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Early Education and Development. 30:2, 259 - 279.

DOI or URL to published work (if available) https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2018.1542889

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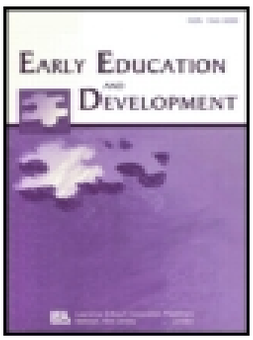

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ISSN: 1040-9289 (Print) 1556-6935 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/heed20

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To cite this article: Jorge E. Gonzalez, Alain Bengochea, Laura Justice, Gloria Yeomans-Maldonado & Anita McCormick (2018): Native Mexican Parents' Beliefs About Children's Literacy and Language Development: A Mixed-Methods Study, Early Education and Development, DOI: 10.1080/10409289.2018.1542889

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2018.1542889

Published online: 26 Dec 2018.

EARLY EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT
https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2018.1542889

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Native Mexican Parents' Beliefs About Children's Literacy and Language Development: A Mixed-Methods Study

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ABSTRACT

Research Findings. This study examined Mexican caretaker roles, beliefs, and practices around their child's language and literacy development. Twenty-six parents in three preschools representing three socioeconomic strata located in Querétaro City, México completed questionnaires and participated in focus groups. We used convergent parallel mixed methods to analyze and compare parent questionnaire quantitative data and qualitative focus group data with a grounded theory approach to identify focus group discussion themes. Four themes were emerged: (a) Goals and expectations regarding reading and socioemotional development, (b) Perceptions and beliefs about children's oral and written language, (c) Caretaker's perceived role in children's language and literacy development, and (d) Home and community learning-related resources and practices. Findings highlighted that Mexican parents highly value supporting their children's education both socioemotionally and through engagement in literacy routines—evidence of duality in the *educación* value among native Mexican families. These literacy routines were complementary and responsive to teacher classroom instruction. *Practice or Policy.* Understanding how Latino families instantiate literacy practices to respond to American schooling expectations may be a way to address home-school discontinuities that often reflect lack of familiarity with the U.S. educational system.

Through everyday interactions, parents socialize children in ways that promote the internalization of social and educational goals (McWayne, Melzi, Schick, Kennedy, & Mundt, 2013). Family socialization goals are strongly tied to values, norms, and beliefs that are situated at the intersection of the cultural and psychosocial niches of families. These niches are realized in home literacy environments through culturally situated daily routines, family dynamics, and practices that affect children's readiness for school (Davis-Kean & Sexton, 2009; Espino, 2016).

Although the importance of cultural contexts in shaping children's early learning is well established, few studies have focused on the ways in which Mexican families support their children's language and literacy learning (McWayne & Melzi, 2014). Therefore, at present, we have an incomplete portrait of Mexican families in the United States and their beliefs, values, and child-rearing practices (Roosa, Morgan-Lopez, Cree, & Specter, 2002). Understanding the ways in which Mexican parents define their roles in children's literacy and language development may shed some light on documented continuities and discontinuities between Mexican American children's home experiences and school expectations (Reese, 2012). To that end, in this mixed-methods study, we took an emic approach to understanding Mexican parents' perceived roles in and beliefs regarding their young children's language and literacy development.

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Families organize home learning environments through cultural models that influence family traditions, relationships, practices, and experiences (Farver, Xu, Eppe, & Lonigan, 2006). Ecocultural theory provides a framework from which to understand culturally diverse families by underscoring the idea that families organize and promote daily routines around cultural models that take shape in family dynamics, values, and norms (Espino, 2016). For Mexican families, like most families, these cultural models typically take form in routines involving household activities that reflect the beliefs, values, norms, and priorities most valued within the culture (Castro, Mendez, Garcia, & Westerberg, 2012). However, the literature on Mexican parents' beliefs, perspectives, and practices around children's language and literacy development remains scant (McWayne et al., 2013). From studies with U.S. populations, we know that parents' beliefs, particularly the mother's, are a prelude to most experiences parents have with their children (Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006).

Parents' literacy beliefs

Parents hold beliefs about virtually every aspect of children's development (Sigel & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2002). The beliefs emerge from personal histories, their own experiences as children, culturally bounded norms, standards, and practices (Rodríguez, Hammer, & Lawrence, 2009) and are enacted in socialization practices to form a crucial link between a child and culture (Roosa et al., 2002). Parents' language and literacy beliefs specifically are most influential in the course of children's development vis-à-vis culturally situated literacy learning experiences in the home (Fuller & García-Coll, 2010). These home literacy experiences are strongly associated with children's cognitive and language development (Bridges, Cohen, McGuire, Yamada, Fuller, Mireles, & Scott, 2012).

Parents play a central role in creating and maintaining supportive home learning environments for their children. Nevertheless, most evidence is limited to studies on White families and the child-rearing beliefs and practices found to be successful in those families (Davis-Kean & Sexton, 2009). Little research has focused on the beliefs of Mexican parents who reside within and beyond the borders of Mexico. From a limited literature, we know that Mexican parents promote children's literacy development through socially embedded family traditions (e.g., oral storytelling, singing, sharing oral folklore involving humor, reciting poetry) that often involve extended family members (e.g., grandparents, aunts) and siblings in ways that go beyond solely reading books (Bridges et al., 2015). These literacy learning experiences typically occur around daily routines and household responsibilities anchored in parents' child-rearing beliefs, values, and priorities (Castro et al., 2012). Often the experiences take form in ways that differ from the discrete, academic-oriented skills valued by schools, educators, or White middle-class families (Billings, 2009) and are often neglected in research (Espino, 2016). Moreover, many immigrant Mexican families are not familiar with what U.S. schools expect, nor are they familiar with the forms of educational support valued in mainstream public schools (Duursma, Robero-Contreras, Szuber, Proctor, Snow, August, & Calderon, 2007).

To understand Mexican child-rearing beliefs, scholars have focused on Mexican values concerning (a) the primacy of the family (*familismo*), (b) respect for adults (*respeto*), and (c) education (*educación;* Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995). In this study, we focused on *educación*. It is a general construct that reflects a dual emphasis on academic training and knowledge as well as appropriate and moral behavior (Bridges, Cohen, McGuire, Yamada, Fuller, Mireles, & Scott, 2012). Previous research suggests that *educación*, either tacitly or intentionally, is enacted in normative ways in daily family literacy routines and practices around children's learning (Bridges, Cohen, McQuire, Yamada, Fuller, Mireles, & Scott, 2012). To date, most previous research examining Mexican American parental education beliefs and/or practices suggests that Mexican parents are less involved in their children's education than other groups (Fuller & García-Coll, 2010). Moreover, all too often educational institutions view Mexican families and their children as linguistically disadvantaged and possessing deficits in the knowledge desired by schools (Billings, 2009).

Contrasting this literature is a rich body of work suggesting that Mexican American parents greatly value education, strongly desire children's academic success, consider themselves active in their child's education, and when necessary adapt to the exigencies of American school expectations (Rogoff, Moore, Correa-Chávez, & Dexter, 2015). For example, Mexican American families play an active role in promoting children's learning by incorporating a wide range of school-related activities into their practices when deemed important to their child's *educacíon* (Saracho, 2007). Now widely known as *funds of knowledge*, Mexican families possess cultural and linguistic resources that can be accessed to promote children's school success (Billings, 2009). Conversely, depending on how parent involvement is measured or defined (McWayne et al., 2013), other studies suggest that Mexican parents believe that it is the school's responsibility to educate children (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001). What is clear is the presence of wide within-groups variability in the beliefs, expectations, and practices that support language and literacy development in Mexican children. The variation likely reflects not only culturally mediated beliefs about literacy but also the ways in which Mexican families adapt to meet child and family needs (Davis, Gonzalez, Pollard-Durodola, Saenz, Soares, Resendez, & Zhu, 2016). Understanding educational beliefs among native Mexicans may shed light on the mixed findings in U.S. research on Mexican American parental role beliefs and practices.

Study overview

In this study, we adopted an emic approach in situating native Mexican caregivers' (i.e., primarily mothers') beliefs, values, aspirations, and practices as reflective of their cultural realities (Reese, 2002). We defined *native Mexicans* as Mexicans living in their home country. Rather than relying on theory or frameworks that often exclude nondominant cultural groups (McWayne et al., 2013), we sought to advance our understanding of Mexican parents', primarily mothers', subjective role beliefs, practices, and aspirations around their children's language and literacy development.

Using this framework, we held three structured parent sessions after school hours at three early childhood settings (subsequently identified as Preschools A, B, and C). Our aim was to uncover parental roles, beliefs, and practices relative to children's oral language development—a key precursor of many early language skills. To elicit a culturally valid portrayal of these three dimensions, we asked native Mexican parents the following questions: (a) "What is your role in your child's language and literacy development?" (b) "What are your language and literacy goals for your child?" (c) "What kind of materials do you use to support the language and literacy skill of your child?" (d) "How do you access materials to help your child (children) learn language and literacy skills?" and (e) "What skills do you want your child to have at the end of the school year?"

Methods

Setting and participants

This study emerged out of a larger randomized field trial of an early childhood supplementary shared reading curriculum designed to accelerate children's oral vocabulary conducted in Querétaro City, Querétaro, and Cuernavaca, Morelos, in Mexico. The present study was conducted in Querétaro City, the largest city in one of the smallest states in Mexico. Querétaro is a middle-class city in terms of gross domestic product and purchasing power parity. Its industrialization has attracted a large number of migrants from Mexico's lowest income regions, resulting in large unemployment and underemployment, which in turn has led to a proliferation of informal markets and unincorporated businesses in and around the city (Oficina Nacional de Desarrollo Humano, 2005).

As of December 29, 2001, the Mexican government decreed that free and public preschool attendance was mandatory in Mexico. Moreover, it would provide those interested in teaching

with the necessary training to obtain the credentials to become preschool teachers. During the 2015–2016 academic year approximately 62% of 3- to 5-year-old native Mexican children attended public preschools, with about 15% attending private preschools (Secretaria de Educacion Publica, 2017). Three early childhood settings representing three socioeconomic strata within Querétaro City were selected for this study. Participating parents with preschoolers, primarily mothers, were recruited from these three preschool settings, two private schools for which parents were required to pay tuition and a public school. Teachers in all preschools were certified. All schools were mandated to follow state preschool education guidelines; however, private schools had the option of using supplementary reading/writing curricula.

Preschool A (PS-A) was located in a predominantly middle-class neighborhood of mixed-commercial and single-family homes. The combination of businesses and homes created a vibrant and self-sufficient community with access to diverse amenities such as walkable sidewalks and the city's recreational options, schools, restaurants, parks, and open spaces for gathering, most within walking distance.

Preschool B (PS-B) was located in a predominantly upper lower income neighborhood bordered by a large, well-established industrial park. The school was located within a long-established *colonia* (i.e., neighborhood) characterized by small, multigenerational single-family units and family-owned businesses (e.g., convenience stores, mechanic shops, and eateries). Most residents worked in surrounding factories as operators or machinists. PS-B was privately owned and funded by nominal tuition and state subsidies to meet the early education needs of the lower income families in the surrounding community.

Preschool C (PS-C) was a federally funded public school located in a low-income or working-class neighborhood bordered by expanding industrial business parks, large factories, warehouses, and offices. Many families were headed by a single parent, primarily the mother. The school was tuition free, but parents were periodically asked to contribute materials, such as paper, markers, crayons, or glue.

Participants were recruited by the principals at each of the schools. Eight parents (31%) were from PS-A, 10 (38%) were from PS-B, and eight (31%) were from PS-C, for a total of 26 parents. On a survey tapping demographic information and literacy beliefs and practices (see Table 1), 23 (88%) self-identified as the mother, one (4%) identified as the father, and two (6%) identified as grandmothers; 62% reported two adults in addition to the preschool child in the family household, and 96% reported that one of the two adults was the mother. Based on parent self-reports of socioeconomic status as indexed by their biweekly household income, 13% were low-income, 42% were upper lower income, and 46% were middle-income families; as a whole, parents reported their biweekly household income was between 5,001 to 7,500 pesos (M= 2.96, SD= 1.12). Biweekly household incomes differed between the three schools (PS-A: M= 3.63, SD= .74; PS-B: M= 3.00, SD= 1.16; PS-C: M= 2.00; SD= .89) and were statistically significant as indicated by the Kruskal-Wallis H test ($\chi^2(2) = 7.54$, $p = .023$). Post hoc pairwise comparison tests, adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests, indicated that only schools PS-A and PS-C were statistically different from each other ($p = .018$) in terms of household income. Based on self-reports of their educational levels, 80% of the mothers had a preparatory (i.e., high school) or higher level of education. Significant differences in mother's education levels were found between schools ($\chi^2(2) = 9.32$, $p = .009$) with post hoc pairwise comparison showing schools PS-A and PS-C being statistically different from each other ($p = .007$). Fifty-six percent of the respondents reported two or more children in the household, with 96% reporting one or more child attending local schools. Spanish was the primary language spoken at home, with 96% of the children primarily speaking Spanish at school. The average age of children enrolled in the three participating preschools was 4.47 years. Parents also reported on their own literacy activities and reported slight differences in the frequencies of their personal literacy practices (see Table 2). For

Table 1. Demographic data across preschools (N = 26).

Variable	n	%	M (SD)
School			
A	8	30.8	
B	10	38.5	
C	8	30.8	
Child age (in years)	20		4.47 (0.99)
Relationship with child			
Mother	23	88.5	
Father	1	3.8	
Grandmother	2	7.7	
Number of adults at home			
1	1	3.8	
2	16	61.5	
3+	9	34.5	
Mother included in the number of adults at home			
Yes	24	96.0	
No	1	4.0	
Father included in the number of adults at home			
Yes	24	92.3	
No	2	7.7	
Mother's education level			
Secondary or lower	5	19.2	
Preparatory	6	23.1	
University	15	57.7	
Father's education level			
Secondary or lower	5	20.0	
Preparatory	8	32.0	
University	12	48.0	
Number of children at home			
1	10	40.0	
2	12	48.0	
3+	2	8.0	
Household's biweekly income			
1,001–2,500 pesos	3	12.5	
2,501–5,000 pesos	6	25.0	
5,001–7,500 pesos	4	16.7	
More than 7,500 pesos	11	45.8	

Note. Frequencies that do not add up to 26 indicate missing data.

Table 2. Frequency of parents' home literacy practices.

	Overall			PS-A			PS-B			PS-C		
Practice	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Read newspaper	26	1.54	1.73	8	1.50	2.39	10	1.20	1.23	8	2.00	1.60
Read magazine	26	1.77	1.45	8	1.88	1.46	10	2.10	1.60	8	1.25	1.28
Read bible or religious book	26	1.00	1.44	8	1.00	1.41	10	0.80	1.62	8	1.25	1.39
Read schoolbook	26	2.88	2.29	8	2.25	2.25	10	3.30	2.63	8	3.00	2.00
Read books[a]	25	3.08	2.25	7	4.71	1.50	10	2.80	2.30	8	2.00	2.14

Note. Response options were 0 = 0 times, 1 = 1 time, 2 = 2 times, 3 = 3 times, 4 = 4 times, 5 = 5 times, 6 = 6 times, 7 = 7+ times. PS-A = Preschool A; PS-B = Preschool B; PS-C = Preschool C.
[a]Significant differences across preschools as indicated by a Kruskal–Wallis test with a significance level of $p < .05$.

instance, parents in PS-A read books about five times in 1 week (M= 4.71, SD = 1.50) compared to parents in PS-B and PS-C, who read books about three and two times in 1 week, respectively (PS-B: M= 2.80, SD = 2.30; PS-C: M= 2.00, SD = 2.14). Note that none of the literacy practices presented in Table 2 showed evidence of statistically significant differences between schools.

Data sources

After consenting to participate in the study and prior to the focus groups, parents filled out a study questionnaire tapping their beliefs and practices on children's literacy development. In Fall 2015, parents participated in one of three 1.5-hr focus groups held at their child's school, for a total three focus groups conducted over 2 days. The first and fifth authors, both native Spanish/English bilinguals, conducted the focus groups using a semistructured interview protocol with the aim of eliciting accounts of parents' role beliefs, emergent literacy and language goals for their child, materials and resources used to support their aims, and aspirational goals for their child's literacy goals. The second and fourth authors, who are also native English/Spanish bilinguals, acted as observers and note takers in addition to distributing and collecting all study-related forms. Because all data collection took place after school hours, we were able to conduct and audio record the interviews in a quiet preschool classroom free from disruptions and with ample participant seating.

We used convergent parallel mixed methods in the design of the study and used a side-by-side approach to analyze and compare qualitative data from discussions with parents in focus groups with the quantitative data from parents' reporting on the questionnaire (Cresswell, 2014).

Qualitative data preparation and analysis

For the qualitative analysis, focus group audio clips were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were used by the first and second authors, native Spanish speakers, for qualitative coding and analysis. Use of a framework analysis enabled us to deduce themes both from research questions and from the narratives of the research participants (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994), complemented with grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), to more rigorously and accurately depict participants' perspectives relating to their child's language and literacy development without moving to theory development. Thus, we used an inductive open coding approach to address our primary questions of interest, namely, what parents perceive as their role in developing their child's oral language and literacy, how they "support their child", what resources they use, and what their end-of -year child literacy goals are.

Our analysis followed a protocol outlined by Ritchie and Spencer (1994) that included (a) reading and familiarizing ourselves with the data, (b) coding the data and preparing summary notes, (c) annotating the data and engaging in conceptual note taking, (d) identifying emergent themes, and (e) identifying and selecting preliminary categories for the themes. Atlas.ti (Version 5.1) qualitative analysis software was used to organize and analyze the focus group data.

To interpret the data, we relied on inductive reasoning and used the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) by systematically comparing parents' statements within and across focus groups. To that end, we identified the relationships between emerging categories and delineated their properties to address commonalities, variation, and subsumption relative to the emerging themes. During the coding process, we were guided by Rabiee's (2004) recommendations for how to interpret focus group data, which included considering the frequency of comments and views expressed by adult parents and paying close attention to the specificity of their responses by focusing on personal experience as opposed to hypothetical situations.

In addition, we considered larger trends or concepts that emerged from the accumulation of evidence that cut across the three focus group discussions. Thus, we first engaged in open coding of the focus group data and chunked data into small units by coding the transcripts using short phrases, ideas, or concepts that arose from responses. Subsequently we used axial coding to group these small units (i.e., open codes) into categories by making comparisons both within and between focus groups. The coefficient of agreement (Hurscka, Schwartz, St. John, Picone-Decaro, Jenkins, & Carey, 2004) was used to measure the proportion of decisions for which the two coders agreed. In the assessment of intercoder agreement, a text segment was the unit of analysis. The coders discussed any problems with coding and, when appropriate, modified coding definitions until sufficient

intercoder agreement was achieved. In this study, we calculated intercoder agreement using the percent agreement between coders, which resulted in 89% agreement .

We then developed overarching themes that represented the content of each of the focus groups. Because we conducted multiple focus groups, we first focused on within-groups saturation followed by cross-groups saturation in order to identify emerging themes that represented community-wide beliefs and practices among parents. By analyzing data across the three focus groups, we were able to assess whether commonalities and differences that emerged in one group also emerged in others, subsequently serving as a proxy for theoretical sampling in order to assess the meaningfulness of themes and refine them as necessary (Charmaz, 2006).

Quantitative data preparation and analysis

Parents responded to a 54-item researcher-developed questionnaire called the Literacy Practices Questionnaire. Parents individually completed the questionnaire using paper and pencil and if needed were given additional assistance by the Spanish-speaking authors of this study in the form of having questionnaire items read orally and clarified for them. In addition to demographic questions, the instrument included questions about the frequency of literacy practices, resources to support literacy practices, and modeling of literacy practices. We present descriptive statistics for the items related to literacy practices, and we used a series of Kruskal–Wallis tests (nonparametric analyses of variance) to examine potential differences across the three preschools. Significant Kruskal–Wallis tests were followed by Dunn's post hoc tests to learn about the source of the significant difference between each pair of preschools. To adjust for the multiple pairwise tests, we utilized the Bonferroni adjustment.

Mixed-methods findings

The findings from the qualitative (i.e., parent focus group) and quantitative (i.e., questionnaire) data were integrated to augment our understandings of these separate data sources. Following the separate analyses of the qualitative and quantitative findings, both data sources were integrated and triangulated to identify and highlight areas of convergence and divergence through a presentation of mixed-methods findings (Fetters & Freshwater, 2015).

Results

Parents' beliefs, resources, and practices reported in the focus groups

Four main themes were addressed through the parent focus group data: (a) goals and expectations regarding reading and socioemotional development, (b) perceptions and beliefs about children's oral and written language, (c) parents' perceived role in children's language and literacy development, and (d) home and community learning-related resources and practices.

Theme 1: Goals and expectations regarding reading and socioemotional development

Similarities in shared goals and expectations

Parents focused on two prominent end-of-year skill expectations for their child's development. First, parents in PS-B and PS-C noted that their child's experiences with and expressions of emotions in relation to others were inseparable from success in language and literacy development. These parents hoped that their child's socioemotional development would be supported across home and school settings. Second, parents in PS-A and PS-C expressed the desire to have their child experience multiple opportunities around reading and possibly engage in conventional reading by the end of the academic year.

Socioemotional development as a goal. A central goal among parents in PS-B and PS-C was prominently focused on children's socioemotional development. Of particular significance was the child's motivation not only to learn but also to experience enjoyment during learning activities. The following excerpt illustrates one parent's goals for his daughter:

> As a goal, they should develop their language at the level that corresponds to them. But to do it to please oneself —to make oneself happy. The state of one's mood is important. There is a social and familiar construction of all these things relating to language. But if she is pleased, then we (referring to himself and his wife) will also be [pleased]. *(Como meta que desarrollen el lenguaje al nivel que le corresponde, pero que lo haga contenta, que lo haga feliz. El estado de ánimo es importante. Hay una construcción social y familiar de todas estas cuestiones del lenguaje, pero si ella está contenta entonces, lo estaremos nosotros.)*

In this excerpt, the preschooler's father acknowledges not only the importance of learning language skills but also his belief that motivation and enjoyment while learning stimulate further learning—a recognition of the interplay between socioemotional development and learning.

This belief was echoed by other parents in both PS-B and PS-C who noted that enjoyment throughout the learning process is a priority. One parent believed in promoting a "friendship" relationship with books. She referred to books as "friends" when speaking to her child to encourage the child's interest in books. Parents also emphasized the importance of siblings as sources of a child's socioemotional development; that is, their children's motivation to learn was heavily influenced by their siblings, whom they emulated when engaging in literacy activities (e.g., "Since he sees his brother who is already working on homework, he also wants to do it" *[Como ve al hermano que ya está haciendo la tarea, él también quiere hacer{la}]*).

Reading as a goal. A child being able to read at the end of the year was an aspirational goal for parents in PS-A and PS-C. Some parents were specific in noting that by the end of preschool their child would be able to read. However, only a few could explicitly identify relevant reading behaviors toward achieving that goal. For instance, one parent hoped that his or her child would be reading a complete sentence on leaving preschool ("To come out [of preschool] reading. Not paragraphs—sentences" *[Que saliera leyendo. No párrafos—oraciones]*). Another parent distinctly aimed for his or her child to comprehend what he reads ("The most important is for him to be able to understand what he is reading" *[Lo más importante es que comprenda lo que está leyendo]*).

Variations in shared goals and expectations

As noted previously, PS-C parents were the only ones for whom both reading and socioemotional development were important end-of-year objectives. Parents in PS-B similarly focused on socioemotional development through seeking enjoyment while learning, relating to books, and referring to siblings as a model for further learning, whereas those in PS-A distinctly shared a goal with PS-C of engaging in reading behaviors at the end of the school year.

Theme 2: Perceptions and beliefs about children's oral and written language

For parents, establishing oral language routines around reading activities was considered an important practice in developing a child's language and literacy skills. In addition, parents expressed concerns about their child's skills across numerous literacy domains, including word reading and print concept knowledge.

Similarities in perceptions and beliefs

Notable similarities were observed among parents' perceptions and beliefs about children's language development. In particular, parents in PS-A and PS-B shared similarities in expecting their children to learn through oral and written language exposure, whereas those in PS-B and PS-C shared concerns about children's learning.

The belief that children learn through oral language and shared reading activities. Parents from PS-A and PS-B believed that repeated exposure to oral language and shared reading activities at home promoted their child's language and literacy development. Several parents spoke of the significance of having regular language-focused practices and routines (e.g., playing games, responding contingently to children's questions) in and outside the home. For instance, one mother shared that she regularly responded to her child's questioning when asked about labels for concepts or objects:

> On the street, [the child] tells me, "What is that, mom?" And then I [say], "Yellow." [Then the child subsequently asks,] "And that one?" So I try to nurture that curiosity in the moment that he independently [asks] me about everything. *(En la calle, me [dice] ¿Eso qué es mamá? Y yo pues, [le digo], "Amarillo." [Entonces pregunta el niño,] "¿Y ése?" Entonces trato de alimentar esa curiosidad en el momento que él me [pregunta] independiente de todo.)*

As noted, parents engaged in and encouraged routines to promote children's inquisitiveness and, as a result, vocabulary growth. Parents also reported gradually increasing both book length and reading duration to promote talk. For instance, one parent detailed how, through regular shared book readings, the child showed interest in reading and was eager to demonstrate his abilities:

> Many times, it was a little bit or small stories to start. More recently, I check out [books] from the library or from here, [the school], as well. And I say, "Read this to me. Read this other one." And now, at times, I say "Wait for me a bit. Only up to here." And now, at times, I say, "Wait for me a bit." *(Muchas veces era un pedacito o cuentos muy pequeños para que empezar. Ahorita ya le saco de la biblioteca o de aquí mismo también me he llevado libros. y ahora léeme este. Y ahora, a veces, le digo, "Espérame tantito. Ya hasta aquí.")*

As revealed in this example, parents pointed out that their child found more enjoyment in reading after it became a routine practice at home.

Observations and concerns about children's learning. Parents from PS-B and PS-C reported being attuned to their child's language development. Parents were proud to highlight their children's accomplishments, including singing the alphabet, knowing the names of colors, independently interacting with books, and using illustrations to create meaning from texts. However, many also expressed concerns over their children's progress. Some of the concerns included a child (a) being unable to understand words with short syllables ("I point to the letters, but I think he is not yet capable of understanding what it is" *[Yo les voy señalando las letritas, pero yo creo que todavía no es capaz de entender que es]*), (b) only identifying a few letters of the alphabet ("Right now, I think he identifies few letters" *[Ahorita yo creo que él identifica poquitas letras]*), and (c) no longer recalling previously known letters ("At age 3, he knew the entire alphabet and doesn't now. I don't know what is happening, but my experience is that they don't retain it as one believes" *[A los tres años se sabía el alfabeto completo y ahorita ya no. No sé que pasa pero mi experiencia es que no lo retienen así como uno cree]*).

Variations in perceptions and beliefs

Only PS-A and PS-B parents made explicit their beliefs that children learn through oral and written language. PS-C parents spoke little of engaging in routine reading and language-focused activities to promote children's oral and written language.

With respect to concerns and observations regarding their children's learning, parents in PS-A (middle class) did not share their unease regarding children's development. This unease, however, was evidenced in statements made by parents in PS-B (upper lower class) and PS-C (working class), who underscored children's "underdeveloped" decoding-related skills (e.g., alphabet knowledge, blending phonemes).

Theme 3: Parents' perceived role in children's language and literacy development

Similarities in parents' perceived role

Parents across all three schools perceived themselves as playing a critical role in their child's development. In particular, parents articulated the importance of developing their child's language and literacy-based skills and promoting these skills at home. It is important to note that parents perceived themselves as playing a complementary role to that of their child's classroom teacher and instruction, thus supporting home–school continuity.

Role in developing literacy-based skills. The majority of parents highlighted the significance of exposing their children to print through shared book reading. Parents perceived themselves as agents in their children's literacy learning by underscoring the importance of establishing storytelling and reading routines. They reported using rich book-related conversations to support their child's language development. In the following representative excerpt, one mother speaks of the relationship between her child's oral vocabulary development and home literacy experiences:

> Since my pregnancy, I have read a lot to them [her children]. I talk a lot with them. I tell them stories because I know that [through] listening to different words I help to expand the range of their language. *(Yo desde mi embarazo les he leído mucho. Les leo mucho. Platico mucho con ellos. Les cuento cuentos porque creo que al escuchar ellos diferentes palabras hago que crezca un poquito su rango de lenguaje.)*

As noted in the excerpt, parents underscored the importance of regularly talking with and reading to their children as a means of developing child language. Parents highlighted the value of having routine reading schedules with their children or, when they were not available, alternating with another adult. Many parents also proudly shared that their child independently interacted with books. One parent spoke of encouraging her child to read at home by means of pointing out books for the child. Another parent shared that she encouraged her child to independently engage with books despite being told by the child's teacher that preschool-age children do not read, in a conventional sense, until later grades.

Role in enhancing developmental skills. Parents pointed out the critical role of providing corrective feedback. For example, parents were attentive to and responded to children's unconventional language use (e.g., "He is explaining something to me and I try to pay attention because suddenly they [incorrectly] use words for others" *[Me está explicando algo y trato de ponerle mucha atención porque de repente usan {incorrectamente} palabras por otras]*). As noted in the following response, parents agreed on the importance of correcting a child's verbalizations to support language use:

> I believe [our] function begins at a very young age: The fact of talking to them; most of all mentioning the words to name things correctly; omitting idioms or diminutive words—I believe is critical at a very young age, maybe including as they get older. Perhaps their pronunciation is inadequate. I believe that through a very subtle way, without pointing out that they are making a mistake, correcting [their] diction. *(Yo creo que la función empieza desde muy pequeños. El hecho de empezar a platicar con ellos sobre todo mencionarle las palabras como se llama correctamente las cosas, el omitir modismos o palabras en diminutivo, creo que es lo principal desde muy pequeños, incluso a lo mejor cuando ya van creciendo. A lo mejor su pronunciación no es la adecuada. Yo creo que de una forma muy sutil, sin señalar que se está equivocando, corregir esa dicción.)*

As noted in this excerpt, parents perceived themselves as language models and provided feedback to correct children's pronunciation errors, word choice, and use. Adhering to standard forms of Spanish when speaking was important to parents. Several noted the use of corrective feedback to both correct and broaden children's vocabulary.

Role in complementing classroom instruction. Parents also perceived themselves as playing a complementary role in children's learning vis-à-vis supporting school learning goals and classroom instruction. They saw themselves as extensions of the teacher in their child's learning. Because of the primacy attributed to teachers as experts (e.g., "They have the foundation to

know what to start [teaching] first" *[Tienen las bases de saber con qué empezar {enseñando} primero]*), parents viewed their role as being a bridging catalyst for their child's academic success by complementing the teacher. Parents believed that they were responsible for gathering information and using the information to structure the home environment in parallel to the teacher's instructional aims. For example,

> We have to also provide a path—[an extra] hand to the teacher. If we do not support them, then we as parents will not also overlap. *(Nosotros tenemos como que también echar un camino, una mano a la maestra. Si no apoyamos nosotros como padres, también no coincidimos.)*

Variations in parents' perceived role

In general, parents across schools perceived themselves as having a role in advancing children's literacy and developmental skills as well as complementing classroom instruction. Although they viewed themselves as playing a critical role in developing children's literacy-based skills, only parents in PS-A (middle class) acknowledged the importance of promoting children's print knowledge (i.e., letter and word recognition) at home. For instance, one parent shared how she regularly drew associations between letter names found in words and their written form:

> If there are words that she mentions, [I say,] "This is how this is written, this is how this other thing is written, my name begins with this letter, my friend's [name] begins with that [letter], my dad's [begins with …]." She begins to associate vocabulary with what she sees written. *(Si hay palabras que ella menciona, [yo le digo] "Así se escribe esto, así se escribe lo otro, con esta letra empieza mi nombre, con esa [letra] empieza la de mi amigo, la de mi papa …" Ella empieza a asociar vocabulario con lo que ella ve escrito.)*

Similarly, parents in this school also reported that print-based interactions at home included pointing at letters while reading a story to the child, engaging in unstructured play with letter manipulatives during bath time, responding to children's letter name questions, and making letter-word associations during shared book readings.

Theme 4: Home and community learning-related resources and practices

Similarities in resources and practices

Parents also relied on various print and nonprint resources and practices in their homes as well as in their communities to support their child's language and literacy.

Home resources and practices. Parents adopted numerous print (PS-A and PS-B) and nonprint (PS-B and PS-C) resources to support children's language and literacy learning. Notable resources and practices included using puzzles and videos as didactic tools, singing when the child had difficulty learning a concept (e.g., singing multiples of the number 10), teaching the names of colors while watching television, engaging in interactive games while in costume, and having the child deliver a speech to the family. Literacy learning resources and practices included playing a number/lottery game, using a flipchart at home to write, using play dough to form letters, writing letters on a chalkboard wall, using an Internet-connected computer to explain words through pictures and video, and reading books from their home or community library.

When asked how resources to support children's learning were accessed, parents pointed to online options (e.g., downloaded stories, songs, and videos), purchased books and writing materials, and books from family and friends. One parent, speaking on behalf of others, made a parallel between the variety of resources found in their homes to support their children's literacy learning and their beliefs about complementing the teacher: "People believe we are teachers" *(La gente cree que nosotros somos maetras).*

Community learning. Parents in all preschools also actively sought out publicly available resources. Resources included school materials and activities, such as free books from schools, and parent volunteer opportunities to read to preschoolers. As mentioned by one parent:

> Now, they put out an announcement for a "literacy diplomat" [to read] *The Ducklings* [to our children]. Many parents signed up. It seems to me that you are one of them (pointing at a parent in the focus group). So, for example, the lady is one of them. So, they offered her support so that she reads to the small children and so that [parents] also have access to children. *(Ahora, se hizo una oferta para un "diplomado de lectura" para [leer] Los Patitos. Me parece que usted está (señalando a una mama en el grupo de enfoque). Muchos papás se inscribieron. Entonces, por ejemplo la señora es una de ellas. Entonces, se les estuvo brindando el apoyo para que ella leerles a los pequeños y además ellos tengan acceso a los niños.)*

As noted in the excerpt, parents not only were encouraged to support their children's literacy learning but also felt encouraged to do their part by signing up for volunteer opportunities as a means of contributing to the school and community. Finally, visiting the library and accessing a local cultural center for homework assistance were other examples of using local resources.

Variations in home resources and practices

Note that when accessing learning-related resources, parents only varied in their engagement with print- versus non-print-related resources at home. PS-C parents did not indicate their use of print-related practices or resources at home, such as highlighting numbers, letters, or words through the use of writing materials, books, or games. Non-print-related resources or practices at home (e.g., singing, interactive games, television) were not evidenced in PS-A parents' discussions of how to support their children's learning.

Parents' beliefs, practices, and resources as reported on the questionnaire

To understand the frequency of home literacy practices, the quantity of literacy resources, and the degree of agreement regarding various types of literacy interactions with their child, we examined parents' self-reported beliefs, practices, and resources on the Literacy Practices Questionnaire across and between schools. Table 3 provides summary information relating to the themes and core categories discussed below.

Beliefs

Parents across preschools expressed positive views regarding reading with their child (see Table 4). Response options for the statements described next ranged from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 3 (*strongly agree*). Parents in all three preschools reported strong agreement with the view that reading enables spending time with their child (M= 2.77, SD = 0.43) as well as with having reading as a goal for their child (M= 2.88, SD = 0.33). They also reported that their child enjoys being read to (M = 2.85, SD = 0.37). As a whole, parents strongly disagreed with the notion that their child does not enjoy reading (M= 0.40, SD = 0.82) and disagreed that they did not think of reading to their child (M= 0.71, SD = 0.86). With respect to their beliefs about constraints faced when reading with their child, parents disagreed that they did not have time to read (M= 0.78, SD = 0.90) and strongly disagreed that they had no material to read to their child (M= 0.24, SD = 0.44). As for differences across schools, Kruskal–Wallis tests suggested that there were differences across at least one pair of preschools for the items want child to learn to read (p = .006) and no time to read (p = .045). Dunn's pairwise tests were carried out for each of the items, but significant differences across preschools were only found for the item "I want the child to learn to read." Specifically, there was evidence (p_{adjusted} = .020) of differences between PS-A and PS-C and between PS-B and PS-C (p_{adjusted} = .013). There was no evidence of a difference between PS-A and PS-B. Note that this result is not surprising given that there was no variability in the way parents from PS-A and PS-B responded.

Table 3. Themes, core categories, exemplar codes, and preschools represented within each category.

Theme	Core Category	Exemplar Codes	Preschool(s) Represented
1. Goals and expectations regarding reading and socioemotional development	Socioemotional development as an end-of-year goal	• Important that child enjoys self during learning • Important to forge relationship between child and books • Important to ensure that child is motivated	B, C
	Reading as an end-of-year goal	• Important for child to be able to read sentences • Important for child to request that mother reads • Making reading a habit • Important for children to read correctly • Important for child to comprehend text	A, C
2. Perceptions and beliefs about children's oral and written language	Belief that children learn through oral language and shared reading activities	• Learn by responding contingently to children's questions • Learn by playing in language-focused routines • Learn by responding to questions about labels for objects • Learn by increasing book length • Learn by increasing reading duration	A, B
	Shared observations and concerns about children's learning	• Inability to understand words with short syllables • Only identify few letters • Cannot recall previously known letters	B, C
3. Parents' perceived role in children's language and literacy development	Developing literacy-based skills	• Create reading routines • Vocabulary learning through reading • Compare words • Engage in shared reading • Highlight letters and syllables in books • Respond to questions about letters	A, B, C
	Enhancing developmental skills	• Correct child's language use • Correct pronunciation • Correct word choice • Not nickname words • Correct diction • Name objects correctly	A, B, C
	Complementing classroom instruction	• Parallel teacher's instruction • Ask children what they learn daily • Be aware of teacher's instruction • Provide assistance to teacher objectives through home practices	A, B, C
4. Home and community learning-related resources and practices	Home resources and practices to promote children's learning	• Number and letter lottery game • Tracing workbook • Flipchart, chalkboard, and whiteboards for shared writing • Use of puzzles, flashcards, books, iPad, memory game • Bookshelf filled with books • Downloaded stories from the Internet to read	A, B
	Community learning with children	• Cultural center with homework help program, reading, arts, and crafts • School and community library • Environmental resources outside home (e.g., artifacts at local market) • Museum visits	B, C

Table 4. Parents' literacy beliefs.

	Overall			PS-A			PS-B			PS-C		
Belief	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Reading enables spending time with child	26	2.77	0.43	8	2.88	0.35	10	2.80	0.42	8	2.63	0.52
Want child to learn to read[a]	25	2.88	0.33	8	3.00	0.00	10	3.00	0.00	7	2.57	0.54
Child enjoys being read to	26	2.85	0.37	8	2.88	0.35	10	2.90	0.32	8	2.75	0.46
Child does not enjoy reading	20	0.40	0.82	7	0.86	1.07	7	0.29	0.76	6	0.00	0.00
Do not think of reading to child	24	0.71	0.86	8	1.00	0.93	9	0.78	0.97	7	0.29	0.49
No time to read[a]	23	0.78	0.90	8	1.38	1.06	8	0.50	0.76	7	0.43	0.54
No material to read	21	0.24	0.44	8	0.25	0.46	8	0.25	0.46	5	0.20	0.45

Note. Response options were 0 = strongly disagree, 1 = disagree, 2 = agree, 3 = strongly agree. PS-A = Preschool A; PS-B = Preschool B; PS-C = Preschool C.
[a]Significant differences across preschools as indicated by a Kruskal–Wallis test with a significance level of $p < .05$.

Practices

Parents also reported the frequency of their child's home literacy practices and shared literacy practices in the home (see Tables 4 and 5, respectively). Response options ranged from 0 (*0 times per week*) to 7 (*7+ times per week*). Across schools, parents noted that their children interacted approximately four times with a book in 1 week (M = 3.69, SD = 1.59) and that their child asked to be read to approximately three times in 1 week (M= 3.00, SD = 1.30). Literacy activities around music and singing were popular children's activities, with parents indicating that children engaged in them on average between five and six times per week. Parents reported that their child engaged in coloring and writing between four and five times per week. Less frequent children's activities, as reported by parents, included children looking at newspapers (M = 2.60, SD = 1.66) and children telling stories (M = 2.60, SD = 1.94). Across preschools, the only children's literacy activity found to be significantly different was the item "The child asked to be read to" (p = .023). Specifically, Dunn's pairwise tests suggested evidence (p_{adjusted} = .020) of a significant difference between PS-B and PS-C. Regarding adult–child shared literacy practices (see Table 6), parents across schools reported similar frequencies in the number of times in 1 week that they read with their child (M = 3.31, SD = 1.44), spoke about letter names (M = 3.35, SD = 2.17), and spoke about letter sounds (M= 3.65, SD = 1.81). Compared to all other parent–child literacy activities reported in Table 5, for which the average frequency ranged from three to four times per week, parents reported visiting the library only about one time per week. Note that no significant differences across preschools were found.

Resources

Parents also identified the number of books in their homes as well as whether particular print resources were available in their homes. Across all preschools on average parents reported having four to 10 children's books and about the same number of adult books at home. The majority of parents across schools indicated that they had dictionaries (88.5% of respondents), computers (92.3%

Table 5. Frequency of children's home literacy practices.

	Overall			PS-A			PS-B			PS-C		
Practice	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Interacted with book	26	3.69	1.59	8	4.00	0.93	10	3.10	2.03	8	4.13	1.46
Asked to be read to[a]	26	3.00	1.30	8	3.13	1.25	10	2.20	1.03	8	3.88	1.13
Looked at newspaper/magazine	25	2.60	1.66	8	3.13	2.36	10	2.10	1.29	7	2.71	1.11
Listened to music	25	5.28	2.05	8	6.38	0.92	10	4.70	2.71	7	4.86	1.57
Colored	26	4.85	1.97	8	4.13	1.36	10	5.70	2.06	8	4.50	2.20
Wrote	26	4.19	2.19	8	2.88	1.96	10	4.20	2.35	8	5.50	1.51
Told a story	25	2.60	1.94	8	2.75	1.58	10	2.40	1.90	7	2.71	2.56
Sang a song	26	5.88	1.77	8	6.50	0.93	10	5.90	1.85	8	5.25	2.25

Note. Response options were 0 = 0 times, 1 = 1 time, 2 = 2 times, 3 = 3 times, 4 = 4 times, 5 = 5 times, 6 = 6 times, 7 = 7+ times. PS-A = Preschool A; PS-B = Preschool B; PS-C = Preschool C.
[a]Significant differences across preschools as indicated by a Kruskal–Wallis test with a significance level of $p < .05$.

Table 6. Frequency of parents' literacy practices shared with their child.

	Overall			PS-A			PS-B			PS-C		
Practice	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Read with child	26	3.31	1.44	8	3.13	1.25	10	3.50	1.43	8	3.25	4.50
Spoke about letter names	26	3.35	2.17	8	2.75	1.98	10	2.90	2.42	8	4.50	1.77
Spoke about letter sounds	26	3.65	1.81	8	3.75	1.75	10	3.50	2.22	8	3.75	1.49
Talked about childhood/family story	26	2.58	1.58	8	2.75	1.49	10	1.90	1.20	8	3.25	1.91
Colored	26	3.69	1.62	8	3.13	1.36	10	4.00	1.89	8	3.88	1.55
Helped to write	26	3.46	2.16	8	2.38	2.00	10	3.90	2.60	8	4.00	1.41
Visited library	26	0.92	1.38	8	0.50	1.07	10	0.60	1.08	8	1.75	1.75

Note. Response options were 0 = 0 times, 1 = 1 time, 2 = 2 times, 3 = 3 times, 4 = 4 times, 5 = 5 times, 6 = 6 times, 7 = 7+ times. PS-A = Preschool A; PS-B = Preschool B; PS-C = Preschool C.
[a]Significant differences across preschools as indicated by a Kruskal–Wallis test with a significance level of $p < .05$.

of respondents), and a bible or religious book (84.6% of respondents) at home. Only about 61.5% of parents indicated that they had newspapers at home. No significant differences were found across preschools for any of the home literacy resources.

Mixed-methods findings

The mixed-methods merging of the data brought together the qualitative data (i.e., emerging themes from the parent focus groups) and the quantitative data (i.e., parent-reported data from the questionnaire). From the triangulation of these data, we were able to identify metainferences (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008) and generate conclusions. Table 7 shows a side-by-side comparison of qualitative and quantitative findings used to generate metainferences obtained from the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data. Metainferences are "overall conclusions[s], explanation[s] or understanding[s] developed through an integration of inferences obtained from the qualitative and quantitative strands of a mixed methods study" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008, p. 1010). Mapping the qualitative themes with findings from the home literacy questionnaire highlighted some many similarities and some exceptions. In sum, the following metainferences emerged from the comparisons: (a) interplay between socio-emotional development and learning (although may be moderated by socioeconomic status), (b) reading as an end-of-year goal (although may differ by socioeconomic status), (c) the relevance of language and shared reading activities, (d) observing child's progress with some concerns along the way, (e) acknowledgment of role in literacy-based activities, (f) perception of key role in enhancing developmental skills, (g) home resources and practices as key in promoting learning (although may differ by socioeconomic status), and (h) community resources accessed for learning.

Discussion

A number of key findings emerged. First, in response to the open-ended questions regarding their child's oral language, parents described their beliefs, aspirations, and goals in numerous ways. In reflecting on their role in their child's language development, parents described myriad beliefs and practices regarding their child's home language and literacy socialization. Parents spoke of the significance of early exposure to print through interactive book-related talk and storytelling that included letter-word identification games. They also described the prominent role of language modeling, including corrective feedback in conversations with their child—a process that highlighted a belief that, like their child's classroom teacher, they too played a significant role in their child's language and literacy development. These findings speak to the relevance of oral language and shared reading activities yet underscore parent concern about correct language use by the child.

Second, in sharing their beliefs about child language and literacy development, parents identified numerous facilitative activities in support of their beliefs. Prominent among beliefs were those

Table 7. Joint display of QUANT and QUAL findings.

QUAL Findings	QUANT Findings	Metainferences
1a. Socioemotional development as an end-of-year goal *Only PS-B and PS-C parents*	Belief that children enjoyed reading, and parents were able to spend time during this activity *All preschools*	Socioemotional development a key aim: interplay between socioemotional development and learning, although it differs by socioeconomic status
1b. Reading as an end-of-year goal *Only PS-A and PS-C parents*	Reading as a primary goal *All preschools*	Reading as a goal, although social class may moderate
2a. Belief that children learn through oral language and shared reading activities *Only PS-A and PS-B*	This belief was not captured, but self-reported practices revealed that parents in *all preschools* • Engaged in shared readings • Engaged in oral language activities with their child (e.g., shared family stories)	Unclear whether parents in PS-C believed that oral language routines and shared readings are critical for learning as suggested in QUAL findings, but recognize their relevance in QUANT findings: relevance of oral language and shared reading activities
2b. Observations and concerns about children's learning *Only PS-B and PS-C*	Not represented in QUANT data	No data supporting or disconfirming QUAL data results: observation of progress with some concerns
3a. Role in developing literacy-based skills *All preschools*	This role was not captured, but self-reported beliefs and practices revealed that parents in *all preschools* • Disagreed that they did not think of reading to child • Disagreed that they did not have time to read to child • Reported that their child asked to be read to three times per week • Reported similar frequencies in the number of times they read with their child and spoke about letter names sounds	Results that suggest that parents perceive their role as important (e.g., by engaging in shared readings frequently, thinking of reading to their child): acknowledge role in developing literacy-based skills
3b. Role in enhancing developmental skills *All preschools*	Not represented in QUANT data	No QUANT data to support QUAL findings about role in developmental skills: perception of key role in enhancing development skills
3c. Role in complementing classroom instruction *All preschools*	Not represented in QUANT data	No QUANT data to support QUAL findings about role in complementing instruction: perception of key role in complementing classroom instruction
4a. Home resources and practices to promote children's learning *Only PS-A and PS-B*	• Possess reading material at home (i.e., strongly agreed; 4–10 books) for their child • Have various print resources (i.e., bible, dictionaries, computers) *All preschools*	Although QUANT results indicated that parents in all preschools possess various print resources at home for their child, it is not certain whether PS-C parents use these print resources to directly support their child's language and literacy as highlighted in QUAL results: home resources and practices to promote learning although may differ by socioeconomic status
4b. Community learning with children *Only PS-B and PS-C*	Visited the library with their child about one time per week *All preschools*	QUANT data diverged from the idea that PS-A parents solely relied on home literacy resources; instead parents across preschools visited the library, a community resource: community resources accessed for learning

Note. QUANT = quantitative; QUAL = qualitative; PS-A = Preschool A; PS-B = Preschool B; PS-C = Preschool C.

around exposing their child to rich and varied language activities through play, both at home and on family outings. According to parents, these experiences not only drew their attention to and interest in their child's early language and literacy invitations to play but also, reciprocally, fostered their child's curiosity in joint language play. Parents reported that their child's interest in being read to fostered joint play around language and literacy. These reports were consistent with works by Farver et al. (2006) showing that a mother's own interest and involvement in reading to her child is motivated by the child's interest in being read to. In addition to engaging in book-related activities,

parents also reported narrating stories to their child, with many of the stories and tales being childhood or family recollections. These findings acknowledge the saliency of parents' role in developing literacy-based activities with their child.

Third, when asked to identify and describe the literacy skills they wanted their child to possess at the end of the academic year, the majority of parents described year-end goals in which the culturally significant duality of *educación* (Reese et al., 1995) in child-rearing practices was evident. Parents highlighted their desire for not only appropriate social and moral behavior within and outside the family but also academic competence at school (Bridges, Cohen, Walker-McGuire et al., 2012). These findings highlight the important interplay between socioemotional development and learning, although variations may be present depending on socioeconomic class.

These findings are supported by Latino family ethnographic literature underscoring, among Latinos, the dual nature of *educación* socialization practices incorporating both socioemotional/behavioral expectations (e.g., proper manners, morality, responsibility) and cognitive/linguistic aims (McWayne et al., 2013). The *educación* socialization practices extended beyond the parents to siblings, who were described as important sources of socioemotional/behavioral and cognitive/language modeling. Similar to Kummerer and Lopez-Reyna (2006), in our study child learning support was situated in whole-family routines that included siblings—evidence of the native Mexican family's role in a child's *educación* (Reese et al., 1995).

Parents also identified being able to read as a year-end literacy goal for their child. Few parents, however, were able to describe specific literacy activities, behaviors, or routines that supported this goal. It is interesting that parents also did not report the use of nontraditional practices narratives or storytelling to support their end-of-year goals for their child. These findings are somewhat unclear, given that it was evident from parent reports that numerous facilitative language and literacy beliefs had been instantiated into daily family routines. It is possible that parents did not make the connection between shared reading or other nontraditional home-based activities and their ultimate year-end goal of their child reading, which possibly explains class differences between the schools in our study on this dimension.

Fourth, when asked to describe the materials and resources used to support their child's language development and how they accessed these materials and resources, parents reported relying on numerous print and nonprint resources both within and outside the home. For example, parents reported providing their children with an assortment of literacy experiences, including literacy for entertainment (e.g., lottery games to learn numbers, puzzles as didactic learning tools, using play dough to form alphabet letters) and more explicit practices such as using the Internet to find vocabulary depicted in pictures and using flipcharts and chalkboards to write letters.

For many, literacy practices extended beyond the home to include the use of publicly available resources such as family visits to the library and a local cultural center. Parents took advantage of opportunities to access public resources, including volunteering at their child's school as a means of getting free books. This finding was corroborated in the family literacy survey. Many of the parents reported having children's books in the home, including a dictionary or other books, magazines, and a computer. These findings highlight the saliency of the home and community in the development of children's language and literacy, although moderated by socioeconomic class. Overall, the fact that native Mexican parents provided their children with a broad range of literacy experiences, especially around entertainment, is consistent with research on Mexican American family literacy routines that extend beyond books to include literacy as entertainment and other practices that do not resemble formal schooling per se (Saracho, 2007).

Finally, establishing routines around reading and actively exposing their children to oral and written language opportunities were endorsed by most parents in PS-A and PS-B in the focus groups. It is interesting that parents of preschoolers in PS-C, the public school, seemed to place less emphasis on wanting their child to learn to read. Rather, parents in PS-C placed more emphasis on a child's inclination to actively seek out reading opportunities (e.g., asking

to be read to) compared to parents in PS-A and PS-B. This was supported by the focus group finding that PS-C parents spoke little of engaging in routine reading and language-focused activities to promote their child's oral and written language. It is altogether possible that unlike parents in the private schools, who routinely met with their child's teacher, parents of children in the public school were not as "knowledgeable" about their child's progress or how they could help to support their child's language and literacy learning in the home.

In summary, our findings on native Mexican parents both support and contrast with research on U.S.-Mexican beliefs and practices around children's language literacy development. At the broadest level, our findings somewhat contrast with research on Mexican American parents, primarily the mother, showing that they hold the belief that it is the school's responsibility to educate their child or that Mexican families participate less in home literacy-related activities than other groups (Livas-Dlott et al., 2010). For the most part, parents in our study believed that their role was complementary to the teacher's and that it was both their and the school's responsibility to educate their children. This was evidenced by the broad and rich range of literacy activities parents provided their children.

Our findings do, however, parallel work by others showing that U.S. immigrant Latino families value children's literacy development and are active in their support of children's literacy practices across a broad range of literacy activities (Saracho, 2007). Parents felt that they had a complementary role to that of teachers in supporting their child's language development. Not only were parents supportive of teachers' efforts to promote good behavior in their child, but they also participated in a range of literacy-related activities both in the home and outside the home. As noted by Reese et al. (1995), family values appeared to complement those at school and were instantiated in daily family literacy routines.

The differences between the present study and other studies with Latino, primarily Mexican, parents may be in large part due to the use of different methodologies, samples (primarily Mexican American or Latino American), and approaches across studies. For example, Crosnoe and Kalil (2010) used the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Kindergarten cohort to examine maternal education levels and investments in children's pathways among Mexican immigrants, Livas-Dlott et al. (2010) used observational methods to examine Mexican American mothers' compliance attempts, and McWayne et al. (2013) used a mixed-methods approach with focus groups to examine maternal engagement styles among Latinos. Most of these studies sampled immigrant Mexican or Central American families. With the exception of Reese (2002), it is difficult to locate studies conducted with native Mexican families residing in their home country, as in our study.

Another source of difference between the present study and similar studies likely results from the highly targeted nature of our focus group protocol. We were interested in parents' perceived role in children's oral language development and how they supported it, their access to materials to promote it, and their end-of-year aspirations for their child. We did not specifically ask whether parents promoted storybook reading as a means of developing children's early oral language competencies or prompt them to understand their level of support of other emergent literacy skills (e.g., alphabet knowledge). Nevertheless, regarding shared book reading, our triangulated data revealed that on average,58% of the parents reported that their child interacted with a book four or more times a week, with 69% of the children asking to be read to zero to three times a week and adults reading with their child four or more times in 42% of the homes during the same period.

If we recognize that the native Mexican parents in our study saw themselves as taking a complementary role to that of teachers in the *educación* of their children, what then are some possible explanations for the often-reported discontinuity between Latino parents, including those of Mexican heritage, in the United States and in U.S. schools? One plausible explanation, as suggested by McWayne and Melzi (2014), is that parents' comfort with English in school settings and children's oral English proficiency mediate school involvement among parents and achievement outcomes for Latino children. Native Mexican parents in our study were not reticent about speaking about their child with his or her Spanish-speaking teachers. Perhaps, as suggested by Reese (2002) in

her interviews with Mexican families in both Mexico and the United States ("El Norte"), the discontinuity gap in the United States will be narrowed only by "schools" encouraging adaptive strategies among Mexican mothers that promote higher levels of literacy involvement, especially those practices that reflect American schooling expectations. Thus, according to Reese (2002), evidence suggests that maternal beliefs among Mexican immigrants can be reshaped to adapt to new home and schooling ecologies if such reshaping is perceived by the mother to benefit her children. Such reshaping can also take the form of promoting more familiarity and knowledge of the U.S. educational system (McWayne et al., 2013).

Alternatively, from an assets-based approach, the discontinuity may actually represent the fact that Mexican American families do not necessarily demonstrate role beliefs or involvement with schools in normative ways (e.g., those espoused through White, middle-class norms and by educators), quite possibly disadvantaging Mexican American families and placing them at odds with schooling norms (Auerbach, 2007). Ignoring the ways in which Mexican American families support their children's schooling (i.e., moral support or *educación*) often results in school administrators and teachers assuming that parents do not care about or value their children's schooling (Espino, 2016).

Limitations

Several qualifications of the findings in the present study are warranted. First, the study was conducted with Mexican parents residing in Querétaro, Mexico, whose children attended preschools with a relationship to our research partner. Querétaro, relative to many similar-size cities across Mexico, is a middle-class city. It is possible that our unique sample may not have accurately reflected other of parts of Mexico with different socioeconomic and environmental ecologies. Second, although parents were randomly assigned in the original study, it is possible that parents who did not agree to participate in the study were different in some characteristic that may have related to outcomes. Third, our sample was small, which might explain why we found more similarities than differences despite different socioeconomic levels across the preschools. Also, our focus groups were only about 90 min in length, which may have limited the depth of information that might have been elicited through semistructured interviews. Future researchers might consider following up focus groups with individual semistructured interviews. Thus, some caution is warranted in generalizing beyond the study. Clearly, much more work is needed in understanding Mexican parents' role beliefs and involvement processes and practices both in Mexico and in the United States as a means of bridging some of the reported home–school discontinuities while capitalizing on family strengths. Future research should seek to confirm our findings in other parts of Mexico, with a particular focus on economic and class differences.

Implications

Like families in Mexico, Mexicans in the United States greatly value supporting their children's education both socioemotionally and through engagement in literacy routines in the home (McWayne & Melzi, 2014). These literacy routines at times are complementary and responsive to early schooling practices and at other times may depart from these practices in important ways. As noted by Reese and Gallimore (2000), neither schools nor families are invariant, homogenous, or inflexible. Both are capable of adapting to cultural differences to benefit all children.

As educators, policymakers, researchers, and practitioners seek to narrow the achievement gap among and between U.S. Latinos and other populations, an important avenue is seeking ways to leverage Latino family values such as those relating to *educación* and the myriad ways in which these values guide parenting practices to support ecocultural adaptations to American schooling using culturally available strategies to meet local needs (Reese, 2002; Saracho, 2007). Understanding the ways in which Latino families adaptively deploy their literacy beliefs and practices to adapt and respond to American schooling expectations may be one way of addressing early home–school

discontinuities that often reflect conflicts over language differences, lack of familiarity with the U.S. educational system, and socialization practices in the United States (McWayne et al., 2013). Knowing how Mexican immigrant families adapt to U.S. schooling expectations may inform future intervention. To address these speculations, more studies are needed to understand or unpack the way in which Latinos—Mexicans specifically—adapt to schooling expectations in the United States and how these adaptations impact their ecological models of child development (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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