting resources, and in California, it is included in the *CA Kit for New Parents*¹. As part of the focus groups in California, participants were given the *CA Kit for New Parents* in advance for them to review.

This sub-study focused on the two Spanish-speaking father focus groups that were the only focus groups with Spanish-speaking fathers in the original study. As part of the original study, other attempts were made in other states to recruit Hispanic fathers, however recruiting this subgroup of parents was difficult. The secondary analysis of this sub-study focused only on those two focus groups conducted with Spanish-speaking fathers.

The overall larger study with the 13 focus groups was deemed “not human subjects research” by the UC Berkeley Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) because that study was a quality improvement study working towards improving materials for parents of children age 0-5 years. However, this current sub-study was considered human subjects research, and the research protocol was approved by the UC Berkeley CPHS.

¹ CA Kit for New Parents – This kit is a free parenting resource offered to parents by First 5 of California. The kit includes parenting information on topics ranging from prenatal care to finding a quality preschool and includes an educational DVD, a parenting book, a children's book, and other resources. Kits are available in 6 different languages, including Spanish. More information can be found at: <http://www.first5california.com/services-support.aspx?id=21>

Study Population and Recruitment

The study population was a convenience sample of local San Francisco East Bay Hispanic fathers, who cared for their children or grandchildren below the age of six years. The fathers were recruited in partnership with child care programs in Berkeley and Oakland. The first focus group yielded two participants while the second had nine participants.

Data Collection

The focus groups were about two hours in length and were conducted in Spanish, led by a graduate student facilitator. The Focus Group Guide included questions about the best part of being a father, what parenting information they couldn't find as new parents, their thoughts on the *CA Kit for New Parents* and other parenting resources, what they believed to be the most important parenting topics, and their input on different methods of delivery for the parenting materials. The focus group discussions were documented with audio recorders and notes, taken with the assistance of two stenographers. Also a pre-survey was given to each participant to gather basic demographic information and initial thoughts on parenting topics on which they would like more information. Participants were compensated with a \$50 gift card and provided dinner during the focus group. After the focus groups, the audio recordings were simultaneously translated and transcribed from Spanish to English.

Data Analysis

The Pre-Survey was quantitatively analyzed to produce descriptive statistics on group participants. The results are summarized in *Table 8* on the next page.

Qualitative analysis for these two focus groups was conducted separately and in greater depth than the analysis of the larger study done with all 13 focus groups. The two focus groups were analyzed by two researchers that coded and analyzed the two de-identified transcripts utilizing a modified grounded theory approach. A qualitative analysis software (ATLAS.ti) was utilized for this process. A codebook was generated and the primary themes were identified, in addition to the formation of a model identifying the different stages of fatherhood identity formation.

Analysis used a modified grounded theory approach which involved two researchers independently coding the first transcript with open codes. Then the researchers compared codes and formed an initial codebook based on the first transcript. Next, the two researchers independently coded the second transcript using the codebook, then again compared codes and updated the codebook. The first transcript was then reanalyzed using the updated codebook. In the second phase, axial coding was done by the two researchers using the codebook and both transcripts. The final phase involved selective coding, in which the most prevalent themes and concepts were organized into a conceptual framework, including the different stages of fatherhood identity formation.

Results

Participant Demographics

The age of the participants ranged from 21 years old to 58 years old, with a mean age of 35 years. All the fathers had at least one child, most had multiple children, and only one father was expecting a child. The ages of the participants' children ranged from less than 1 to 35 years of age, though to participate in the study at least one child had to be less than 6 years old. About half of the participants had an education level less than a high school diploma and all but one father had a household income of less than \$40,000. All the participants spoke Spanish fluently and about half said they had no preference between English or

Spanish. However, nine fathers said they did not speak English very well and 7 said they could not read English very well or at all. Regardless of language preference, nine of the participants said they felt confident or somewhat confident in filling out medical forms which served as a proxy measure for health literacy.

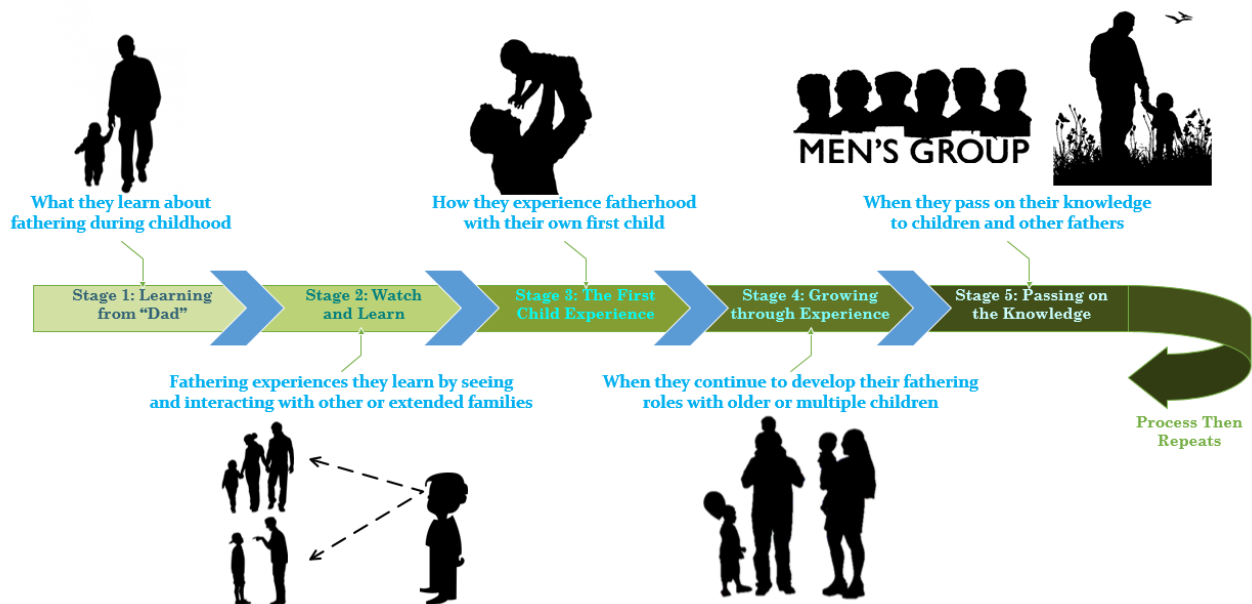
Table 8: Participant Demographics

Descriptive Statistics		n, (%)
Fathers	Mean age	34.8
	Max age	58
	Min age	21
	Fathers with:	
	1 child	3 (27.3%)
	2 children	2 (18.2%)
	3 children	3 (27.3%)
	4 children	2 (18.2%)
	7 or more children/grandchildren	1 (9%)
Ages of Children [4mo – 35y.o.]	Expecting a child	1
	Less than 1 year old	2
	1-5 years	11
	6-18 years	11
	19+ years	4
Education	8 th grade or less	3 (27.3%)
	Some high school	2 (18.2%)
	High school or GED	5 (45.4%)
	Technical school or some college	1 (9.1%)
Income	Under \$20,000	4 (36.4%)
	\$20,000 to \$39,999	6 (54.5%)
	\$40,000 to \$59,999	0 (0%)
	\$60,000 to \$79,999	1 (9.1%)
Language Preference	Spanish only	5 (45.4%)
	English or Spanish	6 (54.5%)
Spoken English Strength	Very well	1 (9.1%)
	Well	1 (9.1%)
	Not very well	9 (81.8%)
	Not at all	0 (0%)
Reading English Strength	Very well	1 (9.1%)
	Well	3 (27.3%)
	Not very well	6 (54.5%)
	Not at all	1 (9.1%)
Confidence Filling out Medical Forms	Very confident	2 (18.2%)
	Somewhat confident	7 (63.6%)
	Not very confident	1 (9.1%)
	Not at all confident	1 (9.1%)

Stages of Fatherhood

After analyzing the focus groups, multiple themes emerged, including a general schema of 5 different stages in the formation of their fatherhood identity over their life courses (See *Figure 1*). Fatherhood identity formation is a general term to encapsulate all the life experiences that an individual acquires over his life that shapes his belief about who he should be and what he should or should not do as a father. This includes philosophies, values, and best practices of raising children from a father's perspective.

Figure 1: Stages of Fatherhood Identity Formation



Stage 1 of fatherhood identity formation, Learning from “Dad”, involves what is learned as a child about a father’s role, using one’s own immediate family and their paternal figure(s) as reference. The second stage, Watch and Learn, takes place at any point in an individual’s life from childhood to adulthood, but before he has children of his own, where he continues to form his fatherhood identity through a variety of experiences. Examples from participants of some of these experiences included observing other family units and helping to raise children other than their own, all of which in some way prepared these participants to be fathers. The third stage, The First Child Experience, is when an individual learns about fatherhood firsthand during his first experience with his own offspring. The fourth stage, Growing through Experience, is when a father’s role is redefined as his child matures beyond the prekindergarten age or when the father begins to manage multiple children. The fifth stage, Passing on the Knowledge, is when a father shares his knowledge of fatherhood with other fathers or even his own children, helping to close the loop of fatherhood identity development and preserve the role of fatherhood for future generations.

Stage 1: Learning from “Dad”

Fathers shared that their own childhood experiences with their parents helped shape the way they wanted to parent their own children. Many fathers shared how their current parenting practices were modeled after the way they were raised. On the topic of discipline, many fathers stated that they spanked their

children because they were spanked themselves as children and consequently grew up with respect for authority. One father states:

"They say that you should spank a child once in a while, and they are correct because it's not abuse. It's not abuse. I spanked my kids. I was spanked, and look, I was afraid. My respect was fear." – grandfather

Another participant shared insight into how children emulate their parents and reflected on how he took on harmful characteristics of his father – becoming an alcoholic. However, with the help of his religious faith, he was able to get into recovery from his alcoholism and avoid passing on the unhealthy legacy to his daughter:

"I set the example, and she follows those principles. So, that means that when we guide our children to a good path, when they get older, they know that they've grown up and what they've grown up with. An example, personally, my father was an alcoholic. He drank alcohol, and when I became an adult, what did I learn? I learned what they taught me. Thanks to God, I was able to get out of that situation. Now, with my daughter, it's a very different situation" – father

This father shared two powerful concepts, that children emulate their parents and that he had to change his own lifestyle, a lifestyle influenced by his own childhood experience, in order to give his daughter a better childhood experience than his own. So this father essentially stated that how fathers raise their children will influence how these children shape their ideation of what constitutes a good or bad father, and in turn, how they themselves choose to be a parent to their children.

Stage 2: Watch and Learn

After their experiences with their own parents, individuals continue to shape their ideas of fatherhood through numerous exposures that include helping to care for other children and watching other family members raise their children. All of these experiences are before fathers have children of their own.

"I got married as an adult and everything. So, I saw everything; how my brothers raised their kids...they'd say I was the angry uncle because I always called everyone out. Now that I'm a father, well, I even folded my hands because I'm not the same person I was before because on one side, my wife changed me, and on the other, I did, because it's not the same to be an angry uncle to being a father. As they say, 'Now you understand, dumbass, what we were – what it is to be a father first.'" – father

This father shared how he did not become a father until later in life which allowed him to reflect on how he saw his brothers raising children. Observing his brothers' fathering style allowed this participant to form beliefs on how a father should raise their children. The participant shared these fathering opinions, by giving unsolicited advice, and was known as an angry uncle. While this participant's philosophy of fathering changed once he became a father, this quote highlights the second stage of fatherhood identity formation by illustrating that other family members can influence how an individual believes a father should act.

Besides just observing other fathers, individuals can also shape their fatherhood identity with physical, hands-on parenting practice with other family members.

"Well, I had an experience with a nephew that my mom taught me a lot of times with him on how to care for him...she taught me how to change his diaper and that if you don't have information, you have to see what's wrong with baby. She said, 'Pick him up and smell him to see if he smells like he pooped [to figure out] why is he crying,' and that's what she taught me. But it is good to have information before the baby is born." – father

“I was like my mom’s helper to take care of all of my cousins, or anything. So, I already knew what the problem was for one [or] what it was for the other. Now that I have my kids, there are some things that I remember and other things that I don’t.” – father

These individuals and others shared how they would help their mothers raise other younger family members. The participants valued learning basic hands-on skills such as knowing how to change a diaper, how to hold a baby, and identifying why a child is crying.

While these quotes only identify two ways of shaping an individual’s fatherhood identity during this stage, there are innumerable other ways an individual can have their fatherhood identity shaped. The importance of this stage is simply to acknowledge that there are experiences beyond one’s own father-child relationship experience and before one’s own first-hand parenting experience, where an individual can continue to shape his fatherhood identity.

Stage 3: The First Child Experience

The third stage of fatherhood identity formation is when an individual experiences firsthand what it is like to be a father to his own child. Participants vividly described how having their first child was a truly life-altering experience.

“Regarding the first experience with my first child, it was something that changed my life because I had my first experience as a father. You wait for your first child, right, so that you can play with him, give him an education, and well, while we don’t do everything right, we work with them. But it’s something that you learn with the first baby.” – father

This father described his transformative experience with his first child and how he anticipated playing with and educating his first child. He acknowledged that not everything goes right with the first child, but that he learned along the way.

Another father emphasized that his transformative experience of becoming a father was in conjunction with his wife’s transformative experience of becoming a mother:

“I did want to be a father with my wife. We planned it. At first, it was all a dream that we were having a child; we were going to get to know our blood. We had my first child. We didn’t plan how we were going to take care of him. Our dream was to have a child, but at first when he was small with us, sometimes it would become complicated because [we would ask ourselves.] “What do we do?” Well, with time, we started to gain a bit of experience...” – father

This father’s first child experience was like a “dream-come-true,” but he, like many fathers, lacked information and advanced preparation, and had to learn the logistics of parenting along the way.

Most fathers attested that no matter what previous experience they had coming into fatherhood, it was a novel experience with that first child, and none felt prepared or that they had the information they needed. There was the common theme of simply “learning on the job” for these first-time fathers.

Some of the common sentiments included fathers feeling uninformed about multiple components of child rearing, receiving limited parenting resources, and difficulty working with different dynamics of inter-partner relationships. However, regardless of these difficulties, fathers shared how raising their young children was very special to them.

In summary, this third period of fatherhood identity formation is a period of change that involves a novel undertaking for which first-time fathers feel underprepared and learn what they need to do as they forge ahead through this new territory.

Stage 4: Growing through Experience

As their children matured through their school-age years and into adolescence, fathers again felt uncomfortable with how to parent these older children. During this stage, fathers also experienced a changing dynamic between raising multiple children, especially when it came to gender differences and raising daughters compared to sons.

“I have three kids... I have two sons. The difference when a girl arrives is that you change the expectation a bit because as a man, you’re a little more, not tough, but rather different with boys. And when the girl arrives, everything changes a lot.” –father

“Now, I see that each one of the kids is very different. More as my colleague said, you really change with girls. You’re always going to change a lot with that. With boys, it’s very different, but with girls, you fold your hands. We all fold our hands there; even if you say it’s not true. – father

While some other fathers agreed that daughters should be raised differently from sons, some fathers disagreed and asserted that girls should be raised similarly to boys, and in particular that girls also needed discipline.

“When I’m there, [my daughters] are mischievous, I’m not going to deny it, but I have to be the firm hand because if not [and] I let them a bit, everything falls apart for my wife. And it’s been difficult for me to be tough with them because my daughters twist my hand.” –father

These fathers highlighted how in this fourth stage of fatherhood identity formation they needed to learn how to be a father to each of their children, with each child being unique in his or her own personality and needs. Although having older or multiple children had its difficulties, fathers adapted and grew in experience over this fourth stage, as the father below described:

“I have my two sons. The oldest one is eight years old.... The second one is...three years old. And with the second one, it’s a bit different. You have a bit more experience.” –father

Stage 5: Passing on the Knowledge

This final fifth stage is when experienced fathers may have a desire to share with one another, with younger generations, or with their children about parenting and being a father. In regards to sharing parenting information between fathers and with younger generations, one father, who was also the only grandfather in the focus group, took the initiative to lead portions of the discussion and shared how he felt it was his responsibility to pass on his knowledge to young fathers. He and others believed it was important for fathers to share with one another – and this was one of the reasons why this participant decided to be in the focus group, to help contribute information to new parents.

“...information at that time was just what the doctor told you, that was it. ‘When the pains start at such date, leave and come over here,’ that’s the only information that they give you. But for raising children, well, just how we were raised. If he cries, he wants to eat, or he wants a toy, or whatever, that’s it. That was it, but there wasn’t so much information like there is today. [Facilitator: And now?] Today, this information is available for the parents. I have to take care of this because the information is helpful for parents. It’s good that you’re providing all of this information so that the kids have more – are raised better.” –grandfather

This participant shared that traditionally fathers would rely on information from medical professionals (an example of Stage 2 learning) and their own childhood experiences (i.e., Stage 1), but that the current generation of fathers has access to more information, information like what was being shared at the focus

group. As part of the new information that is available to parents, this participant felt it was his responsibility to participate in order to pass on his fathering knowledge, for the benefit of both parents and children.

An example of how fathers shared information with one another was when this grandfather shared how he believed fathers needed to show more interest in their children's education by attending more school meetings:

"I went to the meetings with my kids – don't miss their meetings. When they go to college, when I went, like 100 kids go – I mean 100 teens. It was about five dads, and I said, "Where are those kids' dads?" That's a time when you have to be with your kids more, so that they are more motivated to go." –grandfather

The other fathers agreed with this idea of sharing knowledge between fathers and believed it was a valuable experience for fathers. When fathers were asked about their thoughts on sharing parenting information via parenting classes or parenting groups, these were some of their thoughts:

"Due to the differences that there are – you learn from everything, that's why it's more important in a group. That way, I can learn something from him, or him, or they can learn from me."

–father

"Or sometimes it's good to discuss topics on a table because different ideas are shared." –father

These fathers both agreed that there was value in meeting with other fathers to discuss questions they had, including the added value of having multiple opinions and ideas to learn from. This feeling of wanting to learn from one another was shared among the fathers throughout the focus groups and exemplified the feeling of respect that fathers had for one another and the different experiences each brought to the table.

Fathers also shared how coming together for group meetings encouraged fathers to discuss take-home parenting resources.

"I think that it'd be good to have more discussions or more meetings with more parents more frequently. Going over [the CA Kit for New Parents] together...I think is also a good option because sometimes we're at meetings like now, but we forget, and it'd be good." –father

"It is beneficial because sometimes at home, if they give it to us, as you said, in the hospital, we don't watch it. We set it aside, and in these types of meetings, well, they make us watch, even if you say, "I don't want to watch it," but we're here. And at first, we do get like bored and everything, but you become focused later on. I mean, I think that it is good. I agree with them that it's good to talk about those things in these meetings. And then when you leave, share at home with your kids or your wife. But I do agree with these types of meetings to be done, and provide this material so that we can start learning more." –father

So while the focus groups were intended for research, the focus groups themselves proved to be valuable interventions for these fathers, and helped fathers feel supported. Thus the focus groups were an example of fathers' Stage 5 in action, and fathers were very appreciative of the opportunity to share.

"Thank you for your time because this is very important for us as fathers; to care for our children; be aware of what's going on; and how we can help them. It's important that we're well-educated, as I already said, so that our children can obtain that education; that we transfer it to them in a correct manner; that they can receive it, and put it to practice as well." –father

Lastly, in regards to fathers sharing knowledge with their own children, this process started as soon as fathers first began to interact with their children, as was described in Stage 1. Thus, with respect to passing on knowledge to fathers' own children, Stage 5 and Stage 1 overlap and represent how the five

stages of fatherhood represents more of a circular path than a linear path, with each cycle building on the previous generation's parenting knowledge.¹

Overarching Themes

Certain themes were consistently discussed throughout the focus groups and some saturated across the two focus groups, and these themes were discussed across all five stages of fatherhood development. These top themes were discipline, child development and education, child health, partner issues, and structural barriers. This section will give some insight into the fathers' discussions around these topics.

Discipline

The most prominent discussion among the fathers was on the topic of discipline. Throughout the focus groups different fathers initiated discussions relating to child discipline, and multiple fathers would often join the conversation with similar or opposing feelings. Topics discussed included how to discipline children as they matured, whether or not spanking was acceptable, and how discipline was essential to keep children out of problems beyond the home.

A reason why that the topic of discipline was so prominent was because being disciplinarian was seen as one of the key roles fathers fulfilled in their families. Fathers generally agreed that one of their main roles as fathers was to be the main disciplinarian in their households as the father below expressed:

"So, fathers...who are the main ones at home, are the ones who should keep things in control at home," –father

And while fathers loved their children, they believed discipline was an essential part to showing their love.

"I know that you need to give your children love, but at the same time, authority always has to be there. Something that I remember about my dad is when they punished us when we were little; they'd tell us that they punished us because they loved us. At that moment, I would say, 'What do you mean you love us if you're punishing us?' but they'd say, 'When you're older, you are going to understand what I'm telling you.' I think that if a father punishes his child, it's because he doesn't want to see him make bad decisions. If something that he did is wrong, I think that a punishment that's not excessive, in a normal, correct way, I think, so that the child knows what's good and what's bad. So, I agree with that; that we shouldn't fear punishing our children. You can punish them when they're doing something bad." –father

One of the first conversations on discipline started in response to a prompted question of what information they wanted as fathers but had difficulty finding resources with such information. From this question, multiple fathers shared different dimensions of discipline with which they were struggling at different ages and stages of their child's development. One father shared how he felt lost when it came to being informed on ways to maintain control over his child as the child was getting older and acted out

¹ The 5 Stage of Fatherhood Identity Formation generally refers to a boy (a child born with XY chromosomes) developing into a father in the traditional sense (i.e. with no gender or sex changes), since this model was derived from such experiences. And while most of the time this model refers to a boy learning from his father, mothers also help differentiate roles each parent tends to play. Additionally, daughters also learn what a father's roles tend to be and may utilize these roles as a parent (i.e. single parent households, gender-neutral households, same-sex households, etc.). So while this text will continue to use boy/father language in the descriptions, it is important for future researchers and fatherhood program designers to keep in mind the different identities participants may utilize when identifying as a father.

more in public. The quote also brings to light the dichotomy between disciplining or maintaining control of children in public versus maintaining control in private and the public shaming that parents feel when children act out in public.

“Well, I struggled to raise my first child because I don’t know, I couldn’t get the information or something about how to raise him as he grows up, and to be honest, I don’t even know how to do it. And honestly, I need more information on how to raise him. [Facilitator: Are there specific things that you really want to know, like a topic or something that you want to know the most?] How, for example – what to do like when a child has temper tantrums when, I don’t know, for example, you go somewhere like a store, and he wants to buy something, and you don’t buy it for him, and he throws a temper tantrum. And you don’t even know how to control him. And you don’t even know what to do. You have to distance them because everyone stares.” –father

Besides asking for more information on disciplining older children and maintaining control in public, fathers also shared some insight into why they thought disciplining their children was so valuable. Many fathers believed that it was important to discipline children at a young age to set them on the right path in life, and one father expressed this perspective with reference to the bible:

“And the Bible teaches us a lot of those things on how to raise our children. A proverb says that when we correct our children from a young age, even when they grow up, God doesn’t abandon them. So, I’ve also seen the change in my daughter because when I show her those principles - what God likes, I set the example, and she follows those principles. So, that means that when we guide our children to a good path, when they get older, they know that they’ve grown up and what they’ve grown up with.” –father

Participants also shared that the repercussions of having their children go down the wrong path was particularly dangerous in the challenging environments in which these participants were raising their children.

“If you correct the child when he’s little, you straighten him out. When they’re older, they disrespect the mother and father; that’s why there are so many gangsters because you’re responsible for your kids...Not correcting your kids when he’s younger is worse. We have to correct them when they’re young, that’s really important...Because it’s worse to let them be educated outside because they’re going to kill them. They need someone to tell them. Respect in everything.” –grandfather

The metropolitan communities that these fathers lived in had high rates of criminal and gang activity. So they believed the repercussions of not raising well-disciplined children was that their children would follow these community trends of criminal activity.

While all the fathers thought discipline was important, not all fathers spanked their children. However, the fathers that seemed more reluctant to spank their children were not against the idea of spanking, but rather were more concerned with what was acceptable according to US laws regarding child abuse. Fathers acknowledged that what was an acceptable form of discipline when they were growing up outside of the US was not necessarily the case for raising children here in the US, and fathers believed this limited their ability to be responsible parents.

“But to what extent does the government/society allow us to discipline our children?... There’s a limit to discipline and abuse. You have to measure correction. You’re not supposed to leave a mark.” –father

“My point of view is that the government here in the United States has allowed a lot of things, and has taken away a lot of responsibility from us as parents. Like here in the United States, they

tell your son, “If your parents do anything to you, call 911,” or, “If he hits you, call 911.” But even there, we parents need to have the wisdom to know how to reach our children.” –father

Participants agreed that there was a fine line between discipline and abuse, but where that line is drawn was unclear. For example, fathers shared how pulling an ear or hair was okay as long as it wasn't “excessive,” but what was considered excessive was not clearly defined by the fathers. Overall, one quote that seemed to resonate in this conversation was when one father said:

“God has made us fathers of the home. And as fathers of the home, we need to exercise that responsibility that we have.” –father

Another father who also supported spanking as a necessity expressed the need for parents, especially young parents, to learn self-restraint in regards to spanking, so that parents could instead talk to their children.

“Sometimes you are not mature, and I was thinking about a video showing you some exercises to control your temper when you are mad or frustrated with a child, sometimes you don't know what to do... I believe it's necessary to spank them, but it would be better to talk... So I think it would be nice to have strategies to maintain control of yourself and use your words with your children when you know they don't understand or what else can you do to be good to your child. There are other ways to discipline and people don't know a child doesn't understand anything... And young parents aren't mature because they are very young, and they don't know everything or how to raise a child.” –father

The last major discipline topic discussed among fathers was the difference in disciplining sons versus daughters. Fathers consistently expressed that it was more difficult to discipline girls than it was for boys. For example, one father said:

“I don't know the exact time to discipline my daughter and if she is doing something wrong, I can yell and I don't know if that's right or wrong.” –father

Child Development and Education

After discipline, child development and education was the next most common topic that fathers discussed. Topics that were voiced by multiple fathers throughout the focus groups included: teaching children how to read and interact with different toys or objects, supporting children's school education, being a good role model, teaching them to talk and to have good communication skills, being aware of environmental influences, teaching children limits and how to share, and teaching them how to watch out for themselves.

Fathers were very supportive of their children's education. In response to viewing videos or reading books provided ahead of time to the groups (as part of the *CA Kit for New Parents*), fathers described using the books and videos to teach their children to read, recognize objects, and play with toys. Participants also discussed the importance of supporting children's education by attending school meetings and being a good role model as parents by working hard.

“For example, what I put into practice was how to teach him how to read, also helping him by showing him the toys that they show on the video” –father

“In regards to education, well, we have to help them be – if you can, at least support them; have a good time with them, and give them an example of work so that you give them the self-esteem to work themselves.” –grandfather

In addition to school education, fathers also stressed the importance of child development. Fathers proudly discussed how they helped teach children their first words.

“The best experience of everything is teaching your child to talk and do things. Especially when you teach them to talk, the first word she learned was ‘daddy’, and she repeated all day until she learned it, and I know I taught her and now that she’s talking more because she is two years old I know I’m teaching her to speak in English and Spanish, ‘I love you daddy’ or ‘I love you papa’ and that’s the best.” –father

Communication more broadly was also discussed and fathers stressed its importance in teaching children about other topics and for establishing a good parent-child relationship.

“I want to teach my daughter to go to the bathroom, but she doesn’t wish to go, so that would be helpful. That’s the most important, when they grow a little more, you can communicate a little bit more with them but there are cases where kids don’t want to express themselves because they are afraid of their parents, that’s the way they were raised and that’s something you can include in the video – how to improve communication with your children. Sometimes they don’t say everything to parents and it would be good to keep good communication with them. Even when you feel they are going to get mad, I think that helps. There are topics which are difficult to talk about, I don’t know if I’m capable of speaking with my daughter about particular topics, and we need to feel comfortable talking about everything. I think communication is crucial.” –father

Fathers also discussed the importance of being aware of environmental influences on child learning and development, particularly what they learned on television and outside of the home on the street.

“...I have a six-year-old boy. Right now, he’s changing a lot. There are a lot of things that he used to do, and now it’s different. I think these things are really important in order to be able to guide them because kids learn things that they see on the street, on television. I’ve prohibited my son from watching a lot of cartoon programs because all of a sudden, I don’t know, he’s really active with those things. So, it’s good to pay attention to all of that to see what they’re going to need.” –father

As the father above described, placing limits on children was important to keep children from too many negative influences. And fathers also described the importance of using limits to promote sharing among children.

“Two of the things that really grabbed my attention about the [CA Kit for New Parents]; the video mentions the limits that you have to have with your kids, and to teach them to share. A lot of times, kids – you don’t hold them back. They do what they want anywhere you’re at. I think that with kids, you have to show your children. For me, that’s a very important topic; for them to share with the other kids, whatever it is that they’re doing; playing or anything, they have to know how to share.” –father

Lastly, fathers discussed wanting to learn how to teach their children safety or self-care in order to protect themselves.

“Safety, like how to teach them to care for themselves, or how [inaudible] on the street, or prevent them from getting in gangs.” –father

Child Health

Fathers had a variety of concerns about the health of their children, at all stages of their children’s development. These child health topics included how to deal with crying, nutrition, mental health, and sexual health.

One of the most prevalent topics was how fathers tried to understand why their infants were crying, and how to decode the different types of cries. For this and a variety of health topics, fathers often felt less suited for dealing with these health issues than the children's mothers. One father suggested that part of the reason was that there was a natural connection between a child and mother, a connection that did not develop as easily between a father and child.

"I basically had to take care of my baby the first days, and yes, there were obviously things that I didn't know, like why she cried. I think that mothers are more sensitive to that, to babies, and obviously, there's a connection between the child and mother. It was very difficult for me because the connection wasn't there between me and my daughter. I couldn't do what my wife could do. So, I would've liked to have the information on why she cried, how I could help her. Obviously, since my wife wasn't there, she didn't breastfeed, and I had to feed her, and she didn't want the food. So, there's a lot of information that you as a father – well, personally, since I had to care for my daughter, there's a lot of information that you need to know what to do in those cases when it's the fathers that have to care for their kids. So, like why they cry; when they have diaper rash; when they're hungry. There are so many things that are needed in the first months of the child's life" –father

Nutrition was another topic of interest among the participants. As the example above illustrates, there was the simple question of trying to understand when their children were crying because they were hungry. But other conversations regarding nutrition ranged from what the mother should be eating during pregnancy to having school-aged children eat healthier meals.

"Honestly, there are things like how you should eat during pregnancy and everything, not being scared of things like the nutrition for mothers; you have to feed them well because all of the nutrition goes to the baby and to her. If you let them eat junk food only, that's when you're in trouble...When the mother eats well and everything, the babies are born healthy, and they have more, what's it called, health, than when the mother isn't well-fed." –father

"My daughter is older than five and sometimes you don't know how to feed your children and for some parents is easier to take them to McDonalds or any other fast food restaurant and we don't know what we are provoking with that but we are not like that with my daughter, we take her to fast food restaurants but not always." –father

Fathers that had older children expressed interest in learning how to talk to their children about sexual health topics, particularly talking to girls. The fathers reported sending their children to their mothers for such conversations.

"I would like to know what to do at her age, she is eight years old, what to do? What should I do and how to act with her? Children change and sometimes I don't know what to do because she asks questions, and I don't know what to respond and most of the time fathers send their children to ask their mothers. [Facilitator: Can you tell me a concrete example of the questions?] For example, now she is asking about the differences between man's private parts and female private parts. And I feel a little embarrassed, and I tell her to ask her mother about the man's parts and female parts and why are we different, and I don't know how to explain that to her." –father

Fathers also discussed, throughout the focus groups, the topic of mental health for their children. For example, one of the concerns fathers had was how yelling at children could affect their future development. The topic of yelling was of particular interest when disciplining girls because often, instead of spanking their daughters, fathers resorted to yelling.

"I don't know the exact time to discipline my daughter and if she is doing something wrong, I can yell and I don't know if that's right or wrong." –father

Partner Issues

Many fathers noted the need to get along well with their wives/partners and to share a consistent parenting approach, at all stages of child development and parenting. Some ways to help facilitate this was when participants discussed wanting more information about the process their partners went through and how to best support partners when they were sick, especially during the early postpartum period. Information that participants wanted ranged from partner moods during pregnancy to illnesses that can affect the mother after birth to communication with partners in front of children.

One father described how his wife's mood changes during pregnancy affected them and how he wished he had known more on the topic ahead of time.

"I would have liked to know what to do when women are pregnant because their moods change. So I have a strong temper, and during the time my wife was pregnant, her attitude changed a lot and we both struggled with that and you don't know what to do. You try to control yourself or not scream and you don't know what to do. During that time, I was attempting to keep calm but I usually shout and I can get mad very quickly and yell but I tried really hard to keep quiet when she was angry because I knew she was pregnant. And thinking about that helped me to control myself but I never went to a place to know information about the stages of a pregnancy and you have to understand her, you need to know how to react and what to do in that case." –father

Fathers also wanted to know what to expect from their partners postpartum, and they tried to support the mothers as best they could.

"It's good to have [known] more content. For example, you know that you leave the hospital, and for them to explain – I mean, sometimes women stay inside for 40 days and don't take the baby out of the house." –father

"When we were back home, [my daughter's] mother was sick and she couldn't move that much so I had to do most of the things to take care of my daughter, and I had to teach her mother to not be so scared of hurting her." –father

Fathers also discussed their concerns about yelling with their partners in front of their children, a topic that ties back to fathers' concern of their children's mental health.

"There are discussions between [my wife and I], and my daughter is there; and we yell without taking into consideration the consequences and sometimes I say, 'I can scream and I don't care if my daughter is right there' but I don't know the damage I'm causing her in a long term." –father

Structural Barriers

Fathers discussed many barriers that they felt prevented them from being as engaged parents as they may have wanted to be, across all stages of their children's lives. Fathers' work schedules were often inflexible and kept them from accessing parenting resources, attending parenting classes during the pregnancy, and spending time with their children. One father described how he was only able to attend classes because he was working a night shift at the time.

"We went to one WIC class, actually we went to two classes provided by WIC and one of them was about birth, what to do in that moment, and they also gave us a lesson on the proper use of the car seat for babies, those were the two classes I took... I didn't go many times because I was working..." –father

“I went with the mother of my daughter, and I had the time because I was working on evenings, so I was with her to go to the classes. I didn’t go to all the classes, but I tried to attend most of them.” –father

Even with take home resources, like the *CA Kit for New Parents* that was provided to participants before the focus groups took place, fathers described coming home with little energy and time to watch DVDs or read books. Similarly, fathers also discussed how coming home late from work left them with little time to play with their children.

“Honestly, the only thing I’ve seen is the video, and I’m just reading the large book. That’s all I’ve been looking at now. Since I get home late from work, I don’t have time to look at everything else. I’m just looking little-by-little. I learn a bit from everything when I have time. There are a few, and like I said, I haven’t looked at all of them. I wish I could look at all of them, but little-by-little because sometimes I just get home, sleep, wake up early, and leave to work” –father

“We get home from work, and you rest. So, you don’t spend time with your children. And a lot of times, I’ve seen that they put the children in front of the TV and leave them there.” –father

Fathers also described difficulties raising children when both they and their partners had to work. One father described how things finally became manageable once his wife stopped working. And while not all fathers were still in a relationship with their children’s mother, fathers described the need for parents to complement and support one another while raising their children.

“Well, it was very difficult when I had my girl because at that time, I was starting my business. And basically, my wife had to work, and the business that I had was just while there was work... After that, well, my wife stopped working, and it was a bit easier. Between the both of us, we were able to complement each other, and help each other, obviously, sometimes experimenting because a lot of times, it’s the only resource that you have left.” –father

Quantitative Survey Results

In addition to the qualitative findings above, one component of the focus group involved asking fathers to choose what they believed to be the five most important parenting topics from a list that the researchers provided. The list of topics was derived from topics covered in the parenting video series in the *CA Kit for New Parents*. Filling out this survey was one of the last questions in the focus group, where they first filled out the survey individually and then shared their choices with the rest of the group. Fathers chose anywhere from four to six topics from the list on the next page and were also allowed to write in their own topics (topics that fathers wrote in are indicated by “*Other Topic*” in the table). The top three topics that fathers believed were important were discipline, food and nutrition, and healthcare (i.e., vaccinations and doctor’s visits).

Table 9 - Most Important Topics to Fathers

Topics	Totals
Discipline	10 (91%)
Food & Nutrition	7 (64%)
Vaccinations, Doctor's Visits & Healthcare	7 (64%)
Mental Health	5 (45%)
Bonding with Your Baby	4 (36%)
Safety	4 (36%)
Quality Child Care & Preschools	4 (36%)
Baby's Birth	3 (27%)
Early Brain Development	3 (27%)
Prenatal Care	2 (18%)
Learning to Speak	2 (18%)
Learning to Read	1 (9%)
Fatherhood	1 (9%)
Siblings	1 (9%)
Taking Care of Yourself	1 (9%)
Other Topics? How to teach children to take care of themselves	1 (9%)
<i>Other Topic:</i> - Premature Births	1 (9%)
<i>Other Topic:</i> - Spiritual Education	1 (9%)
<i>Other Topic:</i> – How to talk with older children about drug addiction and sexuality	1 (9%)
Sleep	0
Special Needs	0
Foster Care	0
Dental Health	0
Sharing Parenting Roles (including separated parents)	0

These results highlighted what the fathers individually believed were important topics. Their top choices of discipline and different aspects of healthcare (i.e., nutrition and medical visits) helped confirm some of the overarching themes from the qualitative analysis.

Another survey that the focus group participants filled out when they arrived for the focus group asked about their demographic background and questions like where they looked for parenting information. One question asked “What are the 3 biggest challenges that new parents face?” and they had 11 options to choose from (money, child care, time, medical services, medical insurance, legal status, inter-parenting, parent-child relationship, early child care, quality of schools, community safety, or other). The top three results of this question were: safety in your community and neighborhood (selected by 64% of participants), cost of living (45%), and legal status (36%). The cost of living and legal status findings offer more insight into this study’s participant demographics. However, the identification of community and neighborhood safety as the main problem facing new parents is consistent with the qualitative findings that highlighted the importance of discipline and its association with community safety.

Discussion

Previous studies have shown that important differences exist across different racial/ethnic groups when it comes to father-child relationships, however few studies have specifically looked into Hispanic communities. Our research questions asked Spanish-speaking fathers what parenting information they wanted and how the community could better support these fathers. Fathers' responses accomplished two things: first their responses helped to identify ways the community could better help these fathers (which addressed our second research question and is discussed in the points of intervention section below) and secondly fathers helped contextualize findings from previous studies. The first part of the discussion will be how our study adds texture and new findings to what previous studies with Hispanic fathers have found.

One previous study found that Hispanic fathers' level of acculturation was positively correlated to fathers' likelihood to participate in children's schooling. Acculturation was measured as living in the United States for more than 10 years and mostly speaking English in the home (Terriquez, 2013). In our study, it was the oldest participant who was most vocal and proud of attending his children's school meetings and said that more fathers needed to do so. While his length of time in the United States was unclear, his age and comfort with discussing the education system suggested he had many years of experience in working with the American education system. He also spoke a combination of English and Spanish in his home, so our study's findings were consistent with the Terriquez study.

Another study also looked at acculturation and found that more-acculturated Hispanic parents were more likely to have sons with behavioral problems. One possible explanation was that as parents became more acculturated, they moved away from cultural norms like respecting authorities and being "*bien educado*" (well brought-up and polite) (Dumka et al., 2009). While our study did not assess levels of acculturation or child behavioral problems, the focus group participants from our study identified as their top priority to learn how to best maintain control and discipline of their older children so that their children would be respectful. Many fathers cited the need to maintain child discipline since they were raising their children in unsafe communities with gangs and community violence. The Dumka study took place in the central Phoenix, AZ, area, a relatively safe area when compared to areas like Oakland, CA. Therefore, the question remains whether parents' level of acculturation or the safety of the community is a more important determinant of parents' focus on discipline. Future studies on the effect of Hispanic family acculturation on children might benefit from also assessing a community's safety and how unsafe communities and other community stressors might influence child and parental behaviors in Hispanic families.

In a study looking at father involvement with their children, when compared to White and Black fathers, Hispanic fathers that cohabitated with their children were: less likely to eat meals with their children, less likely to provide care, less likely to play with their children daily, and less likely to read to their children (Jones & Mosher, 2013). Our study helps contextualize some of these findings and adds suggestions on ways of improving Hispanic father involvement in these areas. For example, focus group fathers recognized the importance of family nutrition, but noted that work often kept them from the dinner table, and admitted that they needed more support and information on the topic. Therefore, fathers may benefit from more information and practical strategies to enable them to share meals with their children. Focus group fathers also discussed the importance of helping to provide daily care for their children, but noted that work often kept them away from home for long hours, and they could benefit from more hands-on instruction on how to provide the care for that infants and children need. Focus group fathers said that after watching a parenting education video, they started reading and playing with their children regularly. Again, this suggests that educating fathers on the importance of these tasks and demonstrating hands-on skills may help resolve differences seen across racial/ethnic groups.

Our study also contributes to findings in another study that looked at racial and ethnic differences in father involvement in two-parent households. The Hofferth study found that only 27% of fathers (across all racial/ethnic groups) ever attended a parenting class, including childbirth classes. Seven out of 10 fathers learned how to parent from their mothers (across all racial/ethnic groups); however, minority fathers were less likely than whites to learn to parent from their fathers. Hispanic fathers had the lowest proportion (38%) who learned to parent from their own father (Hofferth, 2003). Our study's findings that two of the 5 Stages of Fatherhood Identity Formation included learning to parent from fathers—Stage 1 where children learned from their own father, and Stage 5 where less-experienced fathers learned from more-experienced fathers—shows that what they learned was still significant for how they viewed fatherhood. Additionally, the Hofferth study supported our study's findings that mothers played a significant role in teaching fathers how to be a parent.

Looking toward studies done in the San Francisco Bay Area, the last two major studies on fatherhood were done over a decade ago. One study took a countywide approach to identify the needs of fathers with young children in San Mateo County. However, while the study participants spanned multiple racial/ethnic groups, results were not separated by racial/ethnic groups. Some of the findings were consistent with our study, and others were not, illustrating the importance of examining fatherhood needs in the context of racial/ethnic backgrounds. For example, one consistent finding was the general call for more support services for fathers, and the request for specific fatherhood programming, like a “Dad and Me @ the Library” program (Buckelew et al., 2006). An example of a major difference between our study and the Buckelew study was that in the prior study, only 39% of fathers identified the role of disciplinarian as a father's most important role, while 91% of our study's fathers identified the role of disciplinarian as being an important role. This key difference in how fathers identified their role in the family unit may be due to either racial/ethnic differences or simply a difference in regional needs of fathers. Father's needs may vary significantly between communities, and fatherhood programs should be developed based on the needs of the local fathers they serve.

The other major study in the San Francisco Bay Area reviewed was an extensive evaluation of Fatherhood programs and their participants, including evaluating government support, building a database of programs, and issuing recommendations (Gadsden & Rethemeyer, 2001). While this was by far one of the most comprehensive studies of fatherhood in the San Francisco Bay Area, little follow-up research has been reported. Thus, one of the goals of our study was to expand on the specific needs illustrated by the Gadsden study, including: helping to diversify what fathering programs offer, helping to diversify the communities of fathers targeted, and reducing barriers to father involvement.

Our study with Spanish-speaking fathers in the San Francisco Bay Area provided unique insights into what Hispanic fathers believe are important parenting and child development topics, and inform the timing and ways in which potential future interventions can be targeted towards this population and their needs.

Recommendations: Points of Intervention and Topics Based on the Stages of Fatherhood

The overarching themes that emerged from the study can be found in each of the five stages of fatherhood development, however, certain stages lend themselves as best places for interventions for some of the themes. This discussion will use the 5 stages of fatherhood as a template to organize some points of intervention (POIs) geared toward fathers at different stages of their development. Some POIs suggested will be very specific and others will be more general. These POIs can be combined to be incorporated in designing a new curriculum for fatherhood programs, or they can be used discretely to be incorporated in current programs directed toward either both parents or just fathers.

General Recommendations:

Parenting programs should utilize interventions and resources that enhance access for low-income, Spanish-speaking fathers. Recommendations include:

- Resources and programs should be available at little to no cost.
- Resources should be available in the language of choice of fathers, for this community either English or Spanish.
- In-person resources, such as classes or group meetings, should be offered at different times of day so that working parents can attend.
- Take-home resources (i.e. DVDs, on-line resources, printed materials) should be supplemented so that fathers have the opportunity to utilize the resources at their own pace. Fathers as well as mothers and fatherhood group leaders should be asked about other suggestions that they may have for improving access to fatherhood program resources.

Stage 1 Interventions

Stage 1 is when a child is learning about fatherhood from his parents. This first stage provides the first possible point of intervention for an individual developing his fatherhood identity. Interventions for this stage are geared towards parents. Interventions can help support parents, particularly fathers, to establish a firm foundation of values for their children during the first stage. The fathers identified core values that they wanted their children to learn, including respect, discipline, hard work, honesty, love, family, and community. Emphasizing the opportunity for parents to instill these core values in their children, who will proceed to instill the same values in the next generation of children, might increase current parents' willingness to learn new parenting strategies to "pass the torch" of parenting to future generations.

Stage 2 Interventions

Stage 2 is when an individual continues to develop an image of how a father is supposed to act, with additional role models such as extended family, friends, media, and other sources. This learning occurs before the birth of a father's first child. Stage 2 provides a unique opportunity when individuals are often mature enough to be more involved in the knowledge acquisition process but still do not have the added pressure of having their own child to care for. Because of this unique timeframe, this stage is likely the most ideal stage to begin educating future fathers about the specifics of pregnancy and child rearing. Future fathers can learn about child development, relationships and communication, sexual health, family planning, pregnancy, basic child care, and parenting skills. There may be discussion about what roles are traditionally considered father roles or mother roles, and why in today's changing society, with more stay-at-home fathers or father-only households, couples may choose to be more flexible in their roles. For example, men may choose to become more involved in child nutrition and health care. In addition, as stresses and conflicts arise, couples may need specific skills in anger management, communication and prevention of family violence.

Interventions might be targeted to youth in required high school health courses, or young adults at community organizations or community colleges, the majority of whom are likely to become parents (Emens & Dye, 2007). When individuals enter long-term relationships or marriage with a partner, pre-marital courses or couples' classes on parenting could be very helpful. It may also be beneficial for parenting resources to be made available to the extended family members that may help care for children.

Finally, this stage can serve as an important formative period for individuals that may not have had a father-child relationship during their childhood, such as growing up in a fatherless home, or for those

individuals that may have had a negative father-child relationship during their childhood. Possible interventions for introducing positive father figure role models could be done with mentoring programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Stage 3 Interventions

Stage 3 is when fathers have their first biological child or legally begin to care for their first child (e.g., adopt a child). With a first child, many fathers described transformative experiences and a willingness to make positive life changes. Expectant and new fathers can learn about pregnancy, newborn care, infant nutrition and health, crying, sleep safety, language development, reading to your child, toileting, and temper tantrums. This is also an important time to discuss parental stress and strategies for communication with partners and children, stress reduction, getting support, positive discipline without yelling and hitting, avoiding family violence, and combating violence in their communities. In addition, with the high risk of obesity and diabetes, special attention should be paid to supporting breastfeeding, avoiding sugar-sweetened beverages and snacks, and promoting family physical activity (CDC, 2014; Freed et al., 1993; Kalin & Fung, 2013)

Prenatal group classes and early childhood group classes should reach out to recruit father participation by having father-oriented outreach, materials, staff, and scheduling to fit with work schedules; and take-home resources such as videos. Father interventions could occur at health centers and health education programs such as WIC (Women, Infant and Children), and also novel sites such as churches, children's sporting events, and starting "Father and Me" infant classes, similar to those for mothers and children. Fathers could also be helped to establish support networks for when they have parenting questions.

Stage 4 Interventions

Stage 4 is when fathers are continuing to develop their parenting skills as fathers with older children or raising multiple children at once. Topics that can be addressed during this stage include: school-age child development, helping with homework, navigating the school system, adolescent nutrition and health, obesity prevention, sexuality, limiting media use, and discipline. Given fathers' emphasis on discipline, and study findings that families that were closer to their traditional culture were more likely to have better-behaved children, education and support around discipline should include the connection to strong cultural values (Dumka et al., 2009). Similarly, given the high risk for obesity and type II diabetes, nutrition education and support should include the connection to promoting traditional foods including fresh fruits and vegetables and avoiding fast food and junk food. Finally, since adolescent sexuality appeared to be a challenging topic for fathers, attention should be paid to helping fathers understand healthy child sexuality, gender identity and relationships, and how to create more gender neutral, welcoming and supportive family environments for their children.

Interventions during this stage might be offered through health centers, parenting programs, schools and youth activities (i.e. youth sports, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.). As in previous stages, it would be important to have outreach to fathers and schedule programs at times that are convenient for working parents.

Stage 5 Interventions

Stage 5 is a period when experienced fathers consciously pass on knowledge to other less-experienced fathers and also to their children. All of the above topics could be possible discussion points for an

intervention group, however key topics include: communicating in relationships, challenges fathers are facing, discipline, and helping their children to avoid gangs, stay in school and hold onto their culture.

Fathers could benefit from focus groups and/or support groups that include a combination of didactics and fathers at all ages and stages of parenting (including grandparents) sharing experiences and strategies with one another. Similar to the previous stages, these groups could be organized through community parenting programs, health centers, schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, churches, sports leagues, and local cultural organizations.

Intervention Implications with Mothers

In all of the five stages above, mothers also played a crucial role. In addition to the father-child relationship, the father-mother relationship and the mother-child relationship are important influences. Mothers and fathers are often working as teams to support one another and the family. For this reason, all the topics that fathers mentioned highlight gaps in knowledge for fathers, and are potential topics to include in parenting materials for both fathers and mothers. In addition, the intervention time points and strategies could be utilized for combined mother-father parenting interventions as well as for father-only groups.

Conclusion

This study found that Hispanic fathers in the San Francisco East Bay Area articulated ways that they conceptualized their roles as fathers and what they needed to help them be good fathers. The model of the 5 Stages of Fatherhood Identity Formation that emerged from this research can help organize parenting interventions that support fathers through each of these different stages. Beyond the scope of parenting interventions, our model can also be a basis for future research on identity formation of fathers in different racial and ethnic groups, and how these different identities can influence families. Lastly, the points of intervention suggested in this study offer a variety of ways to increase support for fathers, in both local communities and fathering communities more broadly.

Future studies might take a more expansive look at what Hispanic fathers in different regions request for parenting support. Also, future studies can look at what mothers and key informants, like fathering group leaders, recommend to support fathers. More extensive research with Hispanic fathers can also validate and improve upon our model on the 5 Stages of Fatherhood Identity Formation. Working with fathers and mothers from other racial/ethnic groups can also help expand this model or lead to variations for the different groups of fathers, and also lead to a model for mothers.

Limitations and Strengths of the Study

Important strengths of this study are that this study focused on fathers and also the Hispanic community, two communities that are often lacking support. Other strengths of this study included having a graduate student researcher that spoke Spanish and identified with the participants culturally, allowing the researcher to facilitate the focus groups successfully and help the fathers open up about their fathering experiences. The successful facilitation allowed for all the fathers to voice their opinions equally, which in itself is another strength, since the focus group setting can sometimes limit the participation of some individuals. Another strength of this study was being able to recruit 11 Spanish-speaking fathers and holding 2 father-only focus groups, a task that other focus group organizers involved with the larger,

original nationwide study were unable to accomplish. Thus this sub-study provided an important element for the larger study that was focused on improving parenting materials.

One important limitation was that this study is technically a secondary data analysis since the focus group guide questions were derived for a larger study. Thus a limitation that exists with secondary data analysis is that not all the questions in the focus groups helped answer our study's research questions. Another limitation of this study was the need to translate from Spanish to English in order to utilize the analysis software and for all of the researchers involved in the larger study to understand the transcripts. So while both of the coders spoke Spanish and heard the original focus groups in Spanish, any time data are translated, some meaning may be lost in translation. Other limitations included difficulty recruiting participants, small sample size, recruiting from a small regional area, and having only 2 focus groups for analysis, which could limit the generalizability of the findings.

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