



# CHILD CARE BULLETIN

Issue 24

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## National Leadership Forum on Child Care Issues of the Hispanic Community

On November 30, 1999, the Child Care Bureau sponsored a groundbreaking National Leadership Forum on Child Care Issues of the Hispanic Community in Washington, D.C. The Bureau convened this meeting to focus attention on the critical need for high quality, affordable child care in the Hispanic Community. More than 150 people from across the nation participated in the one-day forum, which opened with the voice of a parent, who explained the importance of finding quality child care. "As a parent," noted Maria del Carmen Gutierrez, "one always worries about what children are going to learn and what they are going to take with them for the future." Other speakers included a demographer, a professor of bilingual education, and state and local leaders, who highlighted issues and initiatives of emerging importance to the child care field. In the afternoon, participants broke into facilitated workgroups to develop recommendations on addressing quality, availability, cultural and linguistic competency, professional development and leadership, and outreach and information dissemination.

The Hispanic population is among the fastest growing and youngest segments of American society, yet families confront lower quality and lower supply of available child care in relation to the general public. The forum examined how this reality and its potential effect on children and families can be successfully addressed, and what strategies can be developed to meet the rapidly growing child care needs in Hispanic communities. As a result of the work group discussions, participants developed concrete recommendations to help focus attention on the vital issues related to serving the Hispanic community. [See page 7 (English) and page 7 (Spanish)].

As the federal government continues to look at ways to address child care and educational issues of the Hispanic community, the Child Care Bureau is developing a strategy to increase the capacity for child care research to examine barriers and needs for underserved and under-researched groups such as Latinos.



**U.S. Department of Health  
and Human Services**  
Administration for Children  
and Families  
Administration on Children,  
Youth and Families  
Child Care Bureau

## Technology and Demographics

In his keynote address, Jesus Garcia, Research Services Coordinator for the Division of Information Resources and Technology Services, Office of Kern County Superintendent of Schools, Calif., discussed the impact and opportunities related to changing demographics. Garcia pointed out that Kern County, which is just north of Los Angeles, has approximately 660,000 residents, with a racially and ethnically diverse population: 57 percent white, 33 percent Latino, 6 percent African-American, and 4 percent Asian, Filipino, and other ethnic groups (1990 data). The county also has a large proportion of children -- about one third of the population is under age 18; 9 percent of that population is under age 5. Half of all children in Kern County are of Latino origin. He estimates that by 2004, Latino children will comprise more than half of the population.

Garcia described efforts in Kern County to address challenges relating to child care and discover how to target child care dollars to populations most in need. One of the tools used in this effort is Geographic Information System Technology (GIS), a computer-based tool for mapping and geographic analysis. The GIS takes geographic and numeric data and visually displays it to uncover relationships and trends.

Kern County's Local Child Care and Development Planning Council currently contracts with the Office's Information Resources and Technology Services Division to use GIS to examine the relationship between families in California's welfare-to-work program -- CalWORKS -- and available child care through spatial analysis of supply and demand. GIS shows concentrations of CalWORKs children from birth to age 5 around each of Kern's 11 incorporated cities, then maps the densities of child care sites to illustrate the relationship between the two. The study has helped identify which communities need additional child care sites as families move from welfare to work.

*For more information, contact Jesus Garcia, Office of Kern County Superintendent of Schools, 1300 17th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301; 661/636-4648.*

### Hispanic Demographics: National Data

- Hispanics represent 10 percent of the American population.
- There are an estimated 31 million Hispanics in the United States, including the 3.5 million in Puerto Rico. (The 1990 census count was 26 million Hispanics.)
- From 1980 to 1990, Hispanics experienced a 53 percent growth, the largest of any group.
- 70 percent of Hispanics reside in 4 States: California, Texas, New York and Florida.
- 40 percent of Hispanic children live in poverty -- the highest for all minority groups.

*Data compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

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- The Hispanic population in the United States is very young. In 1996, 10 percent of Hispanics were under age 5 and made up over 15 percent of their age group in the U.S. population. By the year 2030, they will make up 25 percent of the total school-age population.
  - Hispanic children under age 5 are less likely to be enrolled in early childhood education programs. In 1998, only 20 percent of Hispanic 3-year-olds were enrolled in early childhood programs, compared to 42 percent of whites and 44 percent of blacks. Of 4-year-olds, less than 60 percent of Hispanics were enrolled in early childhood programs, compared to 67 percent of whites and 73 percent of blacks.

*Data from the U.S. Census Bureau compiled by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans*

# Issues of Language and Culture Impacting the Early Care of Young Latino Children

Sylvia Y. Sánchez, Ed. D.

Dr. Sanchez, associate professor and co-director of the Unified Transformative Early Education Model Program in the College of Education at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., was a Forum keynote speaker. The following article, adapted from her presentation, focuses on recommendations for responding appropriately to demand for child care among Hispanic families.

*Tomás and Marina recently selected a community child care center for their 6-month-old son and their 2-year-old daughter. Before deciding on the center, Tomás and Marina visited and met with the director, received a handbook on the center's guidelines and policies, discussed the sliding fee schedule, and met the two lead caregivers. After the visit, they felt confident that the physically attractive child care center they had chosen would be a good setting for their two children. Still, they wondered if there was anything else they should know about the center before leaving their children with virtual strangers.*

What Tomás and Marina, whose home language is Spanish, did not know—and didn't even know to ask about—was the center's language policy. The child care center has an English-only policy that the board of directors approved 15 years ago when the primarily Latino population began increasing in the area. The policy was adopted in the belief that early caregivers could best support the immigrant families and their young children by stressing the use of English. The parent handbook does not include the English-only policy, nor does the director discuss the policy with prospective families; it is assumed that all of the center's immigrant families would want an English-only environment for their children.

Unfortunately, Tomás and Marina's experience with English-only language policies in early care is hardly rare. In another nearby early childhood program, which also serves a large Latino community, the educational coordinator intentionally places new children, whose home language is other than English, with teachers and paraprofessionals who do not speak the child's language. Although the center staff is very diverse and is fairly representative of the ethnic and language groups it serves, the director and most of the teachers believe

that placing a child with a caregiver who can speak the child's language would encourage the child's dependency on the home language and slow down the acquisition of English. As the number of Latino children, especially those under age 3, being cared for outside their homes continues its dramatic increase, the issue of language policies and their impact on children becomes particularly urgent. As more linguistically and culturally diverse young children are placed in early care settings where it is likely that the caregivers don't share the same cultural and linguistic background, young Latino children are being greatly affected by English-only language policies and practices.

Infants learn a language for the purpose of functioning in a particular cultural and language community—that is, language allows us to be able to communicate in a culturally appropriate manner within a particular linguistic community. It is the cultural community, including the family and other members, who identify the key concepts and categories that are important to consider and pass them on across generations. As adults and older children from the cultural community involve themselves in the experiences of very young children, they help the children formulate concepts, solve problems, label categories, and define meanings. Through interactions with their families and community, children take advantage of cognitive tools, of which the most powerful is language. Through these experiences and interactions, language, culture, and thinking, which are interrelated, are passed on to new generations. The particular integrated ways of using language, thinking, and seeing the world and themselves can only be given to young children by their community.

## Fallacies about Second Language Acquisition

Two misleading views about the role of language in the lives of linguistically diverse young children and their families are deeply ingrained in the minds of the general public and constitute a formidable barrier to efforts to create more culturally and linguistically responsive settings and practices for young Latino children. The first fallacy involves the belief that young children whose



home language is other than English are able (“like sponges”) to acquire a second language so quickly and easily that they suffer no traumatic consequences or pain when immersed in an English-only caregiving environment without home language support. Language, we must remember, is only one form of communication. Language is embedded in a culture and is one of the most powerful ways in which culture is expressed and shaped. Families and communities hand down language and culture to their young. Young children learn to understand those around them and to express their own fears, needs, and desires in the distinctive vocabulary of a home language that includes not only words, but also rhythms, gestures, patterns of speech and silence. Language and culture are the fundamental building blocks of identity. From their family, young children gain a feeling of belonging, a sense of personal history, the joy of shared meaning, and the security of knowing who they are and where they come from. In communities where only one language is allowed to flourish and home languages are explicitly or implicitly devalued, linguistically diverse young children often experience emotional pain as their home language is eliminated or its development is frustrated by the linguistic discontinuity between home and caregiving settings.

Insisting that young children learn a second language at the expense of their home language at a critical point during their developmental continuum interrupts their ability to make sense of the world by relying on guidance from family and community members. Such pressure introduces discontinuity and stress into children’s lives just when they need to feel secure and solidly bonded with their family and community. Another major fallacy involves the belief that learning English at as early an age as possible enhances the prospects for later academic success for children. The argument usually involves ideas such as this: Not only will young children learn English (or any new language) more easily and quickly than they will be able to later in life, but they will experience higher levels of cognitive development overall and perform better in elementary school, where instruction is given in English. In actuality, Latino children may be in danger of experiencing significant loss in their cognitive development as they move away from their home language. As a child acquires more English than the rest of the family, and the development of the home language is arrested, the family and community members are unable to linguistically and culturally scaffold and mediate the situations needed to continue facilitating the young child’s intellectual growth.

## More Responsive Language Policies and Practices

By increasing our understanding of what and who drives the language policies that hinder linguistic continuity for young Latino children in early care settings, we may be able to create a more additive model of bilingualism in early care. By reflecting on the policies, environments, practices, and attitudes that affect linguistically diverse families, one can find ways to improve the care of all Latino children. The imbalance of power between Latino families and those in control of the social institutions, such as early education settings, further complicates the situation. The imbalance of power can prevent Latino families from having full access to the knowledge needed to make informed decisions about the early care setting they are selecting and affects their involvement, or lack thereof, in the development of language policies for their children. Centers and caregivers that strive to equalize the balance of power in these settings will learn directly from families and communities ways to respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity found in Latino families.

(Excerpted from “Issues of language and culture impacting the early care of young Latino children,” by Sylvia Sanchez, available in full on the Web at <http://nccic.org/pubs.html>.)

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### Forum Recommendations from Dr. Sanchez:

- \* Involve families and communities; get to know the history that guides them; develop a shared vision.
- \* Examine the balance or imbalance of power within your program and agency.
- \* Review your practices for assigning staff to work with children and families.
- \* Confirm and review your practices for hiring staff. Staff should reflect the diversity of the community.

# Child Care Initiatives: Highlights from the Panel Presentations

## Latino Child Care Task Force

The Seattle–King County Latino Child Care Task Force, a group of parents, early childhood professionals, and administrators, was formed in 1994 to serve as a voice for Latino families and providers. In recent years, the task force has:

- Worked with families and providers to validate and to strengthen recognition of culture and languages in child care programs.
- Increased access to early childhood education programs for families by assisting them with resources and referral.
- Secured a Latino child care family advocate to help Latino families and children get access to special services and to help them mediate issues and problems that they may be having in child care or with agencies in the community.
- Developed criteria through which to analyze culturally and developmentally appropriate practices for Latino children.
- Designed a Child Development Associate (CDA) class conducted in Spanish.
- Worked in partnership with the Shoreline Community College to have a bilingual and bicultural education track that will allow students who are in the CDA process to continue and develop their AA degree.
- Advocated for the city of Seattle to provide scholarships for providers and teachers to continue receiving training in the field.
- Advocated for and won a requirement that all licensed providers have four hours of culturally relevant training and anti-bias training.

“We developed a voice for parents and for providers and for people who were working in the field, particularly Latino providers and Latino teachers who did not have, up to this time, a voice that would assist them and help them.”

-- Carmen Masso, Latino Child Care Task Force Member, La Escuelita Bilingual School, WA

For more information, contact the Task Force at City of Seattle, Alaska Building, 618 2nd Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104; 206/386-1020 or 206/296-1362.

## El Comienzo Curriculum

El Comienzo is a culturally relevant curriculum designed to help recruit and train Spanish-speaking family child care providers. This curriculum was developed by the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, a nonprofit training, technical assistance, and advocacy organization that works with 61 child care resource and referral agencies in California.

El Comienzo grew out of the California Child Care Initiative Project—a public-private partnership started in 1985 through community-based child care resource and referral agencies to recruit and train family child care providers throughout the state. El Comienzo is the result of years of planning and research—the network initially convened a national advisory committee and a state advisory committee of experts in the field to help determine what was unique about Spanish-speaking families and providers and how best to meet their needs. The training materials are organized into a series of packets containing information about business practices and components of quality child care programs.

The network seeks to improve the quality and supply of child care through activities and projects that assist child care providers, parents, R&Rs, and the general public, and that provide a variety of child care training materials and resources in Spanish.

“One of the lessons learned is that this takes a very deliberate, collective, and planned process. ... It requires committed, visionary, and very persistent leadership, not just from Latino leaders but also from all of us in the child care community who know and understand these needs.” -- Patty Siegel, Executive Director, California Child Care Resource and Referral Network

For more information, contact the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, 111 New Montgomery Street, Seventh Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105; 415-882-0234; or on the Web at <http://www.rnetwork.org>



## Supporting Child Care in Massachusetts

Several initiatives underway in Massachusetts are taking steps to improve child care and education for Latino children. In response to growing numbers of Latinos in the area, the Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) in Cambridge, Mass., a private, nonprofit child care resource and referral agency dedicated to making quality child care accessible to every family that needs it, developed a multilingual outreach campaign, translating all of its materials, developing bilingual videos, and hiring a diverse Spanish speaking staff to go into communities to speak about child care.

To improve access to child care for the Latino workforce, CCRC created the Small Business Initiative for Family Child Care. This project recruits women who are interested in becoming family child care providers and helps them develop the business and program skills they need to provide quality care. As a result of the initiative, Latino women have learned to market themselves, manage their businesses, track expenses, connect with food programs, and make their businesses more profitable. At the same time, children are receiving better care and families have more access to language-appropriate and culturally appropriate care.

To help Latino women attain higher education, CCRC used Department of Education funding to develop the Career Advancement Program. Through one-on-one career counseling, the program helps women identify barriers to higher education. Counseling is provided in Spanish and the participants receive ESL support, tutoring, literacy and scholarships to help pay for education.

"I believe that in order to respond adequately to the demographics that we've heard about, we need action--action at all levels of governments and by partnerships, and partnerships with the private sector, to ensure that the caregivers are well-prepared to care for our children and that the Latino parents receive the information and resources they need to make good choices."

-- Marta Rosa, Executive Director, Child Care Resource Center

The Massachusetts Educational Initiative for Latino Students (MEILS) was developed as a result of a Presidential executive order passed in 1994 encouraging states to set a Latino educational agenda. In 1998, Massachusetts created a statewide steering committee and working toward a statewide legislative initiative for Latinos. Since then, the committee has traveled to Massachusetts towns and cities with large Latino populations to help set a Latino political agenda focusing on educational issues, including child care.

For more information about CCRC initiatives, contact the center at:

130 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA, 02139; 617/547-1063, 617/491-1731 (fax) or on the Web at <http://www.cccinc.org>.

For more information about MEILS, contact Representative Jarrett T. Barrios, Commonwealth of Massachusetts House of Representatives, Room 130, State House, Boston, MA; 617/722-2130.

# Issue Group Recommendations

During the Leadership Forum, participants had an opportunity to break into small workgroups to brainstorm on specific topics and develop key recommendations for all involved in the child care field. These recommendations will be beneficial to state and local leaders, national and local organizations, providers and their staff, and parents of Latino children to increase the quality and availability of child care for Latino children.

## **GROUP I: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CHILD CARE IN THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY**

**Facilitator:** Oxana Golden, Director, Division of Child Care, Colorado Department of Human Services

- 1) Increase support for providers in bilingual approaches through scholarships and financial incentives.
- 2) Increase basic training for all types of child care providers.
- 3) Create an all-children's agenda
- 4) Educate and train parents in literacy skills so they can be partners with the children and with the child care providers in improving literacy skills.

## **GROUP II: INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF AVAILABLE CHILD CARE IN THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY**

**Facilitator:** Dolores Terrazas, City Wide Child Care Coordinator, Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, City and County of San Francisco

- 1) Implement a broad-based consumer-awareness campaign with the 10 states that have the largest number of Latino families.
- 2) Evaluate and assess supply and demand issues to be able to answer questions about policy development.
- 3) Encourage family child care networking.
- 4) Provide incentives so that providers can expand their hours of operation.
- 5) Engage with the private sector
- 6) Fund and evaluate community-based approaches that are working.

## **GROUP III: INCREASING THE CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCY OF THE CHILD CARE WORKFORCE**

**Facilitator:** Antonia Lopez, State Director of CA GEAR-UP Parent Institute for Quality Education

- 1) Provide training in cultural awareness for parents and staff.
- 2) Integrate leadership training for parents and families so that they can take a more active role in their children's child care programs.
- 3) Develop linguistic competencies for both staff and parents.
- 4) Develop a public awareness campaign that addresses and targets multifaceted partners, and that has public support.
- 5) Promote leadership from the top--and management by everyone with a stake following a "holistic" model that mirrors the family.

## **Issue Group Recommendations (continued)**

### **GROUP IV: BUILDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

**Facilitator:** Yolanda Garcia, Santa Clara County Office of Education

- 1) Support resources for developing a Latino workforce and those working with Latino children.
- 2) Develop a political agenda that is family and community-based, that exposes families to a larger environment by organizing, networking and increasing representation.
- 3) Address issues in the communities in which Latinos reside.
- 4) Develop initiatives that focus on comprehensive family-based approaches to community development involving those who work with Latino children and families and those who are very involved in the field.
- 5) Ask the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to convene a think tank that operates as a planning session for successful Latino leadership projects and that will result in an action plan.

### **GROUP V: EXPANDING AND IMPROVING OUTREACH AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION EFFORTS TO PARENTS, PROVIDERS AND THE COMMUNITY**

**Facilitator:** Luis Hernandez, Early Childhood Education Specialist, Region IV Head Start Quality Improvement Center, Western Kentucky University.

- 1) Hire and support bilingual and bicultural staff in the community.
- 2) Understand the public will.
- 3) Understand and develop community connections.
- 4) Provide education and outreach to informal providers.
- 5) Put funding into research to examine what is happening in the communities.



# Resources for Child Care Programs Serving Hispanic Communities

## Publications

### *Early Childhood Digest: “Latino Families: Getting Involved in Your Children’s Education”*

(April 1999) is available from the National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20208; 202/219-1935 or on the Web at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ECI/digests/99april.html>

*Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity—Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education: An NAEYC Position Statement* is available from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1509 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036; 800-424-2460 or 202/232-8777 or on the Web at <http://www.naeyc.org/about/about-index.htm>

**What Works For Latino Youth** is a compendium of programs recommended by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Hispanic-serving institutions, Latino community-based organizations, educators and youth from the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. Highlighted programs were either created specifically to serve young Hispanics or have shown strong benefits to Latino youth while serving broader populations. To order the report, contact the U.S. Department of Education at 877/4ED-PUBS or on the Web at <http://ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html>.

The report is on-line at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OIA/Hispanic/new/whatwrks1ed.pdf>. For more information about the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, contact the initiative at 400 Maryland Avenue. SW, FB-6 Room 5E110, Washington, DC 20202-3601; 202/401-1411; 202/401-8377 (fax).

## Organizations and Web sites

**The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)** is a national network of community-based child care resource and referral

agencies (CCR&Rs) that are committed to building a diverse, high quality child care system with parental choice and equal access for all families. NACCRRA operates Child Care Aware (1-800-424-2246), a service that links parents with local child care resource and referral agencies. Contact NACCRRA at 1319 F Street NW, Suite 810, Washington, DC 20004-1106; 202/393-5501; 202/393-1109 or on the Web at <http://www.nac-crra.net>.

**The National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC)** provides links to a variety of Hispanic resources on its Web site at <http://nccic.org/cctopics/hispanic.html>.

**The National Council of Latino Executives (CLE)** is a national group of Latino advocates who advise the Child Welfare League of America to enhance the well-being of Latino children and families. The council provides leadership to the field by influencing and shaping policy, conducting research, and evaluating programs and practice to ensure the inclusion of and responsiveness to Latino issues. Contact CLE at 140 West 22nd Street, Suite 301, New York, NY 10011; 212/206-1090; 212/206-8093 (fax).

**The National Latino Children’s Institute (NLCI)** is a non-profit national organization that creates a voice for Latino children. NLCI’s quarterly newsletter reports on the latest trends and issues affecting young Latinos and La Promesa Yearbook is a compilation of the best programs for Latino youth throughout the United States. Contact the NLCI at 1412 West Sixth Street, Austin, TX 78703; 512/472-9971, 512/472-5845 (fax) or on the Web at <http://www.nlci.org>.

**Hispanic health resources** are available on a Web site for the Hispanic Agenda for Action launched by the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Mi-nority Health. Visit <http://www.haa.omhrc.gov> on the Web for information about migrant and border health issues, regional cultural distinctions, data and publications.

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National Child Care Information Center on the Web: <http://nccic.org>

Internet access to ACF and the Child Care Bureau:

<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ccb>

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