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THE SELECTION OF PRESCHOOL FOR IMMIGRANT AND NATIVE-BORN LATINO FAMILIES IN THE UNITED STATES

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Abstract

With the national push to expand preschool education, there has been growing interest in understanding why Latino families are enrolled in preschool at lower rates than non-Latino families. This study applied the accommodations model by Meyers and Jordan (2006) to the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (n = 5,850) to provide a more nuanced understanding of the preschool selection of U.S.- and foreign-born Latino families. Results from this investigation underscored the similarities and differences that existed in the selection behaviors of different groups of families, while also highlighting important differences within the Latino population. In general, these differences within the Latino population cut across community language use, child factors, and parents' beliefs about school readiness. Moreover, after accounting for the various selection factors, there were no longer any consistent differences in the preschool enrollment rates between Latino children and their Black and White peers. When taken together, these findings suggest that careful attention must be paid to the heterogeneity in the experiences of Latino families in navigating the preschool market.

Keywords: preschool selection; accommodations model; Latino families; ECLS-B

There has been an increased interest in preschool education as a means of reducing socio-demographic disparities in children's early learning and development (Duncan & Magnuson, 2013). Indeed, a large empirical literature has established the effectiveness of preschool programs in preparing children for kindergarten (Bumgarner & Brooks-Gunn, 2014; Gormley et al., 2005; Weiland & Yoshikawa, 2013; Winsler et al., 2008) and setting the stage for a lifetime of success (Campbell & Ramey, 1994; Schweinhart et al., 2005; Reynolds, et al. 2001; Vandell, Burchinal, & Pierce, 2016). Preschool programs, therefore, can serve as actionable points of intervention in reducing the intergenerational transmission of inequality.

Given that preschool programs serve as a potential policy lever for reducing disparities in early learning, understanding why differences emerge in the enrollment of children constitutes an important research endeavor. Of particular interest are Latino families who constitute roughly 17% of the U.S. population and represent the fastest-growing sub-segment of the country (Pew Research Center, 2015), but are the least likely group to enroll their children in preschool during the year before kindergarten. Nationally, 54% of all children attend preschool at the age of 4, but the 44% enrollment rate of Latino children is significantly lower than non-Latino White and Black children (56-57%; Child Trends, 2014). Why are Latino parents enrolling their children in preschool at lower rates than other parents? To address this question it is necessary to consider the processes involved in parents' decision-making regarding preschool as compared with informal care and parental care, which are two options that Latino families use more often.

To this end, I draw from Meyers and Jordan's (2006) accommodations model, which contends that preschool selection is not simply an individual choice, but instead, is reflective of the competing demands that parents' experience. By considering the ways in which this model of preschool selection might vary as a function of families' racial/ethnic group membership, this study seeks to move beyond a discussion of the racial/ethnic disparities in preschool enrollment

and to provide a more nuanced understanding of why these disparities might exist.

Viewing Preschool Enrollment through the Lens of Latino Families

Why Latino families are less likely to enroll their children in preschool has remained contested. Some scholars have argued that Latino families are less likely to enroll their children in preschool because of familial and cultural values (Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010), whereas others suggest that these differences are due to issues of access (Ansari & Winsler, 2012; Yesil Degil, 2011). These assertions often stem from studies of the parenting behaviors of parents from different backgrounds, such as those of native- and immigrant-born Latinos, which have illustrated the different views and practices around raising children that might extend to preschool enrolment (Crosnoe et al., 2016a). Despite the potential differences in parental decision-making about the early schooling of Latino children and perceived maternal roles, Latino families, unlike other populations in the U.S., often face challenges that go beyond economic disadvantage. That is, economic hardship is compounded by the fact that Latino families must deal with additional cultural and linguistic barriers as well as unfamiliarity with the U.S. educational system (Garcia & Jensen, 2007). Preschool selection, therefore, can manifest in different ways, especially for immigrant Latino families who tend to have less experience in the U.S. school system (Crosnoe, 2016a).

Although there has been growing interest in understanding the processes involved in preschool selection (Coley et al., 2014; Crosnoe et al., 2016b; Fuller et al., 1996; Ha, Magnuson, & Ybarra, 2012), prior studies have generally not differentiated these processes by race/ethnicity and/or nativity, and those that have (Daugherty, 2009; Yesil-Degli, 2011), have focused on Latino families without cross racial/ethnic group or within group comparisons (for an exception see Fuller et al., 1996). Without such comparisons, strong conclusions cannot be drawn about the reasons why Latino families choose less formal arrangements and whether these reasons are

similar to (or different from) other populations. In light of the mounting evidence suggesting that poverty, low parental education, and lack of employment are associated with parents' selection of preschool (Coley et al., 2014; Crosnoe et al., 2016b) and the fact that Latino families are also more likely to be living in poverty (Macartney, Bishaw, & Fontenot, 2013), it is likely that selection of preschool by Latino families remains confounded with socioeconomic barriers.

Thus, to have the greatest impact, we not only need to know why Latino families enroll their children in preschool, but the extent to which these reasons differ both within the Latino population and between different groups of families. Such inquiry is grounded in ecological and cultural theories (Weisner, 2002), which contend that individual-level processes, such as preschool selection, are influenced by the socio-cultural conditions and the local communities in which families live. Reflecting these notions are studies of the immigrant paradox, which find the children of immigrants who acculturate to the U.S. over time exhibit less optimal outcomes (Marks et al., 2014)—a phenomenon that might also extend to the selection of preschool. These education-related paradoxes stem from the fact that the families that select to immigrate to the U.S. are often in search of occupational and educational advancement, which are positive attributes that are lost in subsequent generations who experience a disproportionate amount of poverty and, therefore, have fewer opportunities for upward mobility (Buriel, 2012). Thus, we need to know how these individual-level processes within Latino families compare with the historically least (U.S.-born Black) and most advantaged (U.S.-born White) segments of the U.S. population (Crosnoe et al., 2015). We also need to gauge assimilation among Latino families and determine how these broader stratification systems affect within group heterogeneity. To address these possibilities, however, requires theoretically grounded and advanced research methods.

The Accommodations Model for Preschool Selection

The present study is guided by economic theories of preschool selection, which argue that

parents' choices are based on a series of accommodations (Meyers & Jordan, 2006). Balancing between competing demands, preschool selection is not simply about parents' preferences; rather, they are contextualized actions that also reflect families' needs, resources, cultural norms, opportunities, and constraints. Put another way, the fact that Latino families are less likely to enroll their children in preschool does not simply reflect their a priori likings or penchant for cultural matches between the home and school institutions—one of the underlying assumptions about the enrollment gap between Latino families and their non-Latino counterparts. Instead, this theoretical model contends that we must pay closer attention to the contexts in which these decisions are being made and the ways in which broader community systems shape parents' needs and preferences and, in turn, how their preferences map onto their decisions. Ultimately, while it is true that all parents experience competing demands that result in tradeoffs, these tradeoffs occur across different contexts that require attention (Meyers & Jordan, 2006).

Thus, to understand why parents select different types of preschool programs for their children, Meyers and Jordan (2006) argue that we need to move beyond the notion that these are fully informed "choices" that occur in isolation, which provides an incomplete understanding of the complex processes underlying preschool selection. Instead, the accommodations model argues that, to understand parents' decisions, we need to explore how these decisions are influenced by a set of dynamic and interrelated processes that serve as accommodations to the preschool market. In studying parents' preschool decisions, Meyers and Jordan (2006) point to the importance of five set of factors that might influence parents' decisions: *family necessity* (e.g., parental employment and work schedules), *family resources* (e.g., income and household quality), *families' beliefs and expectations* (e.g., cultural consistency and the importance of children's academic preparedness for kindergarten), *child factors* (e.g., children's cognitive skills and social-behavior), and the *community context* (e.g., geographic location and preschool

availability), which are discussed in more detail below.

Reflecting these theoretical concepts developed by Meyers and Jordan (2006), two recent studies provided a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which this model shapes parents' decision making across different developmental stages (Coley et al., 2014) and the socio-economic gradient (Crosnoe et al., 2016b). The current study pushes the early childhood forward by considering how the accommodations model works across different cultural backgrounds, which was *not* considered by Coley and colleagues (2014) or Crosnoe and colleagues (2016b); in doing so, this study can provide important insight into why families from different cultural backgrounds are more or less likely to enroll their children in preschool. That is, although much of the disparities in preschool enrollment map onto race/ethnicity and socio-economic status (Crosnoe, 2007), it remains possible that race/ethnicity conditions how different factors from the accommodations model (that differ both within and between groups) influence families' decisions (Fuller et al., 1996; Huston et al., 2002; Radey & Brewster, 2007). This possibility is supported by the aforementioned ecocultural theory, which posits that children's experiences and families' decisions are influenced by their own cultural contexts (Wesiner, 2002).

Family necessity. Parents' decisions regarding preschool is made within the broader context of family circumstances which, pooled together, reflect family necessity. Indeed, the accommodation model argues that families' need for care is rooted within the broader familial context that includes maternal employment, parents' marital status, and number of children in the household (Meyers & Jordan, 2006). In support of this theory, prior studies have found that mothers who work outside of the home, are not partnered with the child's other parent, or have fewer children are more likely to enroll their children in preschool (Crosnoe, 2007; Fuller et al., 1996; Singer et al., 1998). In contrast, the availability of a relative improves the likelihood that parents will place their children in informal care (Capizzano, Adams, & Ost, 2006). Just as these

family circumstances shape parents' need for preschool, Meyers and Jordan (2006) also argue that they also shape how parents evaluate their options, such that parents who have specific needs (e.g., a mom non-standard work schedules) not only require care for their children, but will likely prefer a program that can accommodate their needs. At the same time, however, family necessity should matter more for some families than others. Given that many Latino families do not need non-parental care because of lower than average maternal employment and higher than average two-parent family structures, and because these families often live in enclave communities in which aggregate demand for such care is lower, it is likely that family necessity would play a weaker role for immigrant Latino families who may be more likely to turn to informal care arrangements than it would for native-born families.

Household resources and quality. The next key dimension of the accommodations framework are household resources and quality, which can play an integral role shaping parents' decisions and choices regarding their children's enrollment in preschool (Meyers & Jordan, 2006). Although parents have different preferences and needs regarding preschool, ultimately, it is their economic and social resources that affect their ability to fulfill those needs. These resources can take may different forms, such as parents' own educational histories and their English language proficiency. For example, parents own educational attainment plays an integral role in shaping their investments in their children both in terms of time investments, such as engagement in different types of cognitively stimulating activities (Crosnoe & Kalil, 2010), as well as monetary investments, such as preschool enrollment (Fuller et al., 1996). There has also been growing collaboration between various state-, city-, and neighborhood-level agencies and local preschool programs as one means of increasing parents' awareness of preschool education. These systemic connections broadly reflect the supply of informational resources that parents need to assist with preschool enrollment (Chaudry et al., 2011). Thus, although parents in the

same neighborhood may have access to a similar set of programs, differences in their knowledge and awareness of these alternatives will shape their preferences and, ultimately, their selection of preschool (Chaudry et al., 2011). These resources and community networks can be particularly effective in acculturating Latino families to U.S. norms and the school system and, thus, play a stronger role for Latino families (Crosnoe et al., 2015).

Parents beliefs and expectations. Moving beyond parents' resources and needs, another driving force in preschool selection is parents' beliefs and expectations, both with regards to preschool programs in addition to their own children's readiness for kindergarten (Crosnoe et al., 2016b; Meyers & Jordan, 2006). For example, Latino families often try to foster good manners and respect for adults in their children, whereas monolingual families are often more academically focused (Crosnoe & Turley, 2013). These differences in parents' expectations may be particularly influential in preschool selection given the longstanding notion that preschool results in better academic achievement but less optimal socio-emotional development (Belsky et al., 2007). Moreover, much of the debate surrounding the lower preschool enrollment rates of Latino families in preschool has been attributed to parents' desires for culturally responsive caregivers and cultural matches between the home and school systems (Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010; Sandstrom et al., 2012). If these desires for cultural matches between the home and school and emphasis on children's socio-emotional development hold true, then it is possible that these beliefs and expectations will narrow the pool of available options that Latino families have and, ultimately, push families to opt for informal care arrangements that better meet their preferences.

Child elicitation. Children's own skills and experiences are also increasingly recognized as an important factor in shaping the investments they experience from parents, including parents' decisions regarding preschool enrollment (e.g., Ansari & Crosnoe, 2015a; Crosnoe et al., 2012). This elicitation can take one of two forms: compensatory elicitation or enrichment

elicitation. Compensatory elicitation can occur when children exhibit poor school readiness skills or problem behaviors, which prompt parents to seek out assistance to help their children prepare for school. In contrast, enrichment elicitation would occur when children demonstrate strong school readiness skills that may motivate parents to continue to invest in their human capital (Ansari & Crosnoe, 2015a; Crosnoe et al., 2012). Outside of children's gender and age, however, these other child-driven effects have rarely been examined as determinants of preschool enrollment. Importantly, the ways in which children shape their developmental ecologies are also contingent on broader ecological systems. As one example, we know that socioeconomically disadvantaged families (Crosnoe, et al., 2012) and families from ethnic minority homes (Ansari & Crosnoe, 2015b) are potentially more reactive to external influences, including their children's behaviors. Thus, minority (versus White) families may be more reactive to their children's functioning.

Community context. Finally, families are nested within broader community contexts, which serve as stratification systems that reflect the supply-side of the community. These external contextual forces heavily shape parents' choice of care as they determine preschool accessibility and availability in addition to the cultural norms (Meyers & Jordan, 2006). Put another way, the supply of (and demand for) quality preschool programs is not the same across different geographic locations and communities in the U.S. and, thus, families from different communities have different sets of alternatives to choose from. These supply factors and community characteristics are particularly salient for Latino families who often settle in ethnic enclaves of shared language, values, and practices, live in communities with fewer care options, and have children who attend mono-ethnic schools. Indeed, Latino families often report that few options exist that meet their needs (e.g., proximity, parents' scheduling needs) and this barrier is particularly true for formal preschool programs, which is why some parents turn to alternative

arrangements (Sandstrom et al., 2012). Considering parents' selection of preschool in light of the community context suggests that these "choices" are constrained by the alternatives in which parents can choose from and, given unequal access across different geographic locations, differential enrollment rates may be partially attributed to the insufficient supply of affordable and high-quality programs (Meyers & Jordan, 2006). Ultimately, therefore, the need for quality programs results in a greater competition for care among families in any given community (Coley et al., 2014) and, in turn, may have a more deleterious effect for Latino families who are likely to turn to less formal arrangements that fit their needs (Sanstrom et al., 2012).

The Current Study

In sum, the accommodations model (Meyers & Jordan, 2006) points to several potential factors that may influence families' selection of preschool, several of which have received inadequate attention. By taking a theoretically grounded approach to studying such selection, this study will elucidate the reasons parents choose to place their children in preschool, or the obstacles they face in doing so. Moreover, the extant literature has inadequately addressed how race/ethnicity and/or nativity may condition these processes and whether the factors that drive parents' selection of preschool differ among families from different backgrounds. Thus, this study continues the work of Coley and colleagues (2014) and Crosnoe and colleagues (2016) who looked at variation in preschool selection across different developmental stages and across different socioeconomic strata by considering variation in the accommodations framework as a function of families nativity and immigration status. Specifically, this study addresses the following two research questions: (1) what are the processes by which families select into preschool as compared with parental care and other informal arrangements? and (2) to what extent do these selection processes vary across racial/ethnic group membership?

Method

Data for the current investigation were drawn from the ECLS-B, which followed a nationally representative cohort of 10,700 children from birth (2001) through kindergarten entry (2006 or 2007; per IES/NCES regulations all sample sizes have been rounded to the nearest 50). The ECLS-B used a multistage, stratified, clustered design, and data collection occurred in a variety of forms, including parent and teacher interviews and direct child assessments (for more on sampling information see, Snow et al., 2009). For the purposes of this study, I utilize a subsample of 5,850 children who took part of the data collection through the end of the preschool year and who were identified as Latino—both the children of immigrants and native born mothers—or as U.S.-born Whites or U.S.-born Blacks (see also Crosnoe et al., 2015).

Measures

Below, I describe the focal predictors of preschool selection, separated by the five broader domains, as well as the focal dependent variable, preschool enrollment. All variables used in the current investigation are informed by the existing literature on preschool selection (see also, Coley et al., 2014; Crosnoe et al., 2016b; Meyers & Jordan, 2006)

Race/ethnicity and nativity. NCES identified race/ethnicity on the basis of maternal reports at the nine-month wave of data collection, which was cross classified with mothers' and fathers' immigration status; if either mothers or fathers were born outside of the U.S., then children were classified as coming from an immigrant household. Children's race/ethnicity was used as the primary marker for their families' background, which overlapped with mothers' race/ethnicity for roughly 95% of cases (see also, Gershoff et al., 2012). In the cases where children's race/ethnicity did not match their mothers, the discrepancy was generally due to the fathers' background. Thus, children's race/ethnicity accurately captured their families' backgrounds. Having established the coding scheme, there were four primary groups of interest. First, to gauge assimilation among Latinos, I focus on the experiences of Latino children from

U.S.-born (*n* = 750) and foreign-born homes (*n* = 750). Then, to compare their experiences with the historically least and most advantaged segments of the population, I consider the experiences of children from U.S.-born White (*n* = 3,250) and U.S.-born Black (*n* = 1,100) homes.

Preschool enrollment. Parents reported whether their child was enrolled in a preschool (labeled preschool or pre-kindergarten) or Head Start program at the age of 4, or whether a relative or non-relative cared for them. Similar to prior studies on preschool education (e.g., Bumgarner & Brooks-Gunn, 2014; Crosnoe et al., 2016b), my coding scheme of preschool enrollment gives preference toward any exposure to preschool. Thus, the focal category was parent-reported preschool enrollment, which included center-based care and Head Start. Children who were not enrolled in a preschool program at age 4 but were cared for by a relative or a non-relative—either inside or outside of the home—were coded as receiving informal care. Finally, children who were not receiving any care from a relative or a non-relative, or in a preschool program, were categorized as being cared for by a parent.

Indicators of family necessity. Family necessity was captured with six different variables that were drawn from the 2-year wave of data collection. To capture family circumstances, indicators of maternal employment (full time, part time, unemployed), non-standard work schedules (*standard* = 0 and *non-standard* = 1), and enrollment in classes (*no* = 0 and *yes* = 1) were examined. Additionally, measures of household structure included two dummy coded variables (*no* =0 and *yes* =1) indicating whether mothers were single and whether there was a relative living in the household, and the number of children living in the home.

Indicators of household resources. The construct of household resources and parenting quality was also captured with six different variables drawn from the 2-year wave of data collection. The first two variables included mothers' education (less than high school, high school/ GED, some college, bachelor's degree or greater) and their annual household income (1

= *$0- $20,000* to 4= *$100,000+*). The next two variables were also based on parent report and captured mothers' English language proficiency (1 = *not very well at all* to 4 = *very well*) and citizenship status (0 = *no* and 1= *yes*). Parents also reported whether or not (0 = *no* and 1= *yes*) they had received different types of federally-provided benefits that may connect them to preschool services (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families [TANF], Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP], Medicaid, and Children's Health Insurance Program [CHIP]) in addition to job training and housing assistance. These financial assistance variables (i.e., TANF, SNAP, Medicaid, CHIP, and job training/housing assistance) were summed to create an indicator of systemic connections (see also, Crosnoe et al., 2016b).

The sixth and final variable was parenting quality, which was created based on ratings of mothers' parenting behaviors when their children were 2 years of age during the Two Bags Task. During this task, parents were asked to play with their children for 10 minutes with two different set of toys; one bag of toys contained toy dishes and the other bag included a picture book. These interactions were videotaped and coded by the ECLS-B staff. Specifically, coders rated different dimensions of parents' interactions with their children on a 1 (*very low*) to 7 (*very high*) scale, including: parents' sensitivity, engagement in cognitive stimulation, and positive regard. These three subscales of the Two Bags Task were standardized to have a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1, and then, averaged to create an underlying indicator of parenting quality ($\alpha = .81$).

Indicators of parents' expectations and beliefs. Four variables captured parents' expectations of preschool programs and their children's school readiness. The first two variables were based on parents' answers to 15 questions regarding the importance of different skills that children need to demonstrate to be ready for school. These questions were scored on a 1 (*not at all important*) to 5 (*essential*) scale and were divided into two subscales to reflect the importance of social-behavioral skills (e.g., "is not disruptive of the class") and academic skills (e.g., "can

count to 20 or more") for kindergarten. Both scales demonstrated strong reliability (behavior, α = .81; academic, α = .87). The third and fourth set of variables captured how important cultural consistency was for parents when they searched for preschool (e.g., importance of caregivers who: spoke their native language, were of the same race/ethnicity, and/or shared the same beliefs for child rearing) and the importance of preschool flexibility (e.g., importance of programs that took care of sick children, had flexible hours, was close to home, and was of reasonable cost). These seven questions, which were based on a 3-point Likert scale (1 = *not too important* to 3 = *very important*), were averaged to create composites of parents' desire for a cultural consistency and preschool flexibility (see also, Miller et al., 2013).

Indicators of child factors. At the age of 2, children's *cognitive* and *motor* skills were directly assessed with the short form of the Bayley Scale of Infant Development (α = .89-.92; Bayley, 1993). The cognitive domain tapped into children's problem solving, counting, and receptive and expressive vocabulary skills, whereas the motor domain measured children's fine and gross motor skills. Children's *negativity* was assessed with a coder rating of videotaped parent-child interactions during the Two Bags Task. Coders rated the degree to which children demonstrated anger, hostility, or dislike toward their parents. Scale scores ranged from 1 to 7, with higher scores indicative of greater negativity. Measures of children's *persistence* were based on interviewer ratings of children's behavior during the Bayley's assessment. The scale ranged from 1 (*consistently lacks persistence*) to 5 (*consistently persistent*). Finally, to capture children's physical well-being, parents' reported on their children's physical health at age 2 (1 = *poor*, 5 = *excellent*). Because these child assessments were on different scales, they were standardized (and reversed coded, when applicable) to have a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1 and summed to capture children's well-being and functioning (α = .78). To capture non-linearity in these associations, this variable was transformed into a categorical scheme (1= *low*

child functioning to 4 = *high child functioning*). In addition to children's functioning, children's age and gender were also considered as drivers of preschool enrollment.

Indicators of community characteristics. Community characteristics were captured with six different variables. To begin, as part of the ECLS-B data collection parents reported on whether they had a difficult time finding child care or preschool and on their household location (region and urbanicity). The remaining community characteristics were derived from the Census. Specifically, similar to prior studies of preschool selection (e.g., Coley et al., 2014; Gordon & Chase-Lansdale, 2001), data on the number of children under six within each zip code were divided by the number of child care providers to tap into child care and preschool competition, with higher numbers indicative of fewer programs relative to the need. These estimates were logged to correct for non-normality. The next two census variables captured community factors that may influence the availability and selection of preschool, namely the percentage of employed mothers with children under the age of six and the subsidy waitlist within each zip code. The final census variable considered the contribution of community-level language use, which was based the proportion of families within each community who were considered to be: (1) English speakers only; (2) Spanish and English fluent; and (3) linguistically isolated. The Census Bureau defines linguistic isolation as households in which no member over 14 years of age speaks English very well (Siegel, Martin, & Bruno, 2001).

Prior child care experiences. In addition to the aforementioned factors, two additional sets of variables were included as covariates that captured children's prior child care experiences, namely: children's age of first care, continuously measured, and their child care arrangement at age 2 (center-based care, informal care, or parental care).

Analysis Plan

I employed a sequential modeling strategy using the Stata program. I began by estimating

a logistic regression model in the full sample to examine the bivariate racial/ethnic disparities in preschool enrollment (Model 1); then, in Model 2, I included the various selection variables that were hypothesized to affect families' selection into preschool in the full sample as compared with parental care and other informal care arrangements (controlling for race/ethnicity). Finally, in Model 3, I re-estimated these same models separately for White, Black, and immigrant and non-immigrant Latino families. To determine whether race/ethnicity conditioned the observed associations, post-hoc coefficient comparisons were used to formally assess for moderation by group membership (Clogg et al., 1995; Paternoster et al., 1998). All models included (a) clustering variables that were based on primary sampling units and were used to adjust the standard errors as function of shared variance in the dependent variables, and (b) the longitudinal weight, which ensured that the sample was representative of the nation's children while also adjusting for cross-wave attrition. To address issues of missing data, which ranged from 0-20%, 20 datasets were imputed using the chained equations method. It is also important to acknowledge that although the current study included a sample of 5,850 children, these children were divided into racial/ethnic groups and preschool type. Thus, any given comparison included 550-2,950 children for the subgroup analyses and 4,700-5,150 children in the overall analyses. For these reasons, some of the subgroup models had issues related to power and, therefore, findings that were at the trend level (i.e., $p < .10$) are interpreted.

It should also be noted that all findings are discussed in terms of odds ratios. To interpret an odds ratio, the estimates are multiplied by 100 to give the percent change in preschool enrollment associated with a one-unit change in the predictor. The majority of the focal predictors were categorized into dummy variables and so interpretation of a one-unit change in a predictor is straightforward, as is the comparison of effect sizes between predictors. To ease the interpretation of the remaining continuous and quasi-continuous predictors, these variables have

been standardized; therefore, the odds ratio for these variables can be interpreted in terms of a standard deviation change in the predictor rather than a one-unit change.

Results

All findings are presented in Table 1 (descriptive statistics), Table 2 (multivariate models of preschool enrollment versus parental care), and Table 3 (multivariate models of preschool enrollment versus informal care). I begin with a discussion of the racial/ethnic disparities in preschool enrolment across the different groups of families. I then discuss the overall patterns of preschool selection for all families before closing with the differences in preschool selection among native-born families and immigrant Latino families.

Racial/ethnic disparities in preschool enrollment. As can be seen in Model 1 of Tables 2 and Tables 3, the children of foreign-born Latino families (versus White families) were 46 and 53% less likely to attend preschool than informal care and parental care, respectively. In contrast, the children of native-born Latino families were 48% less likely to attend preschool (versus informal care) as compared with White families, but similar patterns did not emerge for parental care. Although not shown here, the children of foreign-born Latinos were also 27-57% less likely to attend preschool as compared with Black children (versus informal and parental care) and 40% less likely to attend preschool than the children of U.S.-born Latinos (versus parental care only). At the population level, these descriptive estimates reveal that 56% of Latino children from foreign-born households were enrolled in a preschool program as compared with 63% of U.S.-born Latino children, 70% U.S.-born Black children, and 72% of U.S.-born White children.

There were, however, fewer differences in the rates of preschool participation across groups when accounting for the other selection variables (Model 2 of Tables 2 and 3) than in Model 1, which only accounted for race/ethnicity and nativity. The sole exception was that U.S.-born Latinos were marginally more likely to participate in informal care as compared with U.S.-

born White families (see Table 3). Thus, these preliminary models indicate Latino families, especially those who were born overseas, were less likely to enroll in preschool not because they of their cultural background, but instead, because of other factors that were correlated with this status, such as socio-economic factors and community characteristics.

Selection of preschool for all families. Having established the disparities in preschool enrollment, I next proceed to a discussion of the selection models. As compared with parental care, preschool enrollment was in part a function of necessity; parents who were employed either part- or full-time were 46 and 92% more likely to enroll their children in preschool than unemployed parents, and mothers who were enrolled in classes were 67% more likely to enroll their children in preschool than keep them at home. In contrast, when there was a father in the household, or when children had a greater number of siblings under 18, they were 34 and 21% less likely to attend a formal preschool program (versus parental care). Unlike the comparison with parental care, family necessity did not play a consistent role in parents' preschool selection when compared with other informal care arrangements (see Table 3). There was one exception, however: children who had a greater number of siblings were 20% less likely to attend preschool as compared with other informal care arrangements when they were 4 years of age.

Preschool enrollment was also a function of household resources, with less educated, less affluent families, and families with limited English language proficiency exhibiting a lower likelihood of preschool participation than parental care. While household income was not a consistent predictor of preschool selection when parents were deciding between preschool and other informal arrangements, parents' educational attainment was linked with increased odds of preschool enrollment. Parenting quality (i.e., parents' sensitivity and engagement in cognitive stimulation) and systemic connections, net of household income and education, did not have implications for children's enrollment in preschool (versus either parental care or informal care).

Although parents' own behaviors did not facilitate children's likelihood of preschool participation, their children's own characteristics did influence their decisions. Not surprisingly, older children were more likely to be enrolled in preschool than both parental care and informal care. Beyond these age effects, however, there was also evidence to suggest that children who exhibited the most optimal functioning were 27% less likely to be enrolled in preschool as compared with parental care. Not only did children's own characteristics influence their parents' decisions, but so did parents' own beliefs and expectations. Specifically, parents who valued their children's academic readiness for kindergarten were 28 and 38% more likely to select into preschool (versus parental care and informal care), whereas parents who placed a stronger emphasis on children's social-behavior were 24 and 21% less likely to enroll their children in preschool as compared with parental care and informal care, respectively. Additionally, parents who valued greater preschool flexibility were less likely to enroll their children in preschool.

Finally, a few community factors were found to be linked with the preschool selection behaviors of parents. As expected, when parents had a hard time finding care, they were less likely to enroll their children in preschool and to keep them at home or with a relative. There were also clear regional differences in parents' selection of preschool as compared with both parental care and informal care: parents who lived in the Midwest, South, and West, were less likely to enroll their children in preschool as compared with parents in the Northeast.

Selection of preschool: Moderation by race/ethnicity. Having established the general patterns of preschool selection in the full sample, I now proceed to assessing the between group differences, with a focus on differences between immigrant and native-born Latino families. Again, to determine whether group membership conditioned the observed associations, post-hoc tests were used to compare coefficients across groups. I only discuss findings that were different within the Latino population, in large part because there were more consistent differences *within*

the Latino population than as compared with across groups, but the differences that did emerge among immigrant and U.S.-born Latino families and U.S.-born Black and White families are presented in Tables 2 and 3. When there is no evidence for moderation, then the estimates from the overall column can be generalized to all populations; when there is evidence for moderation, then the estimates from the subgroup models should be interpreted.

Results from these moderation analyses revealed that there were not many differences within the Latino population with respect to the implications of family necessity for preschool selection. The two key differences that did emerge was that the negative effect of having more siblings in the household on preschool selection was only true for U.S.-born Latino families, whereas having a father in the household only reduced foreign-born Latino families' likelihood of attending preschool. There were also very few differences that emerged with regards to household resources. The only two differences that emerged were: (a) immigrant Latino families who were fluent in English were *more* likely to select into preschool (versus parent care), whereas U.S.-born Latino families who were more fluent in English were *less* likely to (versus other informal care); and (b) children from U.S.-born Latino homes were 225% more likely to attend a formal preschool program (versus parental care) if their parents engaged in lower quality parenting, which was also not the case for Latino children from immigrant homes.

There were, however, more consistent differences that emerged for child elicitation and parents' beliefs about children's academic and social-behavioral development. In particular, not only did children's own skills play an important role in the selection behaviors of Latino families, but it did so in somewhat orthogonal ways. Specifically, Latino children who were struggling in areas of early learning at age 2 were 67% less likely to be enrolled in preschool two years later if their mothers were born in the U.S., whereas for the children of foreign-born mothers, those who were struggling at age 2 were 183% more likely to attend preschool than

remain at home. At the same time, however, Latino children of U.S.-born families who were highly functioning were 68% less likely to attend preschool as compared with parental care, which was also not the case for the children from immigrant homes. Finally, parents' valuation of their children's academic (versus parental care) and social-behavioral (versus parental care and informal care) skills also influenced preschool selection, but only among U.S.-born Latinos. When taken together, these results indicate that U.S.-born Latino families opted to keep their children at home when they exhibited relatively low or high levels of functioning (i.e., a non-linear association) and that preschool was viewed as a means of preparing children academically for school, whereas immigrant Latino families viewed preschool in a compensatory manner.

Results from these moderation analyses also revealed that Latino families who valued cultural consistency across the home and school systems were 35% *more* likely to select a formal preschool program (versus parent care) for their children if they were born in Latin America, but opposite patterns emerged for U.S.-born Latino families (30% *less* likely). However, when compared with other informal arrangements, parents' valuation of cultural consistency—across both groups of Latino families—was associated with a reduced likelihood of preschool participation. Finally, immigrant families who lived in communities that had greater support for *both* the Spanish and English language were 58% more likely to enroll their children in preschool (versus parental care), but parallel processes were not at play for U.S.-born families.

Discussion

Early childhood programs hold great promise in preparing children for school and reducing the socio-economic disparities in their long-term school success (Duncan & Magnuson, 2013). With the mounting evidence that preschool education can make a difference in children's educational prospects, there is a growing need to understand *why* certain groups of children are more or less likely to participate than others. This investigation sought to address this "why"

question and builds on the existing literature on preschool selection (Coley et al., 2014; Crosnoe et al., 2016b; Fuller et al., 1996; Ha et al., 2013) by applying the accommodations model (Meyers & Jordan, 2006) to nationally representative data from the ECLS-B in order to understand potential racial/ethnic differences in preschool enrollment. Taken together, the results of this work underscore the similarities and differences that exist in the preschool selection behaviors of different groups of children and families in the U.S., while also highlighting the heterogeneity that exists *within* the Latino population. The results of this study have three take home messages.

Similar to other national estimates (Child Trends, 2014), data from the ECLS-B revealed that Latino children were less likely to participate in formal preschool education at the age of 4. Specifically, roughly six out of every ten Latino children from native- and foreign-born households were enrolled in a preschool program, which was lower than U.S.-born Black and White children (70-72%). However, these disparities in preschool enrollment were largely attributed to other factors; when accounting for the various selection indicators, there were no longer any consistent racial/ethnic differences in children's preschool enrollment. In other words, these findings give credence to the theoretical model put forth by Meyers and Jordan (2006) and suggest that Latino children—especially those from foreign-born homes—are less likely to participate in preschool not because of cultural differences per se, but instead, because of an accumulation of inequality (socio-economic factors, parents' limited English fluency, and parents' difficulty in finding preschool options that met their needs) that reflects the different communities and cultural contexts in which these decisions are being made.

Even though these disparities in enrollment are largely attenuated after accounting for the selection factors, the bivariate differences are still a cause for concern. In other words, although disparities in preschool enrollment are in part a function of racial/ethnic group membership, it is

confounded by other factors. To ignore these bivariate differences, however, is to ignore the accumulation of disadvantages faced by these populations. In reality, these findings underscore the need for greater equity in preschool education, which in turn can potentially reduce inequality in children's educational prospects. Inequality is multifaceted and is a reality faced by many Latino families throughout the life course (Crosnoe, 2005, 2007; Fuller et al., 2009; Reardon & Galindo, 2009) and reflects differential opportunities and resources available to them. Given such evidence, an important first step is the development of policies that aim to reduce barriers towards preschool enrollment for Latino families so that these families have true choices in the matter, which in turn may lead to higher participation rates.

The second key message is that preschool enrollment was multiply determined. It was not driven by any one factor; rather, it was a shaped by a number of factors that cut across various levels of family and community context that drove parents' decisions for their children's preschool education. For example, children were more likely to attend preschool when their parents had an easier time finding a preschool program (accessibility), had a greater need for preschool (necessity), valued their children's academic readiness for school (expectations and beliefs), and had greater socioeconomic resources (household resources). At the same time, however, parents across the country preferred to enroll their children in other informal care arrangements when they valued their children's social-behavioral development, needed greater preschool flexibility, and when their children exhibited high levels of functioning. Interestingly, the social-behavioral patterns map onto some of the existing literature that indicates that children who attend preschool for longer hours exhibit less optimal social-behavioral skills (Belsky et al., 2007). Thus, it might be that parents are concerned with the potential harmful effects of preschool programs for their children's social behavior development. Alternatively, it could be that parents believe that they shape their children's social-behavior, while preschool programs

are meant for developing children's academic competencies.

It is also of note that in comparing preschool enrollment to parental care and informal care, another interesting pattern emerged: different selection indicators were more strongly predictive of families' preschool selection when making the different contrasts. For example, family necessity and household resources were more frequently implicated in parents' selection of preschool when compared with parental care, whereas community characteristics and parents' beliefs and expectations were the strongest factors in preschool enrollment as compared with informal care. Thus, parents' decisions about preschool is likely embedded within, but separate from, their decision-making about less formal child care arrangements. Taken together, the results reported herein largely support the work of Meyers and Jordan (2006) and suggest that preschool selection is not simply about parents' preferences; instead, they are fairly complex and contextualized actions that also reflect families' needs, resources, opportunities, and constraints.

The final take home message of this work is that there were fairly consistent differences in preschool selection when looking within the Latino population. For example, when looking at the differences between immigrant and U.S.-born families, there was evidence for child elicitation, with the ways in which Latino parents reacted to their children's skills varying as a function of their nativity. In general, U.S.-born families were more likely to keep their children at home when they exhibited either low or high levels of functioning and to view preschool as a means of preparing children academically for kindergarten, whereas immigrant Latino families viewed preschool in more of a compensatory manner. These results resonate with some of the recent findings in the literature that suggest that these child-driven effects may be more pronounced within the Latino population (Ansari & Crosnoe, 2015b). Thus, the findings reported as part of the current investigation add to these prior studies by providing a more nuanced understanding of these processes and underscoring the within group differences in these

transactions.

These differences within the Latino population also existed across the community context and indicators of culture. Interestingly, when immigrant families were immersed in communities with high use of *both* Spanish and English, they were more likely to select into preschool, suggesting that the community environments surrounding families do play important roles in facilitating children's preschool participation. These community factors that represent high use of Spanish and English could potentially reflect the opportunities and resources available to families as they adapt to the U.S. culture (Glick, Walker, Luz, 2012). Thus, one potential explanation for the differential selection behaviors of immigrant and U.S.-born Latino families is the type of communities that these families are residing in (e.g., ethnic enclaves, new immigrant destinations). Although there were no community differences when examining the experiences of native-born Latino families, there was evidence to suggest that those who were more accustomed to the U.S. culture (e.g., English language proficiency) were *less* likely to enroll their children in preschool and had a greater desire for matches between the home and school systems.

Another possible explanation for these differences across immigrant and native-born Latino families is that second generation immigrants want to hold on to their ancestry and cultural values, which might be better supported by caregivers in informal care arrangements. Indeed, one of the common themes in the literature on Latino children and families is the immigrant or Latino paradox, which finds that immigrant children exhibit academic advantages in the absence of high socioeconomic standing and their families exhibit health outcomes that are on par with, or surpass, non-Latino White families (Crosnoe & Turley, 2013; Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010). These findings of the differences in preschool selection largely map onto the Latino paradox and the accommodations model (Meyers & Jordan, 2006), in that they highlight the complicated and dynamic nature of these individual processes and how they are embedded in

families' socio-cultural histories that are interwoven within the American community context.

Regardless of why these differences emerge across immigrant and native-born Latino families, these findings indicate that some of the preconceived notions regarding the lower rates of preschool participation among Latino families and the roles of familial and cultural values (e.g., Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010; Zambrana & Morant, 2009) seem to be more specific to U.S.-born Latino families as compared with Latino children from foreign-born homes, and to pertain more to the selection of preschool versus other informal arrangements rather than parental care (i.e., no out of home care). Ultimately, therefore, the findings of the current investigation indicate that the motivations for preschool enrollment vary systematically within the Latino population, as do the barriers faced by these families and that we need to consider how individual differences operate within children's socio-cultural histories. At the same time, however, it is important to acknowledge that even with potential policy changes, parents may purposefully choose arrangements that are more informal because that is the best choice for them. Thus, and as briefly discussed above, one of the first policy goals should be targeted at reducing barriers so that parents have a variety of options that fit their needs.

Limitations, Future Directions, and Conclusions. As with any study, there are important limitations that need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the results of the current investigation. The primary limitation of this current work is a reflection of sample size and in some cases, the interpretation of marginal findings. Although the ECLS-B often provided enough statistical power to look at the experiences of families across racial/ethnic group membership, and tease apart the heterogeneity that exists within the Latino population, there was not always sufficient cell coverage to examine other sources of heterogeneity. This limitation speaks more broadly to issues related to sampling especially when studying sub-groups. Indeed, a series of simulations gauging power within the Latino subgroups revealed that the ECLS-B

provided enough power to detect medium and large effect sizes, but the sample was underpowered in detecting smaller effect sizes (e.g., ORs ≈ 0.60-1.00 and 1.00-1.75) for categorical predictors. For adequate power at detecting smaller effect sizes, subgroup samples of 1,250-1,500 would be necessary. Thus, there is a growing need for national studies that oversample vulnerable populations, including immigrant Latino families. Moreover, although theoretically meaningful, some nuances were also lost in grouping children into one of the three preschool categories (i.e., preschool, informal care, or parental care). These decisions were made because of the relatively small sample of Latino families in the different types of programs. Sample size restrictions also meant that I could not disentangle differences across different types of formal preschool programs (e.g., Head Start, public versus private). A caveat to this limitation is that prior studies of preschool selection have shown that there are fewer differences within "formal" preschool programs as compared with the formal and informal care divide (Crosnoe et al., 2016b). When possible, however, these distinctions should be made to provide a more in depth understanding of preschool selection. Relatedly, this study cannot conclude with certainty that families that said their children were not enrolled in preschool did not have their children enrolled in some form of a non-parental care setting during the year before kindergarten and, thus, caution is warranted when interpreting these findings. Even so, these variables have been commonly used in the extant literature for studying early childhood programs (e.g., Crosnoe et al., 2016b; Coley et al., 2014; Miller et al., 2013).

Next, although these analyses provided the opportunity to examine these selection processes at the national level, applying the accommodations model to understand such selection across different communities in the U.S. is still necessary. Such inquiry is needed because the ways in which parents engage with the preschool market are likely to be different in communities such as Miami, where there is long-standing history of socio-linguistic support for

the Spanish language than they would be in communities such as North Carolina, which has an emerging concentration of the Latino population. Moreover, while the quantitative methods of this study established selection into preschool, they provided little insight into the complex motivations that underlie these behaviors. Uncovering parents' perceptions of their agency, their knowledge and awareness, and their experiences in navigating the educational system, which are not possible to generate with large-scale survey data, is a necessary future direction. As part of this effort, stronger measures of acculturation would also be beneficial; while the ECLS-B provides a wide breadth of indicators it provides little depth, as in the case of the markers of acculturation. Finally, although this study applied a theoretical model to understand parents' selection behaviors, these findings do not represent cause and effect. It should be noted, however, that predictors were drawn from two years prior to preschool entry whenever possible. Thus, the temporal ordering of the selection factors and children's preschool enrollment reduces concerns of reverse causality.

With these limitations and future directions in mind, the results of this investigation build on the accommodations framework (Meyers & Jordan, 2006) and contribute to our understanding of the similarities and differences that exist in the preschool selection of different groups of children and families from across the country. Importantly, these findings build also on the existing literature (e.g., Coley et al., 2014; Crosnoe et al., 2016b) by highlighting some of the key differences that exist *within* the Latino population in terms of preschool selection and suggest that the lower rates of preschool enrollment among these families is not entirely due to cultural differences, but rather, stem from other factors that are correlated with this status.

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Table 1.

Weighted sample descriptives for the ECLS-B, stratified by race/ethnicity.

Variable [a]	Overall	U.S.-born White	U.S.-born Black	U.S.-born Latino	Foreign-born Latino
Child race/ethnicity					
U.S.-born White	0.58	1.00	--	--	--
U.S.-born Black	0.14	--	1.00	--	--
U.S-born Latino	0.12	--	--	1.00	--
Foreign-born Latino	0.16	--	--	--	1.00
Prior child care experiences					
Center-based care	0.16	0.16 [a]	0.26 [b]	0.14 [a]	0.07 [c]
Informal care	0.34	0.32 [a]	0.38 [b]	0.38 [b]	0.30 [a]
Parental care	0.51	0.51 [a]	0.36 [b]	0.48 [a]	0.63 [c]
Child age of first care (months)	14.08 (16.37)	15.00 (16.86) [a]	8.03 (10.91) [b]	11.41 (14.87) [c]	17.96 (17.86) [d]
Type of care at age 4					
Any preschool	0.68	0.72 [a]	0.70 [a]	0.63 [b]	0.56 [c]
Informal care	0.12	0.10 [a]	0.13 [b]	0.17 [c]	0.14 [b,c]
Parental care	0.20	0.18 [a]	0.17 [a]	0.20 [a]	0.30 [b]
Family necessity					
Maternal employment and coursework					
Mom unemployed	0.45	0.42 [a]	0.42 [a]	0.44 [a]	0.59 [b]
Mom employed part-time	0.21	0.25 [a]	0.17 [b]	0.16 [b]	0.12 [b]
Mom employed full-time	0.35	0.34 [a]	0.42 [b]	0.40 [b]	0.28 [c]
Mom non-standard work schedule	0.14	0.15 [a]	0.17 [a]	0.12 [b]	0.09 [b]
Mom enrolled in classes	0.12	0.10 [a]	0.23 [b]	0.15 [c]	0.10 [a]
Household structure					
Father in household	0.79	0.88 [a]	0.39 [b]	0.70 [c]	0.88 [a]
Relative in household	0.20	0.13 [a]	0.30 [b,c]	0.28 [c]	0.33 [b]
Number of children under 18	2.23 (1.16)	2.13 (1.06) [a]	2.45 (1.29) [b]	2.23 (1.25) [b]	2.38 (1.25) [c]
Household resources and quality					
Maternal education					
High school diploma/GED	0.20	0.10 [a]	0.26 [b]	0.26 [b]	0.43 [c]
Some college	0.29	0.26 [a]	0.36 [b]	0.32 [b]	0.32 [b]
Bachelor's degree	0.28	0.30 [a]	0.30 [a]	0.31 [a]	0.17 [b]
Some graduate school	0.24	0.34 [a]	0.08 [b]	0.12 [b]	0.08 [b]

Table 1 continued on next page

Table 1 (continued)

Variable [a]	Overall	U.S.-born White	U.S.-born Black	U.S.-born Latino	Foreign-born Latino
Household income					
$0-$20,000	0.25	0.15 [a]	0.51 [b]	0.30 [c]	0.36 [d]
$20,001-$40,000	0.28	0.22 [a]	0.31 [b]	0.33 [b]	0.45 [c]
$40,001-$100,000	0.25	0.31 [a]	0.13 [b]	0.25 [c]	0.13 [b]
$100,001+	0.21	0.31 [a]	0.06 [b]	0.12 [c]	0.06 [b]
Mother citizenship status	0.88	1.00 [a]	1.00 [a]	1.00 [a]	0.27 [b]
Mother English language proficiency	3.73 (0.77)	4.00 (0.00) [a]	4.00 (0.00) [a]	3.91 (0.40) [b]	2.42 (1.20) [c]
Systemic connections	1.13 (1.34)	0.77 (1.16) [a]	2.28 (1.53) [b]	1.47 (1.43) [c]	1.18 (1.00) [d]
Mother age	28.12 (6.33)	29.25 (6.20) [a]	25.35 (6.00) [b]	26.28 (6.46) [c]	27.85 (5.91) [d]
Parenting quality					
Low	0.20	0.12 [a]	0.33 [b]	0.19 [c]	0.40 [d]
Average	0.58	0.60 [a]	0.58 [a]	0.63 [a]	0.49 [b]
High	0.22	0.29 [a]	0.09 [b]	0.18 [c]	0.11 [d]
Parents' beliefs and expectations					
The importance of…					
Academic skills for kindergarten at age 4	4.01 (0.57)	3.94 (0.57) [a]	4.16 (0.56) [b]	4.07 (0.57) [c]	4.08 (0.54) [c]
Social skills for kindergarten at age 4	4.14 (0.47)	4.10 (0.47) [a]	4.22 (0.46) [b]	4.18 (0.47) [b]	4.17 (0.46) [b]
Preschool cultural consistency at age 4	6.58 (1.19)	6.64 (1.01) [a]	6.65 (1.13) [a]	6.22 (1.25) [b]	6.57 (1.66) [a]
Preschool flexibility at age 4	9.86 (1.96)	9.31 (1.98) [a]	10.67 (1.58) [b]	10.26 (1.80) [c]	10.82 (1.58) [b]
Child factors					
Child functioning					
Low	0.17	0.13 [a]	0.22 [b,c]	0.20 [b]	0.26 [c]
Average	0.60	0.58 [a]	0.60 [a,b]	0.61 [a,b]	0.63 [b]
High	0.23	0.29 [a]	0.19 [b]	0.19 [b]	0.10 [c]
Child is female	0.49	0.49 [a]	0.47 [a]	0.49 [a]	0.48 [a]
Child age at preschool entry (months)	52.46 (4.06)	52.17 (3.91) [a]	52.16 (4.19) [a]	53.23 (4.13) [b]	53.17 (4.26) [b]
Community characteristics					
Child care and preschool competition	-0.01 (1.08)	0.04 (1.06) [a]	0.10 (1.08) [a]	-0.12 (1.09) [b]	-0.17 (1.09) [b]
Proportion of working moms	0.57 (0.10)	0.59 (0.10) [a]	0.57 (0.09) [b]	0.54 (0.10) [c]	0.54 (0.10) [c]
Subsidy waitlist	0.63 (0.48)	0.55 (0.50) [a]	0.69 (0.46) [b]	0.74 (0.44) [b,c]	0.77 (0.42) [c]
Community language use					
Spanish speaking community	0.05 (0.08)	0.02 (0.03) [a]	0.04 (0.05) [b]	0.09 (0.09) [c]	0.14 (0.11) [d]
Bilingual community	0.17 (0.14)	0.11 (0.09) [a]	0.13 (0.10) [b]	0.27 (0.16) [c]	0.30 (0.15) [d]
English speaking community	0.78 (0.20)	0.86 (0.11) [a]	0.83 (0.15) [b]	0.63 (0.24) [c]	0.56 (0.24) [d]

Table 1 continued on next page

Table 1 (continued)

Variable [a]	Overall	U.S.-born White	U.S.-born Black	U.S.-born Latino	Foreign-born Latino
Finding care at age 4 was…					
Difficult	0.26	0.25 [a]	0.24 [a]	0.30 [b]	0.26 [a,b]
Not difficult	0.60	0.64 [a]	0.66 [a]	0.53 [b]	0.48 [b]
Did not look for care	0.14	0.12 [a]	0.10 [a]	0.17 [b]	0.26 [c]
Region and urbanicity					
Northeast	0.16	0.17 [a]	0.16 [a]	0.16 [a]	0.14 [a]
Midwest	0.23	0.29 [a]	0.21 [b]	0.11 [c]	0.11 [c]
South	0.37	0.35 [a]	0.56 [b]	0.29 [c]	0.32 [a,c]
West	0.24	0.18 [a]	0.07 [b]	0.44 [c]	0.43 [c]
Urban	0.84	0.76 [a]	0.91 [b]	0.95 [b,c]	0.97 [c]
Sample size	5,850	3,250	1,100	750	750

Notes. [a] Unless otherwise noted, all variables were derived from the age 2 wave of data collection. Different superscripts within each row indicate significant differences across groups. Estimates in brackets correspond to standard deviations.

Table 2.
Predictors of preschool enrollment as compared with parental care.

Variable	Likelihood of being enrolled in preschool versus parental care											
	Overall				U.S.-born White		U.S-born Black		U.S-born Latino		Foreign-born Latino	
	Model 1		Model 2									
	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)
Race/ethnicity												
U.S.-born Black	1.08	(0.14)	1.09	(0.19)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
U.S-born Latino	0.78	(0.15)	1.05	(0.24)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Foreign-born Latino	0.47 ***	(0.14)	1.51	(0.35)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Prior child care experiences												
Other non-parental care age 2	--	--	2.16 ***	(0.18)	1.79 *	(0.24)	1.72	(0.35)	2.80 *	(0.47)	2.39	(0.58)
Center-based care at age 2	--	--	2.01 ***	(0.18)	1.65 † [a]	(0.28)	2.18 † [a,b]	(0.47)	4.57 ** [a,b]	(0.58)	7.77 ***[b]	(0.64)
Child age of first care	--	--	1.82 ***	(0.08)	1.76 *** [a]	(0.11)	1.40 [a]	(0.22)	2.10 *** [ab]	(0.23)	2.48 *** [b]	(0.16)
Family necessity												
Maternal employment and coursework												
Employed part-time	--	--	1.46 *	(0.19)	1.15	(0.27)	2.03	(0.45)	1.97	(0.54)	2.39	(0.63)
Employed full-time	--	--	1.92 ***	(0.19)	1.92 *	(0.31)	1.72	(0.57)	1.67	(0.57)	2.51	(0.60)
Non-standard work schedule	--	--	0.77	(0.22)	1.17 [a]	(0.26)	0.70 [a, b]	(0.41)	0.23 * [b]	(0.61)	0.55 [a,b]	(0.66)
Enrolled in classes	--	--	1.67 **	(0.18)	2.03 *	(0.28)	1.58	(0.37)	1.19	(0.54)	1.46	(0.55)
Household structure												
Father in household	--	--	0.66 *	(0.19)	0.56 † [a]	(0.32)	0.43 † [a]	(0.45)	1.52 [b]	(0.45)	0.32 † [a]	(0.69)
Relative in household	--	--	1.37 †	(0.18)	1.08	(0.32)	1.08	(0.38)	2.27	(0.51)	1.80	(0.38)
Number of siblings under 18	--	--	0.79 ***	(0.06)	0.80 * [a]	(0.09)	0.69 * [a,b]	(0.17)	0.58 ***[b]	(0.16)	0.90 [a]	(0.13)
Household resources and quality												
Maternal education												
High school diploma/GED	--	--	0.37 ***	(0.27)	0.33 **	(0.35)	0.72	(0.74)	0.53	(0.80)	0.99	(0.71)
Some college	--	--	0.50 ***	(0.20)	0.39 ***	(0.24)	0.76	(0.63)	1.31	(0.69)	1.43	(0.71)
Bachelor's degree	--	--	0.62 **	(0.18)	0.50 ***	(0.22)	0.85	(0.66)	1.52	(0.64)	1.14	(0.65)
Household income												
$0-$20,000	--	--	0.53 *	(0.27)	0.47 †	(0.39)	1.01	(1.10)	0.23 †	(0.87)	0.84	(1.09)
$20,001-$40,000	--	--	0.49 **	(0.23)	0.39 **	(0.32)	0.90	(1.13)	0.32	(0.72)	0.91	(1.03)
$40,001-$100,000	--	--	0.51 ***	(0.20)	0.50 **	(0.25)	1.23	(0.99)	0.40	(0.65)	0.67	(0.93)
Mother citizenship status	--	--	1.36	(0.40)	---	---	---	---	---	---	1.27	(0.40)
Mother English proficiency	--	--	1.25 *	(0.11)	---	---	---	---	1.03	(0.36)	1.51 ***	(0.13)
Systemic connections	--	--	0.92	(0.08)	1.04 [a]	(0.13)	0.73 † [b]	(0.16)	0.89 [a,b]	(0.21)	1.30 [a]	(0.26)
Mother age	--	--	1.01	(0.09)	1.21 * [a]	(0.09)	1.06 [a,b]	(0.18)	0.73 [b]	(0.23)	0.91 [a,b]	(0.19)
Parenting quality												
Low	--	--	1.26	(0.18)	1.19 [a,b]	(0.33)	1.49 [a,b]	(0.39)	2.25 * [a]	(0.52)	0.73 [b]	(0.35)
High	--	--	0.94	(0.16)	0.91	(0.20)	0.50	(0.60)	1.36	(0.50)	1.63	(0.53)
Parents' beliefs and expectations												
The importance of…												
Academic for kindergarten	--	--	1.28 **	(0.08)	1.14 [a]	(0.12)	1.65 * [a,b]	(0.22)	2.44 ** [b]	(0.29)	0.84 [a]	(0.22)
Social skills for kindergarten	--	--	0.76 **	(0.09)	0.81 † [a]	(0.12)	0.68 [a,b]	(0.24)	0.43 ** [b]	(0.30)	1.09 [a]	(0.21)
Preschool cultural consistency	--	--	1.04	(0.06)	0.97 [a]	(0.11)	1.10 [a,b]	(0.15)	0.70 † [a]	(0.19)	1.35 ** [b]	(0.10)
Preschool flexibility	--	--	0.90	(0.07)	0.90	(0.09)	0.76	(0.18)	1.13	(0.18)	0.90	(0.22)

Table 2 continued on next page.

Table 2 (continued)

Variable	Likelihood of being enrolled in preschool versus parental care											
	Overall				U.S.-born White		U.S-born Black		U.S-born Latino		Foreign-born Latino	
	Model 1		Model 2									
	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)
Child factors												
Child functioning												
Low	--	--	1.35 †	(0.18)	1.84 * [a, b]	(0.29)	0.97 [a]	(0.37)	0.33 ** [c]	(0.42)	2.83 ** [b]	(0.33)
High	--	--	0.73 *	(0.16)	0.79 [a]	(0.23)	0.90 [a,b]	(0.49)	0.35 * [b]	(0.45)	0.68 [a]	(0.50)
Child is female	--	--	0.95	(0.12)	1.08 [a,b]	(0.19)	1.52 [a]	(0.27)	0.44 * [c]	(0.32)	0.76 [b,c]	(0.28)
Child age at preschool (months)	--	--	1.30 ***	(0.08)	1.35 ** [a]	(0.11)	1.39 * [a]	(0.14)	1.51 † [a]	(0.22)	0.96 [b]	(0.14)
Community characteristics												
Child care and preschool competition	--	--	1.12	(0.07)	1.31 * [a]	(0.11)	0.71 * [b]	(0.17)	0.98 [b]	(0.15)	1.25 [a,b]	(0.17)
Proportion of working moms	--	--	0.92	(0.07)	0.87	(0.10)	1.03	(0.22)	0.71	(0.22)	1.08	(0.20)
Subsidy waitlist	--	--	1.10	(0.08)	1.16	(0.12)	1.06	(0.17)	0.74	(0.22)	1.36	(0.21)
Community language use												
Spanish speaking community	--	--	1.05	(0.10)	0.86	(0.34)	1.60	(0.46)	1.39	(0.30)	0.90	(0.13)
Bilingual community	--	--	1.15	(0.11)	1.21 [a,b]	(0.24)	0.98 [a,b]	(0.41)	0.79 [a]	(0.26)	1.58 * [b]	(0.19)
Difficulty finding care	--	--	0.23 ***	(0.13)	0.23 *** [a]	(0.18)	0.17 *** [a,b]	(0.27)	0.23 *** [a,b]	(0.44)	0.12 *** [b]	(0.34)
Region and urbanicity												
Midwest	--	--	0.70	(0.26)	0.99 [a]	(0.27)	0.17 * [b]	(0.88)	0.43 [a,b]	(0.73)	0.44 [a,b]	(0.76)
South	--	--	0.63 *	(0.22)	0.72	(0.26)	0.26 †	(0.81)	0.43	(0.55)	0.21 *	(0.66)
West	--	--	0.50 **	(0.23)	0.85 [a]	(0.27)	0.12 * [b]	(0.88)	0.22 *** [b]	(0.47)	0.15 *** [b]	(0.56)
Urban	--	--	1.19	(0.15)	1.06 [a]	(0.19)	0.83 [a]	(0.51)	3.16 [a]	(0.91)	0.20 * [b]	(0.67)

Notes. All continuous variables have been standardized and, therefore, the odds ratios correspond to a one standard deviation change in the predictor. Different superscripts within each row indicate differences across groups. Gray blocks refer to differences within the Latino population. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. † $p < .10$.

Table 3.
Predictors of preschool enrollment as compared with informal care.

Variable	Likelihood of being enrolled in preschool versus informal care											
	Overall				U.S.-born White		U.S-born Black		U.S-born Latino		Foreign-born Latino	
	Model 1		Model 2									
	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)
Race/ethnicity												
U.S.-born Black	0.75 †	(0.16)	1.26	(0.18)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
U.S-born Latino	0.52 ***	(0.18)	0.69 †	(0.21)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Foreign-born Latino	0.54 ***	(0.17)	0.72	(0.28)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Prior child care experiences												
Other non-parental care age 2	--	--	0.58 ***	(0.16)	0.53 ** [a]	(0.23)	0.40 ** [a]	(0.35)	1.35 [b]	(0.37)	0.38 † [a]	(0.58)
Center-based care at age 2	--	--	2.39 ***	(0.23)	1.99 †	(0.36)	2.32 †	(0.49)	3.53 *	(0.52)	2.36	(0.91)
Child age of first care	--	--	1.42 ***	(0.09)	1.39 **	(0.11)	1.33	(0.25)	1.68 *	(0.23)	1.54 *	(0.21)
Family necessity												
Maternal employment and coursework												
Employed part-time	--	--	1.20	(0.20)	1.52	(0.30)	1.21	(0.47)	0.51	(0.58)	1.02	(0.62)
Employed full-time	--	--	0.80	(0.19)	0.82	(0.29)	1.03	(0.50)	0.42	(0.55)	1.01	(0.49)
Non-standard work schedule	--	--	1.09	(0.17)	1.49	(0.25)	0.83	(0.45)	0.94	(0.61)	0.64	(0.43)
Enrolled in classes	--	--	0.90	(0.17)	1.05	(0.25)	1.30	(0.35)	0.83	(0.51)	2.05	(0.62)
Household structure												
Father in household	--	--	1.23	(0.16)	0.92	(0.29)	1.63	(0.35)	1.51	(0.36)	1.67	(0.50)
Relative in household	--	--	1.03	(0.16)	0.88	(0.25)	0.93	(0.31)	1.60	(0.40)	1.13	(0.32)
Number of siblings under 18	--	--	0.80 ***	(0.07)	0.87 [a]	(0.12)	0.70 **[a,b]	(0.13)	0.59 *** [b]	(0.14)	0.88 [a]	(0.14)
Household resources and quality												
Maternal education												
High school diploma/GED	--	--	0.53 **	(0.24)	0.59	(0.39)	0.26 *	(0.63)	0.37	(0.76)	0.73	(0.55)
Some college	--	--	0.58 **	(0.19)	0.59 *	(0.25)	0.28 *	(0.59)	0.79	(0.77)	0.56	(0.61)
Bachelor's degree	--	--	0.84	(0.19)	0.88	(0.23)	0.54	(0.51)	1.21	(0.74)	0.55	(0.64)
Household income												
$0-$20,000	--	--	0.87	(0.26)	0.77 [a, b]	(0.41)	2.41 [a]	(0.93)	0.24 † [b]	(0.81)	2.36 [a]	(0.65)
$20,001-$40,000	--	--	0.68 †	(0.21)	0.78	(0.27)	1.49	(0.83)	0.33	(0.75)	1.13	(0.62)
$40,001-$100,000	--	--	0.94	(0.20)	0.90	(0.26)	1.97	(0.78)	0.50	(0.63)	2.77	(0.70)
Mother citizenship status	--	--	0.67	(0.31)	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.59	(0.39)
Mother English proficiency	--	--	1.05	(0.11)	--	--	--	--	0.28 * [a]	(0.57)	1.21 [b]	(0.15)
Systemic connections	--	--	1.03	(0.09)	0.95 [a]	(0.16)	1.10 [a b]	(0.17)	1.55 * [b]	(0.22)	0.95 [a]	(0.26)
Mother age	--	--	1.08	(0.07)	1.08	(0.10)	1.01	(0.16)	1.25	(0.21)	1.07	(0.19)
Parenting quality												
Low	--	--	1.08	(0.17)	1.20	(0.27)	1.25	(0.33)	1.19	(0.47)	0.65	(0.37)
High	--	--	1.02	(0.19)	1.20	(0.24)	0.41†	(0.53)	0.86	(0.55)	0.97	(0.60)
Parents' beliefs and expectations												
The importance of…												
Academic for kindergarten	--	--	1.38 ***	(0.09)	1.48 ** [a]	(0.13)	2.03 ** [a]	(0.24)	1.30 [a,b]	(0.25)	0.75 [b]	(0.26)
Social skills for kindergarten	--	--	0.79 **	(0.08)	0.76 * [a]	(0.11)	0.57 * [a]	(0.25)	0.66 * [a]	(0.20)	1.21 [b]	(0.23)
Preschool cultural consistency	--	--	0.81 **	(0.07)	0.79 *	(0.11)	0.85	(0.15)	0.66 *	(0.17)	0.77 †	(0.14)
Preschool flexibility	--	--	0.79 **	(0.08)	0.70 ** [a]	(0.11)	0.90 [a,b]	(0.25)	0.93 [b]	(0.19)	1.06 [a,b]	(0.19)

Table 3 continued on next page.

Table 3 (continued)

Variable	Likelihood of being enrolled in preschool versus informal care											
	Overall				U.S.-born White		U.S-born Black		U.S-born Latino		Foreign-born Latino	
	Model 1		Model 2									
	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)	OR	(SE)
Child factors												
Child functioning												
Low	--	--	1.13	(0.15)	0.92	(0.24)	1.43	(0.40)	0.94	(0.43)	1.39	(0.31)
High	--	--	1.09	(0.15)	1.07	(0.20)	1.26	(0.40)	1.65	(0.51)	1.00	(0.49)
Child is female	--	--	1.17	(0.11)	1.19	(0.15)	1.09	(0.25)	0.74	(0.33)	1.49	(0.30)
Child age at preschool (months)	--	--	1.38 ***	(0.06)	1.40 ***	(0.10)	1.46 *	(0.16)	1.26	(0.16)	1.21	(0.15)
Community characteristics												
Child care and preschool competition	--	--	0.98	(0.07)	0.97	(0.10)	0.90	(0.16)	0.99	(0.17)	1.07	(0.20)
Proportion of working moms	--	--	0.94	(0.07)	1.02	(0.10)	0.85	(0.20)	0.79	(0.21)	0.90	(0.18)
Subsidy waitlist	--	--	1.08	(0.07)	1.23 † [a]	(0.11)	0.73 † [b]	(0.18)	0.66 † [b]	(0.22)	1.62 * [a]	(0.22)
Community language use												
Spanish speaking community	--	--	0.98	(0.10)	0.82	(0.22)	1.32	(0.42)	0.94	(0.24)	0.94	(0.16)
Bilingual community	--	--	1.02	(0.11)	1.13	(0.21)	0.80	(0.41)	0.90	(0.21)	1.16	(0.25)
Difficulty finding care	--	--	0.35 ***	(0.11)	0.39 ***	(0.16)	0.28 ***	(0.30)	0.23 ***	(0.33)	0.34 **	(0.33)
Region and urbanicity												
Midwest	--	--	0.46 **	(0.27)	0.94 [a]	(0.33)	0.10 ** [b]	(0.87)	0.11 ** [b]	(0.79)	0.26 † [a,b]	(0.73)
South	--	--	0.51 **	(0.23)	1.02 [a]	(0.25)	0.28 [b]	(0.78)	0.30 [b]	(0.78)	0.10 *** [b]	(0.63)
West	--	--	0.51 **	(0.25)	1.13 [a]	(0.32)	0.13 * [b]	(0.84)	0.15 ** [b]	(0.73)	0.17 ** [b]	(0.63)
Urban	--	--	1.12	(0.18)	1.17	(0.21)	0.90	(0.51)	1.54	(0.81)	0.52	(0.79)

Notes. All continuous variables have been standardized and, therefore, the odds ratios correspond to a one standard deviation change in the predictor. Different superscripts within each row indicate differences across groups. Gray blocks refer to differences within the Latino population. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. † $p < .10$.