PARENTAL LITERACY BEHAVIOR AND ENGAGEMENT IN HOMES OF DUAL-LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

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PARENTAL LITERACY BEHAVIOR AND ENGAGEMENT IN HOMES OF DUAL-LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

By

Sandra Ixa Plata-Potter

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctorate of Philosophy

Major: Human Sciences

Under the Supervision of Professor Helen H. Raikes

Lincoln, Nebraska

August, 2012
Latino preschoolers’ vulnerability to deficiencies in school readiness skills (e.g., alphabet knowledge, letter sounds, print awareness) is well-documented. The purpose of this three-phase, explanatory sequential mixed methods study was to examine parental participation in emergent literacy activities, using both quantitative and qualitative measures, and to determine how parental participation associated with child outcomes for Latino dual-language learners during preschool. Phase I of the study was quantitative in nature, and was part of a larger literacy intervention program, the Rural Language and Literacy Connections (Rural LLC) study. The quantitative hypotheses addressed the association between parental involvement and child emergent literacy outcomes for Latino dual-language learners. Quantitative analyses showed that attendance in Family Literacy Events (FLE) did not significantly relate to the Family Involvement Questionnaire-Home Base (FIQ-HB) in the home or child outcomes. FIQ-HB was positively and significantly related to child alphabet knowledge, but was not related to other outcomes and negatively related to child Print and Word Knowledge and Spanish Vocabulary.

In Phase II, the qualitative case study explored the perspectives of parents of Latino dual-language learners following participation in a preschool emergent literacy program, to determine history, roles, and literacy-related activities. In addition to the
interviews, parents shared literacy portfolios created by the child and parents. Key themes were as follows: Parent’s Childhood Literacy Experiences, Parent’s Role, Home Literacy Activities, Family Literacy Events, and Spanish Language Instruction in the Home.

In Phase III, qualitative results were examined to explain the quantitative results; these results suggest that families who attended the FLEs were not typical of all families, that the families reported they did benefit from the FLEs, and that families were highly invested in supporting children’s language and literacy but not in ways that the FIQ-HB was measuring. The positive findings for Alphabet Knowledge, but negative findings for relations between FIQ-HB and Print and Word Awareness and Spanish Vocabulary, suggest that families who increase their literacy activities, as measured by the FIQ-HB, may be improving some, but diminishing other behaviors that support literacy and retention of Spanish. These mixed method results have implications for how to support Hispanic families’ language and literacy in the context of intervention programs.
DEDICATION

Para Papi.

When other seven-year old little girls were getting dolls on Christmas morning, you gave me a microscope. You would have understood my quest, for you understood the value of an education. I wish you were here, for if anyone should feel proud, it is you.

Gracias Papi, desearía que estuvieras aquí y tomar parte de este triunfo.

To Liam

You are a gift from heaven.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This journey would not have been possible without the love, support and encouragement from others.

First, I want to thank God for His unconditional love, guidance, and blessings.

I am fortunate and thankful for my family:

My husband Wayne, I know your prayers went up daily and I know those prayers were always heard. We changed the course of our lives so that I could fulfill a dream. Thank you for being there, always. We are now ready for the next adventure.

Daniel and Joshua & Lisa, I love you more than words can express.

Liam, you have blessed our family. Mamita dedicates this success to you. Victoria, Abuela sees in you the remarkable young lady you are becoming. I want my grandchildren to know that I will always be their advocate.

Mi familia, Mami, Vitín, Wendy, Manny & Carol, Genevieve & Obed, grand-nephews & nieces. Your love and support is always evident. Mami, your prayers, cooking, and the little things you do. Thank you. Wendy, you came to Nebraska at a time when I needed the extra outside support. I will never forget the daily salads you lovingly prepared.

I want to express my sincerest gratitude to my committee members:

Dr. Helen Raikes, there are no words to express my gratitude. Your wisdom and kindness. Never did you doubt. I have learned so much from you. Thank you.

Dr. Lisa Knoche, thank you for the opportunities you made possible, for your immeasurable contributions and support.

Dr. Maria de Guzman, thank you for your constant support and encouragement.

Dr. John Creswell, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to help make this study successful.

Finally, but not least, I want to thank my graduate school family: First of all, Maria Isiar Iturbide, Traci Kutaka, Keely Cline, Sarah Beals – I am grateful for our friendship. Maria and Traci, I will forever be grateful for walking with me through the dissertation process. The CYAF family (Graduate Students, Faculty and Staff), because it is a family.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Proverbs 3:5-6
GRANT INFORMATION

This research was supported by a U. S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families Head Start Graduate Student Research Grant (Grant # 90YR0044) awarded to Dr. Lisa L. Knoche and Sandra Ixa Plata-Potter.
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Chapter 1: Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Latino preschoolers’ vulnerability to deficiencies in school readiness skills (e.g., alphabet knowledge, letter sounds, print awareness) is apparent, when compared to their non-Latino peers (Quirk, Furlong, Lilles, Felix, & Chin, 2011; Reardon & Galindo, 2009; Reardon & Robinson, 2008; Smith, Patterson, Doggett, 2008). The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study of Kindergarten Children (ECLS-K) found that Latino children tested at lower reading levels than non-Latino children when assessed for school readiness skills before entering kindergarten (Morgan, Farkas, & Hibel, 2008). Starting kindergarten with such a deficit follows Latino children through their primary education, making it difficult for them to catch up to their non-Latino peers (Smith, Patterson, & Doggett, 2008). Additionally, the current preschool population constitutes a large number of Latino children who are dual-language learners, growing up in homes where more than one language is spoken (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). Given the growing number of Latino children entering the classrooms of America and the probability of their immersion in more than one language, it is pivotal to find ways that will help to equip Latino preschoolers with the school readiness skills they will need for success in school.

Predictors of Emergent Literacy

It is crucial for all children to begin school equipped with the skills that contribute to a successful academic trajectory. The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) conducted a search of the scientific literature that resulted in a meta-analysis of over 500 peer-reviewed articles. Their goal was to identify which emergent literacy skills were precursors to later academic success, as well as, how parents and home contribute to these skills. The age group this panel refers to is comprised of children less than 5 years
of age. Skills they found to be positive contributors to school readiness were early literacy abilities, such as alphabet and print knowledge (Butler, Marsh, Sheppard & Sheppard, 1985; Lonigan, Anthony, Bloomfield, Dyer & Samwel, 1999; McQueen & Washington, 1988; Speece, Mills, Ritchey & Hillman, 2003).

The NELP report also explored the impact of programs that included parents and the home. In the 23 studies reviewed by NELP, it was found in two studies that the programs designed to include parents and the home demonstrated significant effects that positively impacted children’s oral language skills and general cognitive abilities, which are part of early literacy predictors. However, NELP was not able to find enough studies that met the criteria for analyses (e.g., group-comparison design, use of outcome measures to assess conventional literacy skills or predictors of later literacy skills, and sufficient information to calculate an effect size). Moreover, of interest for this present study, the studies used in the NELP report did not identify Latino families in the sample.

Parents and other primary caregivers, who interact with children during the early years of life, become integral contributors to children’s initial experiences with the development of literacy skills (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Englund, Luckner, Whaley & Egeland, 2004; Hart & Risley, 1995; Nievar, Jacobson, Chen, Johnson, & Dier, 2011). From birth, infants begin emulating parental behaviors that contribute to literacy as they follow the functions of conversations, writing, and reading. Handling books and holding writing instruments at a very young age helps to develop the necessary mechanisms related to early literacy skills. As a result, the process of assisting children in acquiring school readiness skills begins early in their life and includes the family and other primary caregivers (Dodici, Draper, & Peterson, 2003). Parents who are
informed about best practices and cognizant of their role in their child’s learning can become proactive in taking the early steps that will provide their child with the necessary tools to succeed in school from the start.

One pivotal example of involvement in a child’s literacy development at an early age is reading to or with the child (Bus, van IJzendoorn, & Pellegrini 1995). With that said, the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (2005, 2009) reports that only 37% of Latino parents reported reading to their children, compared to 60% of White, non-Latino parents. These numbers are consistent with other results that demonstrate a gap in literacy-related activities, in the homes of Latino children (Raikes et al., 2006), as well as Latino children experiencing an achievement gap at school entry (Smith et al., 2008).

Children who are read to prior to starting kindergarten, go on to become proficient in the essential skills of reading comprehension, which includes technical reading and spelling skills (Mol & Bus, 2011). Such skills are fundamental for school success at the elementary level, as well as in the middle and high school levels. One study, investigating if an early start in literacy skills contributed to reading proficiency in later years, found that 1st-graders’ literacy skills were a positive predictor in a follow-up study (e.g., proficiency in reading comprehension, vocabulary words, and general knowledge) conducted in 11th-grade (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). Thus, we find that the foundation for literacy skills is established while the child is still young and through practices that encompass early literacy abilities.

Both parental involvement and home environments are conducive to learning, and are essential components for the development of emergent literacy skills in children
before they begin grade school. Access to and acquiring emergent literacy skills occurs within the many interactions (e.g., shared-book reading, writing) that transpire in the home environment (Tabors, Snow, & Dickinson, 2005). Because literacy “comprises a range of skills that develop along a continuum that begins early in a child’s life” (Wasik & Newman, 2009, p. 304), such transactions result in making parental involvement and the home environment relevant to a child’s early exposure to literacy skills (Storch & Whitehurst, 2001). For this reason, it is necessary to attain a good grasp of the conceptual definition Latino parents apply to “parental involvement” when connected to activities that contribute to their children’s acquisition of literacy skills.

How the Study Contributes to the Literature

In an endeavor to help support school readiness skills and well-being for dual-language learners, it is important to understand the types of parental literacy behaviors that take place in the home. Often time, preschool providers include programs designed to provide parents with access to information and training that parents can use outside of the classroom (Doyle & Zhang, 2011; Knoche, Kupzyk, & Plata-Potter, 2011; Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards, & Marvin, 2011). It is, therefore, important to understand how parents apply this acquired information and training to literacy activities in the home. In addition, when working with families whose educational background differs from the mainstream culture, there is a gap in the literature of studies contributing to the knowledge base about the childhood educational experiences of parents of Latino dual-language learners. Access to such information provides a unique opportunity to learn about the literacy foundation of the parents. Though there is an effort to fill the gap, the literature on this topic is still limited.
Moreover, there are few studies using mixed methods, which helps provide a voice for families of Latino dual-language learners. For example, studies designed with the mainstream culture in mind may not capture the responses that represent families from other cultures. Asking all families if they praise their child in front of the teacher on a questionnaire fails to capture the fact that if the parent does not speak English, they cannot praise their child in front of the teacher, resulting in a low score on the questionnaire item. Through an in-depth interview, the interviewer can ask the parent if they praise their child, when, where and how. This example shows how qualitative data collection can help inform the responses of the quantitative data.

The aggregate results from mixed methods studies contribute to the literature. This study will contribute to the literature by filling a gap regarding what we know about parental engagement and behaviors in the homes of Spanish dual-language learners combined with understanding parental childhood experiences. Together, the results and findings can provide a more complete picture regarding emergent literacy in the homes of Spanish dual-language speakers. In this study, parents share their own personal experiences and perspectives regarding emergent literacy, their participation in an emergent literacy program, and their involvement in literacy related activities with their child through both quantitative and qualitative means.

**Audience That Will Benefit**

This dissertation will be of interest to an audience working with preschoolers who are Latino dual-language learners, as well as Latino families of preschoolers. The mixed methods design provides an added dimension to the research within this population. Quantitative results that can be generalized to a larger population together with
qualitative data giving a voice for participant perspective, affords one set of results to inform the other. Findings will be beneficial in that the results provide an insight into the personal literacy experiences of the parents of Latino dual-language learners and their perspectives concerning the emergent literacy activities of children who have not yet begun kindergarten. For example, if teachers are knowledgeable about the emergent literacy upbringing of parents whose home country is not the U.S., they will be better informed about how to approach book-reading activities with the parents. Parents who did not grow up being read to as children will not automatically comprehend best approaches to shared-book reading activities with their own child.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this three-phase, explanatory sequential mixed methods design was to examine how parental participation in emergent literacy activities contributed to child outcomes for Latino dual-language learners during preschool. This design includes collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data that helps further explain the quantitative results, through connections that are made between the two (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Phase I of the study is quantitative in nature and is part of a larger literacy intervention program, the Rural Language and Literacy Connections (Rural LLC) study. The quantitative hypotheses will address the relationship between parental involvement and child emergent literacy outcomes for Latino dual-language learners. Children in the Rural LLC study were enrolled in preschool, funded by Head Start and other public funding, located in a Midwestern community. The purpose of the Phase II qualitative case study was to explore with more depth the perspectives of parents of Latino dual-language learners.
after their participation in a preschool emergent literacy program and to understand the contexts that are relevant to explaining the quantitative results. In addition to the interviews, parents shared literacy portfolios created by the child and parents along with narratives about the activities documented in the portfolios. The rationale for the explanatory design is to explain quantitative results about parental literacy related engagement and behaviors with a qualitative case study. In Phase III, the results from the qualitative phase of the study will help interpret the results from the quantitative phase.

Research Questions

Following is the central research question for this study, next the quantitative research questions along with the hypothesis (H), followed by the qualitative research questions. Lastly, the overarching mixed methods questions are stated.

Overarching research question. How does parental involvement in an emergent literacy program contribute to parent support for emergent literacy skills and emergent literacy outcomes for Latino dual-language learners who are in preschool?

Phase I: Quantitative research questions (Quan RQ)

Quan RQ 1. How involved were parents of Latino dual-language learners in a preschool-sponsored emergent literacy program, as measured by attendance at family literacy events (FLE)?

Quan RQ 2. What types of literacy-related behaviors do parents of Latino dual-language learners report they engage in with their children in their homes, as measured by questions on the Family Involvement Questionnaire – Home Based construct (FIQ-HB; Fantuzzo, Tighe,
& Childs, 2000) (e.g., I spend time working with my child on reading/writing skills)?

Quan RQ 3. What is the relationship between parental participation in FLE and literacy-related behaviors in the homes of Latino dual-language learners over time?

a. $H_1 =$ Parental participation in FLE over time will positively relate to literacy behaviors in the home. Higher levels of attendance at FLE over time will predict high mean scores on the FIQ-HB rating.

Quan RQ 4. How does parental participation in FLE and parental literacy-related behaviors in the homes of Latino dual-language learners over time relate to school readiness skills (child outcomes) as measured by scores on child assessments (e.g., receptive vocabulary, alphabet letter knowledge, letter sound) over time?

a. $H_2 =$ FLE and FIQ-HB will positively relate to child outcomes over time. Participation in FLE and high mean scores on the FIQ-HB dimension ratings over time will predict higher school readiness skills as measured by scores on child assessments over time.

**Phase II: Qualitative research questions (Qual RQ)**

Qual RQ 1. What are the personal childhood literacy experiences of parents of Latino dual-language learners?
Qual RQ 2. How do parents’ personal childhood literacy experiences shape how they, in turn, introduce their own child to literacy?

Qual RQ 3. What are the parents’ literacy perspectives?
   a. How do parents define the “role of the parent” as it pertains to literacy activities?
   b. What literacy activities do parents report they engage in with their child?
   c. What are the parents’ perspectives after participation in an emergent literacy program?

Qual RQ 4. What stories do parents share during the narration of the literacy portfolio, created between the child and parent?

Phase III. Mixed methods research question (MM RQ)

MM RQ 1. Does parents’ literacy background (qualitative) help to explain participation in FLE (quantitative)?

MM RQ 2. Do the types of literacy activities parents report occurring in the home (qualitative) help explain the FIQ-HB (quantitative)?

Definitions and Terms

Documentation: documentation can be used as a form of communication, which helps to demonstrate acquired abilities; from a Reggio viewpoint (presented by the Reggio Emilia, Italy preschool) documentation can further demonstrate the learning direction that is being followed (Fyfe, 2012, p. 274). In this study, documentation will encompass portfolios created by target child and/or parents and preserved as evidence of literacy-inspired activities.
**Dual-Language Learner:** “…children learning two (or more) languages at the same time, as well as those learning a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language” (Office of Head Start, 2008, p. 1). Dual-language learners in this study will encompass Latino preschool children exposed to both Spanish and English in and outside the home environment.

**Emergent Literacy:** “…the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are developmental precursors to reading and writing” (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998, p. 848). Emergent literacy skills in this study will focus on alphabet knowledge, letter sounds, print awareness, rhyming, beginning sound, name writing, and listening comprehension.

**Explanatory Sequential Design:** This type of research design “is a multi-phase mixed methods design in which the researcher starts with the collection and analysis of quantitative data (Phase I), followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Phase II) to help explain the initial quantitative results (Phase III)” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 411).

**Latino:** categorizes people who self-identify with terms such as Hispanic, Latino, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or some other Hispanic origin, according to the 2010 U. S. Census report (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011).

**Parental Engagement/Involvement:** “…parents’ commitment of resources to the academic arena of children’s lives” (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007) (i.e., spending time together in literacy related activities, providing support by making available reading and writing materials, engaging in literacy rich dialogue).

**Portfolio:** a collection of documentation that demonstrate families learning and working together. The portfolios presented in this study were created during the Family
Literacy Events attended by the families. In addition, families were encouraged to continue the learning at home and to add to the portfolio.

**Chapter Summary**

As stated earlier, Latino preschoolers typically begin school with a deficit in school readiness skills (e.g., alphabet knowledge, letter sounds, and print awareness). Since parents and the home environment contribute to the early acquiring of emergent literacy skills, research needs to include a component that further explores the context of the home wherein dual-language learning children learn, and the ways the parents participate in a literacy intervention. By means of using both quantitative and qualitative methodology, this mixed methods design provides an opportunity to study child emergent literacy outcomes for Latino dual-language learners from more than one perspective. In addition to the quantitative results regarding parental attendance in the preschool sponsored emergent literacy program, literacy activities in the home, and child outcomes, the qualitative phase in this study puts into context the personal childhood emergent literacy experiences of parents of Latino dual-language learners and how their own experiences, contributes to their child’s emergent literacy skills.
Chapter 2: Review of Selected Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to review selected literature related to parental involvement and child academic outcomes. The following topics are reviewed: school readiness, parental involvement and home literacy practices, and literacy intervention programs. These three sections are followed by a sub-section that focuses on the demographic picture of Latino preschoolers in the U.S. and parental involvement for Latino children. Furthermore, this review includes an additional section regarding the contributions of portfolios. The final section will address the theory of guided participation, a theoretical underpinning for the study.

Parental engagement and/or involvement is an important contributing factor to a child’s academic success (Children’s Aid Society, 2003). As will be discussed in this chapter, the literature shows that children gain school readiness skills when parents provide literacy related activities, such as writing and shared book reading. In addition, the home environment is also a learning environment for the child because of the types of interactions that occur in the home, with parents creating opportunity to make the home a literacy rich environment (e.g., books, conversations, music).

School Readiness

There was a time when children began learning how to read and write after they started kindergarten (Wasik & Newman, 2009). This is now no longer the case, as it is typical for children to begin school already knowing how to write their name. Commencing their formal education equipped with literacy skills, and not needing to invest time in acquiring them after starting grade school, affords children the opportunity
to do well in school (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). As a result, children are less likely to repeat a grade and more likely to be on task (Willms & Somers, 2001).

Furthermore, students are more likely to reflect what is termed as the “Matthew effect” (Stanovich, 1986). The “Matthew effect” refers to scripture in the Gospel of Matthew whereby the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Within the context of academic skills, the term refers to students who enter school equipped with skills that help them begin with an academic advantage, contributing to their continual success throughout school. On the other hand, students who do not begin school equipped with similar skills start off with a deficit that continues to expand, contributing to an academic gap in their educational trajectory, a gap that will not decrease without early intervention (Hernandez, 2011).

Early literacy abilities, or emergent literacy skills as they are also known, are introduced to the child early in life (Robb, 2003). Emergent literacy is “the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are developmental precursors to reading and writing” (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998, p. 848). The National Early Literacy Panel (2008) identified these skills and abilities as predictors to young children’s literacy abilities after they begin their formal education. The following abilities are a list of essential components for the foundation of literacy skills in children under age five: phonological awareness, emergent writing, alphabet knowledge, oral language, print knowledge, environmental print, and listening comprehension. Similar variables were significantly related in other studies that also explored emergent literacy skills in young children (1990; Lonigan, 2006; Scarborough, 1998).
When examining literacy practices, it has been found that the home is one of the earliest venues for the foundation of emergent literacy for young children. Over the course of a child’s early years, more time is spent interacting with family members than within any other context (Reynolds & Shlafer, 2010). The types of exposure children receive at home during this time are found to be critical for positive academic outcomes (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Snow, Tabors, & Dickinson, 2001; Storch & Whitehurst, 2001). These activities may be in the form of book reading, print, and alphabet knowledge, and other factors contributing to emergent literacy skills (Tabors, Snow, & Dickinson, 2001). In return, the endeavors made by parents, extended family members, and other persons (e.g., day care providers) become apparent once children begin their formal education. A study that examined parental beliefs about children’s learning abilities found that 69% of those surveyed believe they play a pivotal role in their child’s learning (DYG, Inc., 2000). Parents whose educational background differs from the mainstream culture find themselves at a disadvantage as they endeavor to provide the best learning experience for their children. The disadvantage may be a result of unfamiliarity with the dominant educational culture (Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006).

**Parental Involvement and Home Literacy Practices**

Parents recognize the importance of having their child enter kindergarten equipped with skills that will help them to succeed in school and of playing an active role in their child’s educational experiences (Diamond, Reagan, & Bandyk, 2000). Results from the National Household Education Survey (1993), conducted with a sample of non-Latino White, African American, and Latino families found parents believing it is
necessary for their children to possess a variety of academic skills (e.g., knowing alphabet letters, writing their name) before beginning kindergarten (Diamond, Reagan, & Bandyk, 2000). As a result, parents with this belief made the effort to provide their child opportunities that are conducive to learning these skills.

Contributions to emergent literacy skills are also made through activities that are carried out in the home (Barbarin & Aikens, 2009). Assisting with teaching the alphabet, sounding out words, or oral reading (Evans, Fox, Cremaso, & McKinnon, 2004) as well as other activities, such as, mimicking writing, shared book reading, and conversations with family members (Evans, Shaw, & Bell, 2000; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2001; Tabors, Snow, & Dickinson, 2001) are examples. Through behaviors that are geared towards school readiness, parents become influential contributors to their children’s foremost academic development, enriching the foundation that is being laid long before the first day of kindergarten (Landry & Smith, 2006).

A number of studies have documented a relationship between parental involvement and child academic outcomes (Rhyner, Haebig, & West, 2009; Snow, Tabors, & Dickinson, 2005; Wasik et al., 2006). With this understanding, there is a concerted belief that there is a need to engage parents in this process, along with providing quality preschools that include programs/curriculum that will help to equip children with the necessary emergent literacy skills before starting kindergarten (Paratore, Melzi, & Krol-Sinclair, 2003; Storch & Whitehurst, 2001).

A key goal of the Administration for Children and Families is to not only provide services to children who can be at risk academically, but also involve the parent in their child’s development and education. Recently, Head Start introduced the Head Start
Parent, Family and Community Engagement (PFCE) framework as a guide for implementing Head Start Program Performance Standards (Administration for Children & Families, 2011). This framework is designed to continue Head Starts on-going goal of creating an environment that facilitates the involvement of parents in their child’s school readiness skills. The desired outcomes are:

- Family Well-being
- Positive Parent-Child Relationships
- Families as Lifelong Educators
- Families as Learners
- Family Engagement in Transitions
- Family Connections to Peers and Community
- Families as Advocates and Leaders (Administration for Children & Families, 2011, p. 1)

Parents who are involved in their child’s learning contribute in ways that result in positive academic outcomes for the child later in life. For example, children who are read to observe and begin to model different literacy behaviors that lead to the acquisition of literacy skills as they imitate the behavior. A child will rifle through a book or magazine or take an object that looks like a writing instrument and mimic writing movements, thereby pretending to do what a parent has modeled. Through shared book reading, children acquire skills connected to literacy, such as vocabulary words and familiarity with the concept of reading a book.

In a study by Lynch (2008), low-income families with children enrolled in Head Start were interviewed, and during the interviews, the parents expressed the importance
of reading to their children as well as writing the alphabet with their children. In another study by Snow, Tabors, & Dickinson (2001), one parent who was interviewed indicated that she would reinforce at home what she saw the teachers doing in the classroom. The parents were given the opportunity to reflect on the activities they engaged in, answering not just yes or no questions, but also giving examples, or providing a comment about said activities. Researchers also found that parents were more likely to engage more in reading activities, mostly defined as shared book reading. In regards to writing activities, parents were asked to expand on the types of writing activities they engaged in with their child and most parents responded that they assisted their child with mostly writing letters of the alphabet or spelling a name. In a study by Dunst, et al. (2000), families expressed that shared book reading and storytelling were literacy type of activities they participated in as a family. These results demonstrate that child outcomes can benefit from both parental engagement in their academic development as well as from parental beliefs, and how this belief is substantiated by literacy practices (Bennett, Weigel, & Martin, 2002).

In another study, families (98% non-Latino White) from upper and middle class homes were asked to fill out a questionnaire in order to learn about the types of emergent literacy activities they engaged in with their preschoolers (Haney & Hill, 2004). The majority of families (71%) shared that they focused on letter names, followed closely by letter sounds (65%). The parents also indicated that they worked with their child in the area of printing letters (45%). The authors found that these literacy-related activities contributed to emergent literacy outcomes, noting that time spent teaching alphabet sounds contributed positively to higher scores on vocabulary subtests and time spent
writing words was positively associated with scoring higher on alphabet knowledge subtests.

In Raikes, et al. (2006), the authors looked at three time points (14, 24, and 36 months) in homes of low-income families, to learn about reading activities across the pivotal years in the life of young children, and how these activities were associated with language outcomes. This study had the additional component of studying timing, since learning occurs in a continuum. In homes where the language spoken was English, consistent daily reading was taking place throughout all three time points measured. This behavior was positively associated with child language and cognitive outcomes. These parents also exercised other forms of engagement in literacy activities, such as going to the library, purchasing books from books clubs for their children, or requesting family members to give books as gifts to their children. Moreover, when asked about literacy activities, parents responded by drawing from their own personal childhood experiences.

Another form of parental engagement in emergent literacy development is talking with children. Hart and Risley’s (1995) study illustrates the impact of quality engagement actualized through conversations with the child. This monumental longitudinal study examined parents talking with children in homes from three different socioeconomic backgrounds: professional, working class, and welfare. After three years, the level of parental engagement in talk the study looked at the word count that occurred within a set time-period and extrapolated those numbers, resulting in a 30-million-word gap, after three years, between children whose parents were professionals, when compared to children from homes on welfare. They also found that significant differences were due to the quality of the conversations between parent and child. The quality interactions
consisted of rich conversations taking place between parent and child. Families who were more likely to engage in “extra talk” provided an environment consisting of copious conversations about any given event, immersing the child in a world of rich vocabulary. As opposed to families engaging in more “business talk” which consisted of conversations where the parent would tell the child to “sit,” “go to bed,” or “time to eat,” with minimal, rich vocabulary interaction. These results were evident within the three different socioeconomic backgrounds, indicating that SES was not the sole factor contributing to poor literacy skills.

The context of the home environment is an important contributor to a child’s early exposure to the world of learning, with parental involvement in literacy activities occurring both in and outside the home (Foster, Lambert, Abbott-Shim, McCarty, & Franze, 2005; Lynch, 2008). When children reside in stimulating learning environments, we are able to observe positive language and cognitive development (Bradley, McKelvey, & Whiteside-Mansell, 2011). Dunst, et al. (2000) study also interviewed families in order to learn how they defined family life sources for learning opportunities, or environments, within which a child has opportunities to learn. The participants identified 11 activities, such as, family routines (e.g., household chores), parenting routines (e.g., bath time), literacy activities (e.g., bedtime stories), physical play (e.g., playing games), and family rituals (e.g., family talks). In addition, this same study interviewed another group of families to learn about what they defined as learning opportunities, or environments that are found within the community life, resulting in 11 community activities, such as family excursions (e.g., car rides), family outings (e.g., shopping), community activities (e.g., parades), outdoor activities (e.g., hiking), and
children’s attractions (e.g., zoo). Dunst et al., (2000) points out that each of these learning environments constitutes a context where both the adult and child are engaged participants, allowing the opportunity for learning to occur through interactions. Still, studies have found that the levels of literacy opportunities in the homes of preschoolers differ considerably and do not always have strong, positive contributions (Hart & Risley, 1995; Heath, 1983).

To determine how the home contributed to the child’s language development, Farver, Xu, Eppe, and Lonigan, (2006) selected participants, including Latinos, with no prior preschool experience. Parents indicated that they engaged in activities such as reading to their child, teaching their child letters of the alphabet, as well as pointing to words and telling the child what they say. After assessing the children, scores for English and Spanish receptive language were positively associated with parental engagement, even though the children had not received additional literacy support from external programs.

Foster et al. (2005) looked at the relationship between quality home environment and its contribution to child emergent literacy skills. This study states that the quality of the home environment mediates emergent literacy skills for children who come from homes with low SES. Parents with low SES indicated that they provided their child with enriching experiences such as visits to the library, zoo, and sporting events. They also shared that they provided their child with various forms of reading materials in the home (i.e., books, magazines, newspapers, and catalogues). What children learned while in these environments was dependent on the quality. This is one aspect pointed out by Hart and Risley (1995), when they discuss parental engagement in literacy activities and the
importance of quality. It is not just a matter of having environments and tools that are
geared towards literacy, the quality of such environments is just as vital, if not more so.
Rodriguez and Tamis-LeMonda (2011) highlight the strong association between the
learning environment of the child and emergent literacy outcomes before children entered
kindergarten. The results in this study showed a relationship between engagement in such
activities and child outcomes when measuring receptive language and emergent literacy
skills (e.g., letter-word identification), with those children afforded literacy activities in
three areas—direct literacy activity, materials and parental responsiveness—benefiting
the most. The study contributes relevant results that demonstrate how the early years of a
child’s life need to be regarded, along with the quality of the learning environment.

As this review has indicated, the role of the parent and the home environment is
pivotal to a child’s attainment of early literacy skills. Moreover, starting early in life,
before beginning their formal education, affords children the opportunity to develop
important school readiness skills, such as letter recognition, beginning sound, and
familiarity with reading.

**Demographic Picture of Latino Preschoolers in the U.S.**

In addition to being the largest minority group in America, Latinos constitute the
greatest percentage of ethnic minority children who are of preschool age. Of the total
U.S. population, Latinos make up 25% of children not yet 5 years of age, while all other
ethnic minority groups combined comprise 24% of this same age group (U.S. Census,
2010). As this young population grows and reaches school age, their numbers become
even more apparent. Between 1990 and 2006, the Hispanic student population in the U.S.
nearly doubled, contributing to over 60% of total growth (Fry & Gonzales, 2008).
An important characteristic of the Latino student population is that 70% are more likely to come from homes where English is not their home language (Fry & Gonzales, 2008), resulting in the simultaneous learning of two language (i.e., English and Spanish). For the parents of these children, English may not have been their home language, or they may not have begun to learn English until they were of older age, making the learning of the English more difficult for them. Another important fact about Latino families is that they are migrating to new areas around the country. Presently, the largest pockets of Latinos are located in urban communities. However, a shift in the area of residence is occurring, with Latinos moving to rural towns across America. In recent years, this shift in demographics has been seen in southern states and more recently in Midwestern communities (Hernandez, 2004; U. S. Department of Agriculture, 2005). By the year 2025, it is expected that Latinos will be the largest minority group in rural America (U. S. Department of Agriculture, 2005).

The socioeconomic status of the Latino population is another distinctive characteristic, in which, due to the recent U. S. economic downturn, Latinos experienced a significant negative shift. Between 2005 and 2009, the net worth in Latino households dropped 66%, from $18,359 to $6,325. In addition, their unemployment rate in 2011 was up to 11% (versus the national rate of 8.5%) (Kochhar, Fry & Taylor, 2011). Collectively, these figures are indicative of expected changes within the landscape of American classrooms, and they provide a vista of the future American workforce.

**School Readiness – Through a Latino Cultural Lens**

Latino parents who completed their education outside of the U.S. grew up in homes where academic learning began with the start of formal education; entering school
with emergent literacy skills was not a common occurrence (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Ramirez, 2003). Moreover, these parents also grew up in homes with limited print materials (e.g. children’s books). For many Latino parents, their first book was the one received when they started elementary school. As a result, unfamiliarity with the present educational culture, coupled with their own personal literacy experiences are then reflected in the way Latino parents become involved with their child’s education, and what they consider key components to school readiness.

Parents who come from Latino cultures bring with them the strong belief that the teacher is the person best prepared to teach their child, because they have received the appropriate training to do so (Espinosa, 2010; Reese, Garnier, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 2000). This belief is evident in the approach Latino parents take when teaching their children how to be successful in school in that they focus on how it is necessary to be respectful to the teacher (Reese et al., 1995). Latino parents have high respect for teachers and believe that the school will provide their child with the best education, and, therefore, do not feel they have a right to become overly involved (Auerback, 1995; Battle, 2009). As a result, many Latino families focus on other attributes of school readiness, such as moral behavior, and are more likely to see their primary responsibility as teaching their children moral values (Ada, & Zubizarreta, 2001).

Within the Latino community, preparing a child to have a strong moral foundation, to be bien educado, is part of the preparation for success in school. Directly translated, bien educado means to be well educated. Culturally, it means more; it means to conduct oneself with decorum and in a way that will not bring shame to the family. For example, the first question a Latino parent will ask during parent-teacher conferences is,
“Is my child obedient or well behaved in your class?” (Plata-Potter & de Guzman, 2012). Moral behavior is believed to be a necessary component for academic success (Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1995), and for many Latino parents, an essential part of the home teachings that contribute to their child’s education is the knowledge of right from wrong (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995).

Similar to *bien educado*, the concept of *educación* is also relevant for understanding how Latinos view education. Latino families’ method of supporting their child academically encompasses a more holistic approach that includes *educación* or “life education” (Zarate, 2007). Though derived from the English word “education,” this Spanish word also implies certain behaviors that are not a part of the English translation. Zarate (2007) conducted a qualitative study with Latino parents, who shared their perceptions of parental involvement in their child’s education. Their responses were divided into two groups, academic involvement (e.g., attend parent-teacher conferences, listen to the child read, ask questions about homework) and life education, also known as educación (e.g., be aware of and monitor child, teach good morals and respect of others, provide advice on life issues). The parents did not separate the two, but believed that each was an integral component of a well-rounded education for their child. See Table 1 for a summary of these concepts.
Table 1

**Latino Parents’ Definitions of Parental Involvement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Involvement</th>
<th>Life Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend parent-teacher conferences.</td>
<td>Be aware of child’s life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign homework as required by the teacher.</td>
<td>Be aware of and monitor child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know when to expect report cards.</td>
<td>Be aware of child’s peer group and interacting with peers’ parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask about homework daily.</td>
<td>Teach good morals and respect of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to the child read.</td>
<td>Communicate with child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit classroom during open houses.</td>
<td>Be aware of and encourage child’s abilities and career aspirations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions about homework.</td>
<td>Provide general encouragement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask friends, siblings, and other family members for homework help for child.</td>
<td>Discuss future planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have high standards for academic performance.</td>
<td>Monitor school attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase materials required for class.</td>
<td>Exercise discipline and provide behavioral cuing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive them to tutoring and school activities.</td>
<td>Establish trust with child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to the library with them.</td>
<td>Provide advice on life issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be present when required to pick up report cards at school.</td>
<td>Warn of dangers outside the home, such as illegal drugs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Get to know teachers to assess child’s safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer to observe school environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage siblings to look out for each other.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the qualitative strand of a mixed methods study (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995), Latino parents had an opportunity to voice their beliefs about what they saw as an important part of a child’s education. The parents shared how the knowledge of right from wrong was essential. Similar to the Zarate’s (2007) study,
results in this study also show that Latino parents do not make a distinction between academics and morals. They both are important for the making of a well-educated person. In the comments made by the parents in the study, we see how parents speak of academic success in the same sentence that they speak of good moral upbringing. One parent phrased it this way:

\[\textit{Las dos cosas van de la mano. Uno tiene que estar siempre tratando de caminar un camino recto. Sería imposible llegar a la Universidad si no tiene buenos modales, si no se enseñe a respetar a los demás.} \) (The two things go hand in hand. One always has to try to walk a straight path. It would be impossible to get to the university if one doesn’t have good behavior, if one isn’t taught to respect others) (Reese et al., 1995, pp. 64)

To these Latino parents, preparing a child to have a strong moral foundation was the first step in preparing them for success in school.

**Parental Involvement and Home Literacy Practices – Latino Families**

However, families are willing to adapt to a new school environment and combine both cultures in order to make the new school system work for their children (Gillanders & Jiménez, 2004). When learning about literacy activities that are not part of the existing practices in the home, Latino families often modify these activities in ways that support their beliefs of moral development while at the same time contributing to the child’s literacy development (Perry, Kay, & Brown, 2008). For example, parents shared with the interviewer that they would interject the importance of sharing and playing fair, which are characteristics of moral behavior the families felt they needed to instill in their children along with the literacy activities (Perry, Kay and Brown, 2008). In order to learn
more about possible differences in literacy related activities amongst ethnic groups, Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo, and Coll, (2001) used a national data set that included the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment-Short Form (HOME-SF) and the four major ethnic groups (i.e., European Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, and Latino Americans). Bradley et al. (2001) found that, with regards to activities that parent and child engaged in, this study showed that Latino mothers were less likely to read to their children, teach the letters of the alphabet, and were even less likely to teach shapes and sizes, when compared to the other ethnic groups. It was also found that differences were dependent on family income, with non-poor ethnic families providing their children developmentally appropriate books and other literacy rich opportunities (e.g. being read to or visits to the museum).

On the other hand, other literature shows that Latino parents have demonstrated a strong desire to assist in their child’s literacy development (Perry, Kay, & Brown, 2008). Latino parents believe that they do play an active role in their child’s education (Gillanders & Jiménez, 2004; Weigel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006). They want their preschool children to succeed in school, but may not be well aware of their role in this process and the importance of the types of interactions that take place in the home which contribute to literacy development (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2002; Sampson, 2003).

Studies have shown that Latino parents have the motivation and interest to support their children in the area of education, but lack the mainstream knowledge for specific strategies and routines necessary for success in American schools (Paratore, Melzi & Krol-Sinclair, 2003). For example, some Latino parents do not immediately make the connection between advertisement, print, and literacy; and when this occurs
children miss out on literacy opportunities (Lynch, 2008). Cereal boxes, cans of food, bags of chips, calendars on the wall, magazines, and newspapers all offer opportunities to expose a child to print (Lynch, 2008). However, not all Latino parents think about these items as “literacy material” because they are not defined as such. Some Latino parents commented that they used these as literacy materials because their child initiated the interaction.

Latino parents are not only willing, but are known to modify literacy activities in ways that support their beliefs about education so that the child’s literacy development can benefit. They will modify instructions to facilitate their interactions with their children. They take what they learned when they went to school in their country of origin and work it into the instructions given at their child’s school. For example, many Latino parents learned through repetition, writing letters and words repeatedly, demonstrating how Latino parents are drawn to practices that are more in line with recollections of their own education (Gillanders & Jimenez, 2004). Latino parents will provide their children with worksheets that focus on literacy activities, as opposed to providing storybooks. Worksheets provide an avenue to literacy skills with which these parents were more familiar and comfortable (Goldenberg, Reese, & Gallimore, 1992). This is one reason why they purchase workbooks for their children and have them write letters and words repeatedly (Gillanders & Jimenez, 2004). Moreover, some Latino parents feel that what children need to know in the area of print and reading is minimal, because they will acquire these skills when they begin their formal education (Lynch, 2008).

Parents who spend time engaged with their child in literacy types of activities while out in the community, (e.g., running errands, or visiting the zoo) create learning
opportunities that can result through the conversations that take place. These interactions create opportunities for vocabulary rich dialogue that help to contribute to emergent literacy skills. Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, and Ortiz (2010) found talk to be an important contributor to literacy development in Latino young children. With the intent to support the home language and literacy environment, Boyce et al., (2010) asked Latino parents to create a book with their child. The parents were then recorded at the beginning, as well as at the end of the project, as they talked with their child about the books. These conversations were transcribed and upon analysis, indicated an increase in words use at the end, when comparing the pre- and posttest mean scores. The demonstrated increase was found in the child’s total number of words, as well as the number of different words. Latino parents’ shared their perceptions after having participated in this project. Their comments included how they learned to talk in different ways with their child, having longer conversations, and how their child is now “asking more questions” and wanting to know more about “the meaning of new words” (Boyce et al., 2010, p. 361).

Within Latino homes, the responsibility of helping Latino children learn does not fall solely on the parent, but other family members, as well. A closer look at literacy practices within Latino homes reveals that interactions that occur between different family members (e.g., siblings, grandparents, cousins, uncles, aunts) are positively related to Spanish oral language development (Billings, 2009; Gonzalez & Uhing, 2008). These extended social networks contribute greatly in transmitting knowledge, skills, norms, and values. Billings (2009) found that a large percentage (83%) of Latino parents stated that their child read with other children (e.g., siblings, relatives, friends, etc.), demonstrating engagement outside of the typical parent/child dyad. In the Gonzalez and Uhing (2008)
study, the children were enrolled in an Even Start program, and the majority (92%) spoke only Spanish. These parents were administered The Familia Inventory (Taylor, 2000) which consists of 57 items (10 subscales), assessing different types of family interactions. One subscale, Extended Family, measures levels of family interactions that include siblings, grandparents, and other family members. The results demonstrated a positive association between the interactions with extended family members and Spanish oral language. The study points out how, for example, Mexican American families consider social networks, which are composed of family members, to be pivotal for the transmission of “knowledge, skills, information, norms, and values” (Gonzalez & Uhing, 2008, p. 131).

**Interventions that Support Latino Parents’ Contribution to Child Learning**

Literacy intervention programs, when designed to include parents, provide an avenue for families to become engaged in their child’s learning, facilitating one-on-one opportunities for literacy interactions between parents and child (McQueen & Washington, 1988; Sharif, Ozuah, Dinkevich, & Mulvihill, 2003; Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards, & Marvin, 2011). Moreover, researchers have found that Latino families utilize school-sponsored literacy programs to familiarize themselves with opportunities that facilitate literacy interactions with their child. (Madrigal, Cubillas, Yaden, Tam, & Brassell, 1999).

An intervention program, designed to support the home language and literacy environment, found that Latino families who received the services were able to engage in literacy related activities that contributed to an increase in their child’s vocabulary (Boyce et al., 2010). As part of the intervention program, home visitors had participants
create books using pictures and drawings made by the parent and child as well as designing the captions and words in the story. The books focused on a topic of interest to the families, and parents noted an increase in enjoyment when reading with their child after participating in the program.

Latino families participate in literacy-related activities as a way to contribute to their child’s emergent literacy skills (Boyce et al., 2004). In another study, when provided with the opportunity to participate in a preschool-centered book-loaning program, Latino families not only participated, but also expanded the types of parent-child activities. For example, parents commented on how they would read the stories so they would “come alive for their children” (Madrigal et al., 1999, p. 13). They believed that in doing this, they would increase their child’s comprehension of the story’s concept. These parents also expressed interest in further learning about reading strategies with their child. They asked for ideas on reading methods that would increase their child’s interest and understanding of the books they were reading to their children, and they were provided with ideas such as reading the pictures or tracking (pointing) to each word as it was being read. Participating in programs provided by their child’s preschool affords families who are not from the dominant culture the opportunity to acquire additional skills that in turn can assist the parent as they engage in emergent literacy activities with their child. Essentially, the Latino families demonstrated that opportunities to engage in literacy activities were of great interest.

**Literacy Portfolios**

A tangible mechanism educators use, to encourage and motivate, is the creation of portfolios which provide a visual depiction of progress and results. Portfolios are defined
as “a purposeful collection of …work that exhibits…efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas,” (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991, p. 60). Portfolios provide benefits: They allow for the collection and communication of data. Artifacts collected that demonstrate literacy activities, can be in the form of writing, drawing, photos of interactions, and items that provide opportunities for dialogue to take place. Literacy portfolios contain work that align with activities that are literacy related (e.g., reading, writing, drawing), usually created by a child, or a child with the assistance of a parent (Miller, 2000). Portfolios, along with the documentation found inside, are as diverse as their owners are.

As an assessment tool, portfolios are used to gauge the progress of students (Miller, 2000). The creation of a portfolio within the classroom provides opportunities for engagement between children, as well as children and adult discourse, something that cannot be assessed with standardized testing (Gilkerson & Hanson, 2000). Additionally, unlike standardized tests, documentation in a portfolio provides data that is qualitative in nature and documented over time, in order to learn about what children know, by the approach the child chooses to express his or her thoughts (Gilkerson & Hanson, 2000; Katz & Chard, 1996; Turner & Wilson, 2010).

The use of portfolios in the classroom provides opportunities to learn from the child and approach teaching from a different perspective (Turner & Wilson, 2010). For example, in one classroom, a preschool teacher provided children the opportunity to create portfolios, which included documentations that the children themselves had chosen for their own reason. Smith (2000) decided to interview the children in order to learn their reasoning for the specific documentation they had chosen to place in the portfolio.
In the beginning, the children would provide simple answers, such as “I like it.” However, as time progressed, Smith noticed that their conversations began to expand as they provided more input for their chosen items. Smith also witnessed conversations between the preschoolers, as they would discuss what they had and the “story” behind their documentation. For example, one child had placed a photo of herself next to a structure she had built out of blocks. When asked to talk about why this picture was important she replied, “Well, actually, it’s the best block structure I ever did. I made homes for all the animals. I even made stairs and bridges. It looks like Como Zoo. I never made Como Zoo before.” Her response had greatly progressed from the usual “it’s special.”

As demonstrated by Smith (2000), portfolios create an opportunity whereby the observer could listen, observe, and acquire an understanding about the child’s experience (Turner & Wilson, 2010). Educators from Reggio Emilia preschool in Reggio Emilia, Italy describe this as “a way in which children are made visible” (Turner & Wilson, 2010, p. 7). In addition to making the child visible, including the parent provides opportunities for the parent to engage in learning with the child, by giving assistance, discussing ideas, and contributing in ways that allow the child to continue to be the leader in their project (Katz & Chard, 1996). More importantly, the creation of portfolios provides families opportunities to bring their culture into their learning by providing opportunities where documentation from the home includes artifacts that are a part of the child’s home culture (Gilkerson & Hanson, 2000).
Theoretical Framework

Children learn within the social context of their environment, with the participation of caregivers who provide guidance. Defined as guided participation, children become engaged in activities modeled by parents, thereby learning as the parent guides the child (Rogoff, 1990). The concept of guided participation provides a theoretical base for this dissertation. Rogoff (1990) points out that:

Guided participation involves children and their caregivers and companions in the collaborative process of (1) building bridges from children’s present understanding and skills to reach new understanding and skills, and (2) arranging and structuring children’s participation in activities, with dynamic shifts over development in children’s responsibilities. (p. 8)

From an early age, children begin to perform activities that they see adults engaging in. Whether washing dishes, folding laundry, sweeping, or hammering, young children begin by observing adults, and then continue with trying to perform the task him or her-self.

This emulation applies to literacy related activities as well. The role of the parent is very important because they have the ability to provide appropriate guidance as the child participates in a given activity. Parents can assist the child through guidance, while at the same time allowing the child to perform tasks that are at an appropriate and challenging level. Engaging in literacy activities provides children opportunities that will contribute to their literacy development. Guided participation provides bridges between familiar skills or information and those needed to solve new problems. Through parental engagement in literacy related activities with their child, parents can contribute to
bridging what the child knows and/or understands about literacy with the next level, thereby providing appropriately challenging literacy tasks.

Chapter Summary and Rationale for Study

As presented above, parental engagement and beliefs are related to child literacy outcomes. Moreover, within the homes of dual-language learners there is some variance in approaches to education when compared to those found within the homes of families from the mainstream culture. As Reese et al., (1995) pointed out there is the added dimension of *educación* in Latino homes, which informs their educational approach and perspective. As we try to develop best strategies that will contribute to child outcomes, and as we reach out to families whose educational experiences are not of the mainstream culture, we need to delve deeper in order to find and understand those nuances of beliefs and engagement that are culturally relevant. Moreover, through qualitative studies, researchers gain access to in-depth responses that contribute to a better understanding of the subject matter.

Similar to non-Latino populations, Latino families participate in literacy types of activities that positively contribute to literacy skills (e.g., Boyce et al., 2010; Farver et al., 2006; Gonzalez & Uhling, 2008). We have also seen that studies exploring participation by ethnic groups suggest differences found in participants identified as Latino, for example, the number of books in the home (Hammer et al., 2003). However, gaps still exist in the current literature and should be addressed or explored further. It is helpful when studies that include ethnic groups provide information as to what extent differences are due to cultural values, beliefs and/or practices versus other issues, such as SES, income, and/or the educational level of parents, such as the Raikes et al. (2006) study,
which presented differences between Latino Spanish speaking and Latino English speaking mothers. Studies that include research with different groups do not always delve into this level of inquiry or present results that can answer questions such as these.

The present literature lacks empirical research that comprehensively explores the type of engagement and behaviors that are literacy related and specific to parents of Latino dual-language learners. The use of an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach will provide an avenue whereby the findings from the second study, which presents actual behaviors, engagement, and perspectives of parents of Latino dual-language learners, to help explain the results in the first study, which measures parental engagement and behaviors.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This study uses an explanatory sequential mixed methods design to explain the participation of parents of Latino dual-language learners in a preschool emergent literacy program. Approval to conduct this study was granted by the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (IRB# 20101011231EP). A hierarchical linear models were used to explore (a) the relationship between parental participation in preschool sponsored family literacy events (FLE) and parental literacy-related behaviors in the home (FIQ-HB) and (b) the relationship between FLE and FIQ-HB and school readiness skills (child outcomes).

The design of a mixed methods study consists of collecting, analyzing, and integrating the results of the quantitative and qualitative research strands within a study, and then determining how the results help to address the mixed methods research question (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, 2011). The use of just quantitative or qualitative methods alone would not adequately capture the attributes that emerge regarding parental involvement in an emergent literacy project, emergent literacy outcomes for Latino dual-language learners, and how parents actualize literacy activities in the home after having participated in an emergent literacy program. In using a mixed methods design, quantitative results are complemented by the qualitative results. With multiple forms of inquiry, there is greater contribution through the richness of collected data, thereby augmenting the knowledge base of the specific research question and offsetting deficiencies that may emerge from just one type of research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).
Definition of Mixed Methods

The evolution of mixed methods has generated numerous definitions that contain differing viewpoints. After reviewing years of mixed methods articles, Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) provided a definition that relies “on a core set of characteristics” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 5) for understanding mixed methods research. This core set of characteristics help incorporate the differing perspectives that have emerged over time (i.e., methods, philosophy and research design orientation), and include the following six key components (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011):

- Pursuant to the research question, a rigorous collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data is conducted;
- Mixing the quantitative and qualitative data is performed concurrently, sequentially or embedded one within the other.
- Pursuant to the research conducted, priority is given to one or both forms of data.
- These procedures can be applied to an individual study or in a program of study consisting of more than one phase.
- A philosophical worldview and theoretical lens is part of the design; and
- Integration of procedures governs how the study is accomplished

Mixed methods designs help compensate weaknesses that can emerge when only using qualitative or quantitative methods alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In the explanatory sequential mixed methods design for this study (Figure 1), the qualitative strand puts into context the results from the quantitative strand by giving a voice to parents of Latino dual-language learners who participated in an emergent literacy project.
The additional contributions made by the parents during the interviews will help interpret the results in the quantitative strand.

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<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Product</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Descriptive analysis, Hierarchical Linear Modeling</td>
<td>Descriptive results Model Estimates</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHASE II</td>
<td>Purposeful sub-sample from quantitative participants, Develop interview questions</td>
<td>Case study Interview protocol n = 30</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual one-on-one in-depth interviews with 30 families, Portfolio narratives</td>
<td>Audio, video, and image (photograph) data Transcribed and translated interviews Text data</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coding and thematic analysis MaxQDA qualitative software Member checking (proxy)</td>
<td>Codes and themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHASE III</td>
<td>Integration of quantitative and qualitative results, Interpretation and explanation of the quantitative and qualitative results</td>
<td>Discussion Limitations Implications Future research Strengths of Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.** Visual Model of the Mixed Methods Sequential Explanatory Design

**Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design**

This study uses an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, where quantitative data collection and analysis is followed by qualitative data collection and
analysis, resulting in results from the qualitative strand contributing to the results from the quantitative strand, with each phase conducted sequentially (Creswell & Plano Clark (2007). As a result, the explanatory sequential design helps to provide a context for the quantitative results, through the qualitative phase of the study. The “mixing” element takes the findings from the qualitative study to answer results from the quantitative study.

Prompting the decision to use an explanatory sequential mixed methods design was my interest to learn more about parents of Latino dual-language learners and their personal emergent literacy backgrounds. The selection of participants for the qualitative sample were selected based on their involvement in the emergent literacy program at their child’s preschool, which would be considered a “participant selection variant” sampling strategy (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 86). The strength in applying this design to my study allows me to explain the quantitative findings by sharing the participants’ stories and contexts reflected in those findings. For example, the sub-sample in the qualitative component of this study participated in the data collection of the quantitative strand of the study. Extracting this sub-sample to learn more about their unique experiences helps to identify factors contributing to the quantitative results.

**Challenges in Mixed Methods Design**

Several potential challenges have been identified in using a mixed methods design for a dissertation study. One challenge is not having sufficient training in both quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Hesse-Biber, 2010). Such a limitation could diminish the quality and scholarly applicability of the study. To prevent such a possibility, I have taken courses and received training in the use of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Moreover, to ensure the integrity of this
study, I employed the services of both the office of Statistics and Research Methodology (SRM) and the Office of Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research (OQMMR) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Another potential challenge identified was the preferred methodology of committee faculty, who may be resistant to the use of mixed methods (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Hesse-Biber, 2010). The committee for my dissertation include faculty who are not only familiar with, but who have conducted and published quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research. One final potential challenge regarding mixed methods study is the absence of mixed methods studies in the domain of early childhood education. As I researched prior studies on my topic, I found that the number of mixed methods studies is extremely limited. This work contributes to this gap in the literature.

There are also challenges associated with the sequential explanatory design. Because the study is sequential, the researcher needs to decide how to make an informed decision of how to move forward with the qualitative strand of the study, based on the quantitative results. In this instance, as a Latino, my personal childhood experiences concerning literacy guided me in the types of questions I considered important to connect the results from both parts of the study. Another challenge is receiving approval to ask the families if they want to participate in a study. Having good relationships with the gatekeepers facilitated the process for this study.

Philosophical Foundation for Project Methodology

The worldview guiding the methodological approach for this study follows a hermeneutics concept, along with its relative, interpretive social science (ISS). According to Patton (2002), “Hermeneutic researchers use qualitative methods to establish context
and meaning for what people do” (p. 115). This study explores the perspectives of parents of Latino dual-language learners who participated in a preschool emergent literacy program. The quantitative phase of the study included measurements and statistical analysis to learn about parental involvement and child outcomes. The qualitative phase of the study provides the context and meaning for the quantitative results. Using hermeneutics “provides a theoretical framework for interpretive understanding, or meaning, with special attention to context (Patton, 2002, p. 114).” For these families, context consists of two fields: one encompassing the past and corresponds to their personal childhood literacy experiences; the second encompasses the present in how they introduce and work with their own children in literacy related activities.

ISS considers multiple interpretations and provides a window for a reader to be able to “feel for another’s social reality by revealing the meanings, values, interpretive schemes, and rules of living used by people in their daily lives” (Neuman, 2006, p. 91). The authenticity of the writing is confirmed when a reader comes away with a sense that what they have read is genuine. Combining both qualitative and quantitative results provides an avenue to identify strengths and limitations in a given study. By using a mixed methods approach this study provides opportunity for readers to come away with a feeling of comprehending the reality of parents of Latino dual-language learners.

**Background**

**The Rural Language and Literacy Connections project.** This study is part of a larger emergent literacy project conducted with Head Start preschoolers to study young children’s language and literacy development. The Rural Language and Literacy Connections (Rural LLC) project (Early Reading First grant funded by the U.S.
Department of Education) was conducted in collaboration with Head Start Child and Family Development Program (HSCFDP) in a rural Midwest community, and the community’s public school early childhood program. To be eligible to enroll in the Rural LLC project children needed to be of preschool age (3 – 5 year old). The duration of the Rural LLC project was from fall 2007 to spring 2011 and child enrollment in the project did not exceed 2 years.

The Rural LLC project intervention was designed to integrate early literacy pillars (e.g., alphabet knowledge, print awareness, oral language, phonological awareness, print-rich home environment) and to provide opportunities for parents to become involved in their child’s learning. The Rural LLC project arranged family literacy events (FLE) that were held twice monthly in the evening, at the preschool, and averaging approximately 15 events per year. To make the events inclusive for the entire family and to make it as convenient as possible for families to attend, dinner was provided, as well as childcare for siblings. Each event followed a schedule that consisted of a family-style dinner for the family, a group book reading session where usually a preschool classroom teacher would read a book to the families, followed by hands on activity for parent and target child. Each FLE activity used the Opening the World of Learning (OWL) unit curriculum theme used in the child’s preschool classroom. As part of the FLE activities, parents were also given a 3-inch binder notebook, to serve as a portfolio, to insert documentation created during FLE activities, as well as other documentation created outside of the FLE. Documentation consisted of drawings and writings, as well as reflection from filled out by the parent (Appendix A).
All interactions were age and developmentally appropriate and a translator was available for the Spanish speaking families. FLE were based on active learning, modeled to create a learning atmosphere where the parent and child are engaged in the task on hand, in addition to providing information on how to extend the learning to the home environment. For example, one event theme focused on making homemade ice cream, where parents helped their child read the child-friendly recipe and measure the ingredients to make ice cream. The families then took home a set of measuring cups, measuring spoons, and recipe card. During the first two years of the Rural LCC project, parents received a $10 gift card for attending the FLE. During the third year of the Rural LCC project, parents and children received items that were related to the evenings lessons, so that they could take home and continue the learning in the home (e.g., if the lesson was about measuring, they would take home the measuring tools used for the lesson).

Phase I: Quantitative Study

Present Study. The focus of the present study was not on the effects of the intervention, but rather an independent project looking at parental involvement in an emergent literacy program, parental perspectives, and child emergent literacy skills for Latino dual-language learners. The HSCFDP Policy Council expressed great interest in the contributions of this study to their continuing endeavors for understanding how Latino dual-language learners and their families can best benefit from such projects. The participating Head Start program, together with the HSCFDP Policy Council, provided letters of support for this study and for the use of the previously collected child assessments and parent questionnaires (see letters of support, Appendices B and C).
Setting and participants. This study is part of a larger emergent literacy project (Rural LLC) conducted in a rural Midwest community, between fall 2007 and spring 2011, with families who had children enrolled in center-based preschool at the local Head Start and public school preschool programs. Families with a child enrolled in the preschool program were invited to participate in the Rural LLC. Participation in Rural LLC lasted up to two years, before the target child would enter kindergarten. The sample criteria for the present study were (a) parents with a child enrolled in Head Start, (b) preschoolers identified as Hispanic, (b) indication of Spanish language usage (spoke Spanish in the home), and (c) enrolled in the Rural LLC project for two years. This resulted in 103 families (Table 2), who were enrolled during one of three cohorts (Table 3): Cohort 1 (fall 2007 – spring 2009); Cohort 2 (fall 2008 – spring 2010), and Cohort 3 (fall 2009 – spring 2011).
Table 2

Participant Demographic Characteristics (n = 103)

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<th>n</th>
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*Missing Data
### Table 3

*Participant Demographic Characteristics by Cohort (n = 103)*

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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandmother</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster parent</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Married</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>W/Partner</td>
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<td><strong>Parent’s Education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>No Formal Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than HS Diploma</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>HS Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>GED</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than HS Diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Time</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Time</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

*Missing Data
**Quantitative data collection.** The quantitative data for Phase I of this study were collected as part of the Rural LLC project, which focused on emergent literacy skills for preschoolers. Collection of both parent and child measures were collected. Head Start home visitors administered the parental questionnaire and demographic questions in the family’s home.

Child assessments were conducted at the child’s preschool during two time points six months apart each year, once at the beginning of the school year (fall) and again at the end of the school year (spring), resulting in four time points during the two years. These procedures were part of the existing data used for this study. I served as a research assistant with the Rural LLC project for three years, active in data collection and analysis. As one of the bilingual data collectors, I administered the Spanish assessment to the Latino children.

**Instruments.** This study used quantitative data previously collected for the Rural LLC project. Permission was obtained from the Rural LLC project, as well as Head Start Child and Family Development Program (HSCFDP) Policy Council. The data for the present study included (a) parent measures, (b) demographics, (c) parental engagement, and (d) child outcome measures. Only the data collected from the eligible 103 families in the three cohorts was used for this study. Table 4 lists all the psychometric properties of the study variables, and where applicable includes the alphas for this study. The range of scores and overall Cronbach’s alphas are also reported in Table 4.
Table 4

*Psychometric properties of study variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Measure/Coding Procedure</th>
<th>Range of Scores</th>
<th>Published Alpha</th>
<th>Study Alpha</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Engagement</td>
<td>FLE attendance</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Behaviors</td>
<td>FIQ</td>
<td>Likert Scale</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>S08=.84</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Home-based Involvement</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td></td>
<td>F08=.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S09=.90</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F09=.88</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S10=.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Outcomes</td>
<td>PALS – PreK</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name Writing</td>
<td>0-7 possible</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphabet Knowledge</td>
<td>0-26 possible</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Sound</td>
<td>0-10 possible</td>
<td></td>
<td>.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print &amp; Word Awareness</td>
<td>0-10 possible</td>
<td></td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhyme Awareness</td>
<td>0-10 possible</td>
<td></td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMLSR Spanish Form</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture Vocabulary</td>
<td>M = 100</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter-Word Identification</td>
<td>M = 100</td>
<td>from .80-</td>
<td>.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPVT-III</td>
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<td>Form A</td>
<td>M = 100</td>
<td></td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Form B</td>
<td>M = 100</td>
<td></td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S08 = Spring 2008, F08 = Fall 2008, respectively

**Parental measures.**

**Demographics.** Appendix D is a sample of the demographic questions administered to the parents during the same time points as the Family Involvement Questionnaire. Demographic questions included questions addressing both parent and child information (e.g., date of birth, place of birth, language spoken).
Parental engagement. To measure parental engagement in the emergent literacy program, I used attendance records taken during Family Literacy Events (FLE), which were a part of the Rural LLC project. FLE were parent-child focused interactions held twice monthly, in the evening, at the preschool. Dinner was provided for the families, along with childcare for siblings. Parent and focus child engaged in activities designed to correspond with the classroom lesson plan, as well as incorporating literacy related project. An example of one event was themed “All About Me” where the child, along with the parent, created a book and inserted documentation that described the child (e.g., height, color of hair, favorite food, and family members). Table 5 illustrates the number of events held during each cohort year, during the fall and spring of each school year.

Table 5

*Family Literacy Events Held per Cohort Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cohort 1</th>
<th>Cohort 2</th>
<th>Cohort 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2009</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total FLE per</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
**Parent literacy behaviors.** To measure parent literacy behaviors in the home, the Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ; Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000) was used. The FIQ is a multi-dimensional scale of family involvement and is available in English and Spanish (Appendix E). The FIQ uses parent or primary caregiver report to assess the nature and extent of family involvement for children in preschool, kindergarten, and 1st-grade programs. It reflects various levels of parental activity across home, classroom, and school contexts. This is a 42-item measure, which uses a 4-point (1 = rarely, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = always) Likert scale format. Although there are three subscales in the FIQ: school-based involvement, home-school conferencing, and home-based involvement, this study only used the home-based involvement sub-scale (questions J24 – J36). A total of 13 items measure home-based involvement, and were found to be highly reliable, with Cronbach’s alpha of .85. This subscale measures behaviors that are literacy related and conducive to the home environment, such as providing a place in the home where books and school materials are kept. The constructs for this subscale are relevant to the research questions in my study. A Head Start home visitor administered the FIQ during home visits in the fall and spring of each year the child was enrolled in the Rural LLC project.

**Child outcome measures.**

**Receptive language.** To measure the preschooler’s receptive vocabulary in the Rural LLC project, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Third Edition, Part A and Part B (PPVT-III, Part A and Part B; Dunn, & Dunn, 1997) was administered at two time points (fall, Part A and spring, Part B), six months apart, each school year. The PPVT-III assesses receptive language ability for Standard English, an achievement test of the level
of vocabulary acquisition and administered in English. The mean score is 100, with a standard deviation of 15. Part A and Part B were used for the dual-language learners study, as well.

**Emergent literacy skills – English.** To measure the preschooler’s emergent literacy skills, the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening – Preschool (PALS-PreK; Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004) was administered. PALS-PreK assesses children’s fundamental literacy knowledge and consists of eight subscales. Seven of the subscales were used for the Rural LLC project as well as this study: beginning sound awareness, letter sound, rhyme awareness, upper and lower case letters, print and word awareness, and name writing. Raw scores are used for scoring by counting the actual number of correct items on each subtest and comparing to the predetermined expectations set up by the program.

**Emergent literacy skills – Spanish.** To measure emergent literacy skills in Spanish, the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey–Revised Spanish Form (WMLS-R Spanish Form; Alvarado, Ruef, & Schrank, 2005) was administered at two time points, in the fall and spring. The WMLS-R “provides a theoretically and technically sound procedure for evaluating Spanish proficiency” (Alvarado, Ruef, & Schrank, 2005, p. 5). The WMLS-R Spanish Form consists of seven subscales (Picture Vocabulary, Verbal Analogies, Letter-Word Identification, Dictation, Understanding Directions, Story Recall, and Passage Comprehension). Two of the subscales were used during assessments: Test 1: Picture Vocabulary/Vocabulario sobre dibujos measures aspects of oral language, including language development and lexical knowledge and Test 3: Letter-Word Identification/Identificación de letras y palabras measures letter and word identification.
skills. All raw scores are converted to derived scores ($M = 100, SD = 15$). Correlated reliability coefficient was calculated using the Spearman-Brown formula, with median reliabilities ranging from .80-.93 (Koch, 2009). The WMLS-R Spanish Form is administered in Spanish (using a Spanish speaking assessor or an interpreter) and can be administered to persons 2.0 years of age – adult.

**Quantitative data analysis.** The statistical analyses for quantitative research questions 1 and 2 in this study utilized descriptive statistics. First, analysis for attendance at Family Literacy Events (FLE) was conducted by cohort year. Frequency analyses were conducted for each cohort to arrive at the total number of events that each family attended within each cohort. The result was a total for actual attendance that began at zero. For quantitative research question 2, descriptive statistics were conducted to arrive at the mean score for the Family Involvement Questionnaire Home Based (FIQ-HB) sub-scale. FIQ-HB was administered in the fall and spring of each preschool year. Statistics were conducted using the score of each time point for each question item in the FIQ-HB to get a mean for said question, within each cohort. Next, statistics were conducted to arrive at the overall mean score for each question item, the aggregate of each mean score for each question item in each cohort.

Measurement occasions were centered at the first occasion, such that the intercept represented initial language and literacy status in all models. A random intercept-only model was estimated as the baseline model to observe all possible variance to predict between- and within-person variance in the seven total language and literacy child outcomes. For each of these outcomes, at least two models were estimated. Absent the
presence of a cohort effect, a model containing parental participation and beliefs was specified to examine the extent to which they predicted language and literacy scores.

**Time-varying predictors.** The effects of two time-varying predictors were tested in this study: the number of literacy events (FLE) attended (the time variable was centered to reflect the number of time points since baseline (e.g. 0, 1, 2, and 3) and FIQ-HB scores. As evidenced by the ICCs for FLE and FIQ-HB scores, each of the time-varying predictors contains both between-person variation (i.e., family to family differences in the mean number of FLE and mean FIQ-HB scores over time) and within-person variation (i.e., variation around a family’s mean number of FLE and mean FIQ-HB scores over time). Thus, between-person and within-person variation potentially represents two different theoretical constructs and their effects on the child outcomes may be of different magnitudes or different directions. In order to eschew model confflation (i.e., the assumption that the magnitude and direction of the between- and within-person effect is the same), it is necessary to examine the extent to which cross-sectional and longitudinal effects of each predictor may differ. The present study used person-mean centering methods to represent the two sources of variation within each model (as seen below):

Level-1, Within-person effect of total FLE attended:

\[ WP_{FLEi} = FLE_{ti} - \bar{X}_{FLEi} \]

Level-2, Between-person effect of total FLE attended:

\[ BP_{FLEi} = \bar{X}_{FLEi} - c \]

*The subscript “t” indicates time, “i” indicates person, and “c” represents a constant value.*
Using person-mean centering, the within- and between-person effects become orthogonal (i.e., the within-person effects and the between-person effects are completely uncorrelated). Thus, the level-1 predictor contains only the within-person component of the time-varying predictor, so its main effect directly represents the within-person effect (Hoffman, in press). In the present model, this is the effect of how FLE attendance and FIQ-HB scores vary within a single family across the four measurement occasions. Correspondingly, the level-2 predictor, centered at a constant, contains only the between-person component of the time-varying predictor, so its main effect directly represents the between-person effect. In the present model, this is the extent to which FLE attendance and FIQ-HB scores varies between families.

The statistical analyses for Research Questions 3 and 4 in this study uses hierarchical linear modeling procedures (i.e. multilevel regression models). Each research question was investigated using a two-level multilevel growth model that accounts for the nesting of time points within individuals. For example, the single-equation multilevel model for Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), in Research Question #4, is:

\[ PPVT_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10}(TIME_{ij}) + \gamma_{20}(BP \_ FLES_{ij}) + \gamma_{30}(WP \_ FLES_{ij}) + \gamma_{40}(BP \_ FIQ_{ij}) + \gamma_{50}(WP \_ FIQ_{ij}) + \gamma_{60}(Identified Disability_{ij}) + \gamma_{70}(MotherEducation_{ij}) + \gamma_{80}(Gender_{ij}) + \gamma_{90}(Session_{ij}) + \gamma_{100}(HomeLanguage_{ij}) + u_{ij} + r_{ij}. \]

In this equation, PPVT_{ij} is the receptive language child outcome scores for individual \( i \) at time \( j \). The effect of time, \( \gamma_{10} \), represents the average rate of increase in receptive language over the course of the program. The time variable will be centered to reflect the number of time points since baseline (e.g. 0, 1, 2, 3), so that the intercept, \( \gamma_{00} \), will be properly interpreted as the average receptive language child outcome score at
baseline (i.e. when all other predictors are zero). The effect of the between-person total FLE (BP_FLEi), $\gamma_{20}$, represents the rate of increase in between-person total FLE, which is a level-2 predictor. The effect of the within-person total FLE (WP_FLEij), $\gamma_{30}$, represents the rate of increase in within-person total FLE, which is a level-1 predictor. The effect of the between-person family literacy behavior (BP_FIQ-HBi), $\gamma_{40}$, represents the rate of increase in between-person family literacy behavior, which is a level-2 predictor. The effect of the within-person family literacy behavior (WP_FIQ-HBij), $\gamma_{50}$, represents the rate of increase in within-person family literacy behavior, which is a level-1 predictor.

The effects of the covariates including identified disability, mother education, gender, session and home language, are represented by $\gamma_{60}, \gamma_{70}, \gamma_{80}, \gamma_{90}, \gamma_{100}$, respectively. The terms $u_{0j}$ is residual that accounts for variability in individual intercepts. The residual variance $r_{ij}$ “summarizes the net (vertical) scatter of the observed data around [student] i’s hypothesized change trajectory” (Singer & Willett, 2003, p. 53). This model was executed for each outcome (PALS: Alphabet Knowledge, Beginning Sound, Rhyme Awareness, Print & Word Awareness, and Name Writing and Woodcock-Muñoz: Vocabulary and Letter-Word Identification).

Demographic variables were used as covariates to account for variance not attributed to the variables of interest. Child gender (coded, 1 = boys, 2 = girls) was used as a control variable; research has shown that immigrant girls have been found to outperform immigrant boys in school (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Mother’s education (1 = no formal school to less than 8th grade, 2 = 9th-12th grade, 3 = GED, 4 = high school diploma, 5 = training beyond HS diploma) was also used as a control variable. Studies have indicated that maternal education is associated with children’s
language development (Hoff, 2006). Studies have also shown that children whose home language is not English do not perform as well, when assessed in reading skills, as students whose home language is English (Marchman, Fernald, & Hurtado, 2010). Additional control variables include children identified with a disability (coded, 0 = no, 1 = yes) and school session (1 = Half Day, 2 = Full Day, 3 = Combination of Half Day and Full Day).

**Model Specification.** Maximum likelihood (ML) was used in reporting model parameters; denominator degrees of freedom were estimated using the Satterthwaite method. Effect sizes for each model are reported as the total pseudo-R2, the total reduction in the overall variance of outcomes across all levels of the model. Total pseudo-R2 are generated from model predicted outcomes from fixed effects only and correlated with observed outcomes; this correlation is then squared. The intra-class correlation (ICC) from the unconditional means model (i.e., empty model; random intercept-only model) was calculated for each dependent variable to observe the proportion of between- to within-person variances in language and literacy outcomes. Polynomial models were then estimated to approximate the effects of language and literacy scores across four measurement occasions.

**Phase II: Qualitative Case Study**

The quantitative study conducted provided results that measured literacy related engagement and behaviors of parents of Latino dual-language learners. The purpose of the follow-up qualitative study was to identify factors contributing to literacy related engagement and behaviors of the parents.
**Qualitative data collection.** Phase II of this study uses a case study approach. An important element in defining a study as a case study is the need for there to be a bounded system. Case study research “explores a bounded system (a case)…over time…involving multiple sources of information…and reports case description and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). Moreover, a bounded system consists of a phenomenon that is relevant to a specific entity, but may consist of one or many, but with the distinction that it does not include everyone or everything (Merriam, 1998). As the second phase in this explanatory sequential mixed methods study, the bounded system in this case study approach explores the perspectives of parents of Latino dual-language learners who participated in an emergent literacy preschool program for two years in a rural Midwestern community to explore the perspective of parents, as well as their personal early literacy experiences.

**Participants.** The participants in Phase II case study are a subset of Phase I. In Phase I, the sample criteria were (a) preschoolers identified as Hispanic, (b) indication of Spanish language usage and (c) enrolled in the Rural LLC project for two years, resulting in 103 families who were part of one of three cohorts. The overall criteria for Phase II of this case study was similar to that of Phase I, in that families were identified for the study if (a) their child was identified as Hispanic, (b) an indication of Spanish language usage (e.g., someone spoke Spanish in the home), and (c) was enrolled in the Rural LLC project for two years. The sampling strategy used for the case study was purposeful sampling with maximum variation. A purposeful selection of participants enables for sample criteria representing the bounded system to be met and maximum variation provides the variation needed within the sample (Creswell, 2007). The purpose for using maximum
variation sampling was to explore what was common and uncommon amongst the parents. In this study the purposeful sampling, along with maximum variation, afforded the opportunity to include families who had created portfolios and those who had not, as well as families who did not attend the Family Literacy Events.

From the eligible sample of 103 families in Phase I, and based on the above-stated criteria, a sub-sample of 30 families was selected to receive a packet informing them about the study. The sub-sample of 30 families was from the last two cohorts (Cohort 2 and Cohort 3) and included families who had not attended any Family Literacy Events (FLE). Including families who had not attended any events would provide valuable essential information about the reasons families might not be engaged in such school-sponsored activities. The effort and resources allocated for such activities is cause for exploring all perspectives. Families from Cohort 1 had been out of the program for two years and were no longer a part of Head Start, making it difficult to contact. Five of the families interviewed included both husband and wife, in ten of the families interviewed the child was also present, and four of the families interviewed had two children enrolled in the program for two years. In addition, during the in-depth interviews I found two families who had not participated in the Rural LLC program for the two years, which was one of the criteria for participation. The data for these two families was removed from the study. Table 6 shows the demographic characteristics of the families in the sub-sample for the qualitative study (n = 28).

As part of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process for this study, I obtained permission from the site gatekeepers (Head Start Child and Family Development Program) to conduct the study. Upon receiving approval from the Institutional Review
Board (IRB), I contacted the Head Start Child and Family Development Program (HSCFDP) office to begin the process of recruiting families from the sample of participants in the Rural LLC program. HSCFDP had agreed to serve as a contact liaison between the families and myself. I prepared an introduction packet (in English and Spanish) that included a leaflet describing the study (Appendix F) and a form for families to sign, giving consent for me to contact them (Appendix G). A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included in the packet with instructions that the signed consent form be placed in the envelope and mailed to me or returned to the agency via the Head Start home visitor.

Head Start home visitors from the HSCFDP office made the initial contact with the families and hand delivered the packets, thereby maintaining confidentiality of the families until they were willing to participate in the study. HSCFDP Head Start home visitors distributed the packets to families who met the case study selection criteria. For families no longer enrolled in Head Start, the HSCFDP office mailed the packets to the last available known address filed at the Head Start office. Once the form was returned, I contacted the family to schedule an appointment for the interview. During this initial contact, I asked the parents if they still had their child’s literacy portfolio, and if they did, would they like to share the documentation in the portfolio with me. After initial contact, the families gave permission for me to call and set up the interview, I called the families and agreed upon a day, time and location for the interview. Participants in the study were given a $20 gift card as a token of appreciation for their time.
Table 6

*Characteristics of Parents Participating in In-depth Interviews (n = 28)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Father:</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father:</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother:</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Country of Birth*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. S.</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
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</tr>
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<td>El Salvador</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Grandparent Country of Birth*</td>
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<td>Relatives living close-by*</td>
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<td>Yes:</td>
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<td>No:</td>
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<td>Home Language*</td>
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*In-depth Interview Demographic Data, **Primary Demographic Data, *** Missing data
**Data collector.** In keeping with the recommendation that data collectors and interviewers be of the same ethnicity as the targeted population (Marín & Marín, 1999), I personally conducted the in-depth interviews with the Latino families. I am a native Spanish speaker and am familiar with the community. As a graduate research assistant with the Rural LLC program, I collected data from the families who participated in this study. The design of this study entailed a level of personal contact during the in-depth interview process, and it was important for families to feel comfortable with the interviewer. When interviewers share a similar ethnical background with participants, they are less likely to misinterpret nuances, and more likely to catch comments that are not clear, probing for clarification (Rodríguez, Rodríguez, & Davis, 2006). I have vast experience conducting in-depth interviews and focus groups. I have also completed the required human subjects training and protocols, approved by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board.

**Data Collection.** Data collection for the case study consisted of two parts. The first part of the data collection comprised of in-depth interviews designed with semi-structured open-ended questions to learn about the parent’s personal experiences and perspectives regarding emergent literacy, their participation in an emergent literacy program, and their involvement in literacy related activities with their child (n = 28). The second part of the data collection was only conducted with families who had maintained the literacy portfolio created during the FLE (n = 13). Families without a portfolio either no longer had it or stated they never received one. Notwithstanding, six of the families who did not have a portfolio participated in the interviews and on their own accord presented other forms of documentation demonstrating literacy related activities in the
home. All interviews were digitally recorded, using audio recorder, videotaping, and photography (Table 7).

Table 7

*Qualitative Data Collection Matrix* (N = 28 families)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Source</th>
<th>In-depth Interview</th>
<th>Portfolio Documentation</th>
<th>Other Form of Documentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Bilingual Families</td>
<td>n = 9</td>
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</table>

A contracted transcriptionist transcribed the audio digital recordings in the original language they were conducted. Transcribed Spanish interviews were then translated to English (n=19). The transcriptionist signed a confidentiality form prior to receiving the recordings, and had received IRB training. The audio digital recordings did not have any identifying information on them, just the assigned identification number. Video recordings of portfolios were burned onto DVDs and stored in a locked file in a locked office on campus. These were also assigned a number and do not contain any identifying information. All digital data is stored on campus in the original grant’s share drive, which is password protected and only personnel working on the grant have access to it.

**In-depth Interviews.** Families were given the option to have the interview in their home or at their child’s preschool. All the families chose to conduct the interview in their home. Interviews were conducted in the preferred language of the family, with nineteen of the families preferring to have the interview in Spanish. Interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes.
Upon arrival in the home of the participant, I spent a few moments getting acquainted with the family. I then proceeded to go over the informed consent form (Appendix H) with the families, making sure they understood the study, that their participation was voluntary, and verifying their consent to audio and video tape the interview, as well as photographing the portfolio. Before beginning the actual interview, I asked the parent if there were any questions, and did not begin until all questions had been addressed. A supplemental demographic questionnaire (Appendix I) was administered to gather additional information from the families being interviewed (e.g., generational history, level of acculturation, English proficiency). In addition, to make them more comfortable and less conscious of the camera, during the in-depth interview the camera faced an inanimate object, and served only as a back-up to the digital audio recording.

In-depth interviews, with questions designed to get background information and detailed experiences (Mertens, 2005) provided an avenue for families to share their perspectives regarding the home literacy practices of dual-language learners. The in-depth interview protocol (Appendix J) for this study was designed to elicit responses that would give insight into the literacy background of the families. Parents were also asked retrospective questions about their early recollections regarding literacy in their own childhood. Questions addressed topics such as the personal literacy experiences of the parents when they were young, their participation in the emergent literacy project and provided an opportunity for parents to talk about how they engaged in literacy activities within their own families. The questions also provided an opportunity to hear the stories of how the families approached emergent literacy through their cultural lens and how it is
navigated within the context of two cultures. Parents were asked questions regarding their participation of FLE. The questions elicited details about FLE activities, attendance or lack of, and how they transferred what they learned at the events to home literacy practices.

**Narrated Literacy Portfolios.** As mentioned previously, part of the Rural LLC program included Family Literacy Events (FLE) which were held twice monthly during the preschool year. Parents attending the FLE received a red 3-inch binder to serve as a portfolio. They were encouraged to place items representing literacy related activities into the portfolio. These items served as documentation of the literacy related work done by the child, or child with parent. Parents were also provided with a form to fill out, providing parents with an opportunity to journal what they did with the child and what was learned. Parents were encouraged to include literacy related documentation that took place in the home, outside of the FLE. This resulted in the creation of Family Literacy Portfolios (FLP). Parents would bring the portfolio to the events, at which time a Home Visitor would place a date stamp on the documents. The date stamp provided a record of literacy related documentation occurring at different time points.

During my initial contact with the families to set up the appointment for the interview, I asked if they still had the FLP that was created during the FLE, and if they did, would they mind sharing the literacy related activities documented in the portfolio. This resulted in 13 interviews with families who still had their portfolio. This advance notice allowed the families to be prepared to show the portfolio.

After the in-depth interview, I asked the parent to show me the FLP and to share with me about the contents in the portfolio. At this time I focused the video camera on the
portfolio and the parent would begin to turn each page and talk about the documents on each page. On two occasions, the parent walked me through the home to show me literacy related changes they had made in the home, allowing me to videotape the observation. Differing from the in-depth interviews, where families were asked semi-structured, open-ended questions, the approach used with the narrated FLPs can be described as emergent in design. Parents were asked to go through the portfolio, page by page and narrate the contents in the portfolio. This allowed the parents to approach what they wanted to say without any restrictions or guidelines. I felt this style would provide an opportunity for me to hear what the parent wanted to share, how they wanted to share it, and giving them the opportunity to go in the direction they felt important and say what they felt was important. This process created discoveries that were unique to each family.

Each family spoke about the success of their child, recalling the stories tied to each page. They would share stories to introduce the pictures their child had created, or pictures they had created together. Some of the documents were about activities they did together during the FLE, others were documents created at home, and for those who had graduate to kindergarten at the time of the interview, documents of their present school work. At the end of the narration, and with the parent’s permission, I photographed each page. Parents who did not have a portfolio brought out other items to show what they did in the home with their child. Portfolios had not been coded as part of the original study. The sharing of the portfolios with me was the first time a researcher had been invited to view them.

This procedure adds a qualitative element that enhances the knowledge base of what can be learned about dual-language learners through their documentation of home
literacy activities. Videotaping of the portfolios, along with the narration, helps to substantiate and strengthen the authentic evidence. Multiple forms of data were collected (Table 8), along with documentation in the form of literacy portfolios (Figure 2). Once interviews were completed, families were assigned a number, and all identifying information on recordings was removed to maintain confidentiality.

All interviews were transcribed in their entirety, and those conducted in Spanish were translated into English. There were a total of 278 pages of interview data, with an additional 203 pages of interview data from the portfolio narratives. In addition, there was a total of 635 photos taken of the documentation in the portfolios. The coding process included two coders of the same ethnicity as the participants in the study as recommended by Marin and Marin (1999).
Table 8

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*Order of parents participating in interview; ** Child present during interview (FC = Focus Child; C = Sibling)*
**Qualitative analyses procedures.** The coding process for this study followed the polyvocal analysis described by Hatch (2002). The analysis of the in-depth interview data was guided by the objective stated within the qualitative research questions, which is to capture the perspective of parents of Latino dual-language learners. Polyvocal analysis facilitates the process to present these perspectives because the analysis is conducted in a way that provides a voice for the participants. Moreover, my position as the storyteller for these voices brings with it my voice as well (Hatch, 2002).

To begin the process of coding, the interviews were read in their entirety. This process allowed coders to get a sense of each participant voice. Notes were made to highlight the specific perspectives the parents expressed. A second reading was conducted, at which time the coders extracted words and phrases generated during the coding process. As the lead researcher, I gathered the coded interviews and grouped the selections to create a list of themes that emerged from the interviews, which included emic categories, based on the perspective and language of the parents. I grouped the codes based on the emerging patterns, which included answers to the quantitative study and unexpected findings. Interview transcripts were uploaded into MAXQDA 10, qualitative data analysis software, along with the code list. MAXQDA facilitated the grouping of the codes into themes. Once all the data was entered and grouped by themes, I was able to create outputs that generated the quotes by themes.

Coding for the portfolio narratives followed the steps of the polyvocal coding process as well, with the exception that there were no predetermined phenomena guiding the coding. Coding of the portfolios focused on parent’s reflections of their participation in the FLE and the activities they engaged in with their child. As the parents presented
each piece of documentation, they would reflect on what they did for that activity, recalling different aspects surrounding the activity. The portfolio narratives also included video recordings of the parent turning the pages of the portfolio as they provided narration for the documents. These were coded, as well, using MAXQDA and themes were also generated.

**Validation Procedures.** To establish validation, proxy member checking (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) was used, along with triangulation (Patton, 2002) and thick, rich description (Hatch, 2002). Due to reasons of confidentiality, it was not possible to go back to the families and have them validate the results of the study. I, therefore, contacted a member of their community who served as a proxy for my actual study participants to read my findings provide feedback for validation purposes. I also used triangulation, which in this case was the combining of different methods, data sources, and researchers (Denzin, 1978) such as the quantitative data, the in-depth interviews, and the portfolio narrations. Thick, rich description was used to provide details regarding the findings, consisting of numerous quotations, representing the voice of the participants.

**Role of the Researcher.** When I began the in-depth interviews with the families, I was not surprised by the stories that I began to hear. As the parents spoke about their own childhood experiences, their stories mirrored mine. I was never read to as a young child and my first trip to a library was in second grade. Though my parents did not have a high school education, they read and enjoyed reading. However, they did not see a reason to read a child’s book to a child. Reading was mostly for learning and that would happen
when I started school. Nonetheless, I became an avid reader for both school and pleasure and I instilled that same passion to my own children. Despite my own experiences, I also knew that the story of each family would be unique and it was important to learn about their experiences.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have provided the process, along with participants and measures, to conduct both phases of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study. Table 9 illustrates the research question for each phase, the measures that will be used for each research question and the approach for analysis.
### Table 9

**Research Questions, Measures, and Analyses**

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<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Analyses</th>
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<td>Quantitative RQ 1. How involved were parents of Latino dual-language learners in a preschool-sponsored emergent literacy program, as measured by attendance at family literacy events (FLE)?</td>
<td>FLE</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative RQ 2. What types of literacy-related behaviors do parents of Latino dual-language learners report they engage in with their children in their homes, as measured by questions on the Family Involvement Questionnaire – Home Based construct (e.g., I spend time working with my child on reading/writing skills)?</td>
<td>FIQ- HB</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
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<td>Quantitative RQ 3. What is the relationship between parental participation in FLE and literacy-related behaviors in the homes of Latino dual-language learners over time?</td>
<td>FLE and FIQ- HB</td>
<td>Hierarchical Linear Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative RQ 4. How does parental participation in FLE and parental literacy-related behaviors in the homes of Latino dual-language learners over time relate to school readiness skills (child outcomes) as measured by scores on child assessments (e.g., receptive vocabulary, alphabet letter knowledge, letter sound) over time?</td>
<td>FLE, FIQ and Child Outcome Measures</td>
<td>Hierarchical Linear Model</td>
</tr>
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<td>Qualitative RQ 1. What are the personal childhood literacy experiences of parents of Latino dual-language learners?</td>
<td>In-depth Interviews</td>
<td>Coding and Thematic Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative RQ 2. How do parents’ personal childhood literacy experiences relate to how they, in turn, introduce their own child to literacy?</td>
<td>In-depth Interviews</td>
<td>Coding and Thematic Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative RQ 3. What are the parents’ literacy perspectives?</td>
<td>In-depth Interviews</td>
<td>Coding and Thematic Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative RQ 4. What stories do parents share during the narration of the literacy portfolio, created between the child and parent?</td>
<td>In-depth Interviews</td>
<td>Coding and Thematic Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Methods RQ 1. Does parents’ literacy background (qualitative) help explain participation in FLE (quantitative)?</td>
<td>FLE and In-depth Interviews</td>
<td>Integrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Methods RQ 2. Do the types of literacy activities parents report occurring in the home (qualitative) help explain the FIQ-HB (quantitative)?</td>
<td>FIQ-HB and In-depth Interviews</td>
<td>Integrate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Results and Findings

The results from Phase I (quantitative study) and findings from Phase II (qualitative study) are presented in this chapter. Three cohorts of Head Start participants received two years of services in the Rural Language and Literacy Connection program and data was collected across four measurement occasions. Phase I (n=103) begins with descriptive statistics computed individually for the Family Literacy Events (FLE) which were attended by the families and the Family Involvement Questionnaire-Home Base (FIQ-HB), completed by parents. Next, linear mixed models were estimated using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) procedures, with the psychometric software SAS PROC MIXED, in order to estimate the overall pattern of, and individual differences in, parental engagement and behaviors and child language and literacy outcome scores. This is followed by findings from the case study in Phase II, with was conducted with a sub-sample from the quantitative component of this study (n=28).

Phase I: Quantitative Results

Parental measures. Descriptive statistics for parental measures of parental engagement (attendance at Family Literacy Events) and parental behaviors (Family Involvement Questionnaire-Home Based) were computed. In addition, a Hierarchical Linear Modeling procedure was used to test the effect, over time, of FLE (attendance at family literacy events held at the preschool) on FIQ-HB (e.g., I spend time working with my child on reading/writing skills).

Cohort effect. Preliminary analyses with independent variables of parental FLE participation and FIQ-HB, along with child outcomes as dependent variable were conducted, testing for effect of cohort, between and within person, as well as over time
and I did not find any significant effects for cohort. There was no main effect of cohort nor were there significant differences in the linear rates of change over time (to account for the cohort x time interaction) on child outcomes. Moving forward in the study, cohorts were combined as one group for the remainder of analyses.

**Parental engagement: Quantitative Question 1.** The level of engagement by parents of Latino dual-language learners, in an emergent literacy program, was measured based on the total number of Family Literacy Events (FLE) they attended during the two years their child was in the Rural Language and Literacy (RLLC) program, representing the preschool years just before a child starts kindergarten. Because 27% of families did not attend FLE, it was important to determine if attendees and non-attendees differed in any systematic way. Figure 3 illustrates attendance at FLE. Cross-tabulations were conducted to further explore demographic characteristics contributing to parental attendance and non-attendance at FLE. Demographic characteristics explored include (a) place of birth, (b) mother’s education, (c) entry PPVT (receptive language) score, and (d) home language. Chi-square analyses were conducted and I only found a trend pattern for parental attendance and non-attendance of FLE and parent’s place of birth, \( X^2(1) = 3.15, p = .076 \). Parents who were not born in the U. S. were more likely to attend FLE than parents who were born in the U. S. Table 10 illustrates the frequency results for attendance at FLE and place of birth.
Figure 3. FLE Attendance. X axis represents number of families who attended the FLE. Y axis represents the total number of FLEs attended by families. Thurs, 28 families did not attend any events and 2 families attended 28 events.

Table 10

Cross Tab Comparison of FLE and Place of Birth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLE Attendance</th>
<th>Were You Born in the US?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero Events Attended (n = 28)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n = 102)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or More Events Attended (n = 74)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n = 102)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parental literacy behavior: Quantitative Question 2. The FIQ-HB addressed parents’ literacy related behaviors in the home. Refer to Table 11 for descriptive statistics of the FIQ-HB, illustrating overall mean ($M$) at baseline and standard deviation (SD) of parent’s responses for each of the items in the FIQ-HB. There was minimal overall variance in the mean scores of the FIQ-HB. In the individual item response, the lowest mean scores were found in two of the questions, (1) I praise my child for his/her schoolwork in front of the teacher ($M = 2.99$, $SD = .96$) and (2) I share stories with my child about when I was in school ($M = 2.88$, $SD = .93$).

Table 11

*Descriptive Information on FIQ-HB*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Overall $M$</th>
<th>Overall SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I review my child’s schoolwork.</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I keep a regular morning and bedtime schedule for my child.</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I praise my child for his/her schoolwork in front of the teacher.</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share stories with my child about when I was in school</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take my child places in the community to learn special things (e.g. zoo, museum, etc.).</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I check to see that my child has a place at home where books or school materials are kept.</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk about my child’s learning efforts in front of relatives and friends.</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk with my child about how much I love learning new things.</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I bring home learning materials for my child (tapes, videos, books).</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I maintain clear rules at home that my child should obey.</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I spend time with my child working on reading/writing skills.</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I spend time with my child working on creative activities (like singing, dancing, drawing and storytelling).</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I spend time with my child working on number skills.</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Mean Score</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**FLE and FIQ-HB: Quantitative Question 3.** A hierarchical linear modeling procedure examined the relationship between parental engagement as measured by participation at FLE and parental literacy behaviors as measured by overall mean score on the FIQ-HB. The hypothesized belief that higher levels of attendance at FLE over time would predict high mean scores on the FIQ-HB rating was not supported (Table 12).

Table 12

*Parameter Estimates for FLE and FIQ-HB*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Person</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Person</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FLE, FIQ-HB and Child Outcomes Relationship Analyses: Quantitative

**Question 4.** The following results show the extent of longitudinal change in language and literacy outcome trajectories for children who are Latino dual-language learners (35-56 months), as measured by PPVT (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Third Edition, Part A and Part B; Dunn, & Dunn; 1997), PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening – Preschool; Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004), and the WMLS-R (Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey–Revised Spanish Form; Alvarado, Ruef, & Schrank, 2005) over the two year intervention period. Because language and literacy outcome scores could be described as a function of parental behaviors and engagement, these two constructs were included as predictors. Target children were assessed in language and literacy outcomes, along with parents attending program-sponsored family literacy events and filling out the FIQ twice per year.

No results for FLEs (between or within person) were significant. Of interest was the significant finding in FIQ-HB between person results, showing that upper-case letter alphabet knowledge increased by 4.05 (p < .01) for every unit increase in FIQ-HB. Also, there was a statistically significant main effect of within-family FIQ-HB-score, such that for every one-unit increase in FIQ-HB-score relative to one’s own mean, print and word awareness scores decreased by 0.82 (p < .05). In Spanish vocabulary, there was a statistically significant main effect of within-family FIQ-HB score, such that for every one-unit increase in FIQ-HB score relative to one’s own mean, Spanish vocabulary scores decreased by 4.86 (p < .01). There was also a significant main effect of between-family FIQ-HB score, such that for every one-unit increase in FIQ-HB score relative to other families, Spanish vocabulary scores decreased by 15.45 (p < .01).
Section Summary

The purpose of Phase I was to determine whether parental literacy-related engagement and behaviors were positively related to child outcomes. Descriptive statistics illustrated the level of engagement at Family Literacy events. The mean scores on the Family Involvement Questionnaire-Home Base did not show much variability. Overall, there were only two items, out of 13, showing a mean score less than 3.0.

The first research hypothesis (parental participation in FLE over time will be positively related to FIQ-HB rating) was not supported. The second hypothesis, (FLE and FIQ-HB will positively relate to child outcomes) was also not supported, except for one child outcome, upper case alphabet knowledge. In an effort to further explore the contributing factors in the gains demonstrated in Phase I, a sub-sample from the quantitative strand of this study participated in a qualitative case study where they were asked to share their perspectives regarding literacy in the home. The next section provides the findings resulting from in-depth interviews.
Table 11.

Parameter Estimates for FLE, FIQ & Child Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>FLE ESTIMATE</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>FIQ ESTIMATE</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BP</td>
<td>WP</td>
<td>BP</td>
<td>WP</td>
<td>BP</td>
<td>WP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPVT</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>113.0</td>
<td>-0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uppercase Alphabet</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>134.0</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowercase Alphabet</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Sound</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Sound</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print &amp; Word Awareness</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>-1.22</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>-1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhyme Awareness</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>-0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name Writing</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>-1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Vocabulary</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>-0.91</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>-1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Alphabet</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.93</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>-1.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01, *p < .05
Phase II – Case Study Qualitative Findings

The purpose of the Phase II qualitative case study was twofold: (1) to explore with more depth the perspectives of parents of Latino dual-language learners after their participation in a preschool emergent literacy program and (2) to shed light on quantitative results. At the onset of the study, I posed several qualitative research questions and analyzed the data, resulting in three qualitative themes. After analyzing the quantitative data, and consistent with the mixed methods approach, I posed two additional qualitative questions and the themes related to these two additional questions emerged.

The original research questions guiding Phase II were as follows:

1: What are the personal childhood literacy experiences of parents of Latino dual-language learners?

2: How do parents’ personal childhood literacy experiences relate to how they, in turn, introduce their own child to literacy?

3: What are parents' literacy-related perspectives with regard to: the role of the parent; engaging in literacy related activities with their child; and their views after participating in an emergent literacy program?

4: What stories do parents share during the narrations of the literacy portfolio with documentations created between child and parent?

New qualitative research questions, emerging after analyzing quantitative data, were as follows:

5. How did parents regard attendance in FLEs and its role in enhancing children’s language and literacy? The qualitative data were queried for this focus after
discovering that there was no effect of FLEs on parental language practices or children’s language outcomes.

6. How did parents support children’s Spanish language learning? The qualitative data were queried for this focus after finding that children’s Spanish vocabulary actually decreased relative to age norms in relation to scores on the FIQ-HB. Learning what families did and did not do to enhance Spanish language learning while children were engaged in a literacy-based program could help to explain this finding.

**Themes**

There were five main themes identified, with subthemes within each theme, and they were as follows. The first theme focuses on the parent’s childhood literacy experiences, which consists of three subsections (e.g. their own childhood experiences, approaches to literacy their own parents engaged in, and how these experiences contributed to what they have chosen to do with their own child). The second theme focuses on how the parents defined the parent’s role and literacy in the home. The third theme focuses on the literacy-related activities families share they do at home, which includes their resourcefulness when providing literacy-related activities in the home. The fourth theme conveys the parent’s perspectives regarding their participation in the Family Literacy Events, as well as the reasons for not participating from those who did not attend. In the last theme, I focus on parents’ perspectives regarding teaching their children Spanish (Table 13).
Table 13

_In-depth Interview Themes_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Childhood Literacy Experiences</td>
<td>Life is different over there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Earliest recollections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflecting on illiteracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Availability of parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Childhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I recall being read to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Types of books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other approaches to literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head Start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beliefs about childhood literacy derived from personal experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s Role</td>
<td>Literacy in the home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basics begin at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Literacy Activities</td>
<td>Teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activities related to reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Literacy Events</td>
<td>One-on-one time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning through the Program overall and the FLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barriers to attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Instruction at Home</td>
<td>What parents do to teach Spanish at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching both English and Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 1. Parents’ childhood literacy experiences.**

*Life is different over there.* As I began the interview process and asked the parents in this study, “Tell me about your experience as a child in relation to literacy and reading,” one of the initial responses by a number of parents was to compare the difference between _acá_ (here) and _allá_ (there). One parent phrased it this way, “Es diferente _la, la vida de allá_” (1101-7) (It’s different, life over there). This comparison encompassed more than just literacy and reading, because to them, it included life in
general. Some families stated what to them was the obvious, that life in their home country was different, with others including their specific country (Mexico, El Salvador) to make clear the country they were referring to. A few families provided examples of how different life was, in order to demonstrate the realities of their life as a child. They gave examples of the availability of support and resources in the U.S., “O sea, es más diferente cómo es aquí.” “Aquí es más apoyo, aquí con los libros y todo” (1129-4) (I mean, it’s more different than how it is here. Here it’s more support, here, with books and everything). There was also difference in the life of a child in the U. S., as compared to their home country,

*Sí, eso es diferente. La verdad, es de que como le decía al principio, la vida de un niño acá es mucho mejor* (1111-55) (Yes, it’s different. In truth, it’s like I said in the beginning, the life of a child here is much better).

**Earliest recollections.** I asked parents if they recalled someone reading to them as children, and almost two-thirds of the parents responded that no one had read to them when they were children,

“No me leyeron. No había, habían libros, lo que es de la escuela, pero aparte no teníamos mas libros” (1122-4) (I was not read to. There were no, there were books, those from school, but aside from that we had no other books).

They recollected that their parents were too busy to sit and read to them. Nor do they recall seeing children’s books around the home, “No, de esos yo nunca mire uno” (1101-18) (No, of those [children’s books], I never saw one). The parents went on to
expand on this, with comments ranging from not having any recollection of this type of reading taking place in the home, to reasons as to why they believed it did not happen.

Some of the parents in this case study remember their introduction to books at a later age. Most were old enough to remember that it was while in elementary school. A couple of the parents remember it being much later, between the ages of 7 to 11. They shared how they did not learn how to read until later in life, contributing to difficulties with literacy later in life,

*Entonces, creó mucho problema porque casi no, no pues, no leía. Ya ve que sí, desde temprano, yo tengo, era bien temprano, no, uno no capta los sonidos, ni, así, entonces es algo muy difícil para una persona* (1109-40). (So then, it created many problems because I barely could, no, well, could not read. As you can see that, from an early age, I have, it was very early, not, you don’t get the sounds, nor, like, so then it’s something that is very hard for a person).

**Reflecting on illiteracy.** This recollection compelled two parents to reflect on their personal experiences related to not knowing how to read. One father talked about how he did not attend school until he came to the U. S., at the age of 10 years. He remembers not knowing how to read and being overcome with fear,

*El primer día de la escuela allá, me daba miedo. Sí, porque, no mas mi tío me fue a dejar, y no, no sabia ingles el primer día. No sabia ni el abecedario, ni na, ni a, e, o, nada* (1107-7) (On the first day of school over there [California] I was scared. Yes, because my uncle just left me and I didn’t, didn’t know English on the first day. I did not even know the alphabet, nothing, not the a, e, o, nothing).
One mother shared how she learned how to read Spanish after coming to the U. S. She did not have the opportunity to learn how to read while in her home county. She spoke of her strong desire to be able to read the magazines that interested her, and this motivated her to learn how to read.

**Availability of parents.** The parents pointed out that their own parents were not always available for them, especially to read. The parents spoke of the difficulties they experienced as children learning to read,

> Lo que yo me pueda recordar, fue bien difícil. Porque en mi casa éramos muchos hermanos y era muy, pues, si mi mama, no había tiempo de ayudarme (1105-4)

(From what I can remember, it was very difficult, because at home, we were many siblings, and it was very, well, yes, my mom, there was no time to help me).

One mother recalled the pain she felt, when first an earthquake hit and afterwards a civil war in her home country had prevented her from going to school, “Entonces, todo eso trajo problemas porque allá, después hubo tantas cosas que ocurrió, pasamos por un terremoto, una guerra” (1109-9) (So then, all that brought problems because over there, afterwards so many things happened, we had an earthquake, a war).

Availability was also in the context of having parents who were around to praise them. Due to the hardships in their childhood, the parents did not always experience opportunity where there was talk about hope, goal setting or future aspirations. One mother spoke about parental inspiration this way,

> Pues, cuando yo estaba pequeña no era tanto así, cómo le digo, como aquí, verdad. Que, que los papa, este, como inspiran a los niños (1102-3) (Well, when I
was young, it was not so much like, how can I tell you, like here, right. That, that parents, well, like they inspire the children).

**Childhood.** The parents also provided examples of their life as children, to put into context their own experiences growing up. They spoke about their childhood difficulties. For examples, some did not begin attending school until older, “*Ya estaba grande. Porque, pues, vengo de una familia grande y, pues, muy pobre*” (I was already grown. Because, well, I come from a large family and, well, very poor). One parent stated that at the age of ten she started working a job outside the home and preferred that to going to school, so she did not finish.

**I recall being read to.** Parents who had been read to shared their experiences with literacy during their childhood. They talk about the types of the books they had in the home and a couple of parents remember being enrolled in Head Start. A small number of parents remembered being read to, and spoke about that experience. These parents recalled having a parent, usually the mother, spending time reading to them and providing literacy opportunities in the home. One parent spoke of how his parents provided his brother and him with everything that was connected to education,

> *Mi hermano y yo, y los dos tuvimos prácticamente todo, la ayuda de nuestros padres acerca de la educación y cosas así* (My brother and I, and both of us had practically everything, the help from our parents regarding education and things like that).

This father also remembers his parents always buying him books. He also reflected on how they always got the newspaper, each day, which he enjoyed because he liked reading the comics (something, he said, his daughter enjoys doing now). He said
this about his parents, “Mis padres me proveyeron con libros y todo, y eran personas que siempre compraban el periódico, cada día” (1125-89) (My parents provided me with books and everything, and they were people who always bought the newspaper each day). One parent shared how she remembers her mother taking time to get her and her siblings together to read, something that she now does with her own children. She saw this as something helpful that parents can do, “Pero lo importante, que pienso yo, que fue también la ayuda de los padres” (1110-7) (But the important thing, which I think, that it was also the help from the parents).

**Types of books.** When parents were asked to talk about the books they had as children, the majority of the described books indicated they were schoolbooks and books used to teach the alphabet and other specific subjects. The parents did not recall having “children’s” books, but they do remember the books they received from school, “Allá en México nos dan como tres, cuatro libros, español, matemáticas, ciencias naturales, son libros” (1101-13) (Over in Mexico they give us like three, four books, Spanish, Math, Natural Sciences, these are books). A few of the parents remembered specific books they had as children. One father shared that he still had a copy of the book he had as a child which was used to learn the alphabet and that he was using it with his own children to teach them the alphabet in Spanish, in the same manner that he had been taught as a child.

Two other parents went on to describe the books they remember using the most. One recalled the story, which had a moral teaching. The other parent remembers the color of the book and that it was the one used to learn the alphabet, recalling how the mother would sit and work with her to teach her vowel sounds and letters,
Todavía me recuerdo del libro. Un libro verdecito, que decía, “A, B, C.” Estaba un niño sentado con su libro abierto. Sí, mi mamá me enseñaba a decirlas todo.

Las, este, vocales, todas las letras del abecedario (1125-55)

(I still remember the book. A green book that said, “A, B, C.” There was a little boy sitting with an open book. Yes, my mother taught me how to say them, all of them. The vowels, all the letters of the alphabet).

Other approaches to literacy. Some parents shared about other literacy related things their mothers did. For example, they remember being sung to a lot, “Mi mamá me leía en español. Me leía mucho, me cantaba muchas canciones también” (1112-11) (My mother would read to me in Spanish. She read to me a lot; she would sing many songs to me, also). Another parent shared how her mother would tell the story from the pictures in the book, “Me lo leía como, lo que dependiera la, en la foto” (1112-16) (She read it to me like, depending on the, on the picture).

Head Start. Two parents, who grew up in the U. S., remember being enrolled in Head Start and learning about books at a young age through the program. They shared some recollections about being read to, and one specifically remembers her mother reading to her, “I went to Head Start when I was little. I think it helped a lot. Reading wasn’t my favorite, though. But, I remember mom reading to us a lot.” (1124-4)

Beliefs about childhood literacy based on personal experience. I wanted to understand how one’s own childhood literacy experience contributes to one’s approach, so I asked the parents this question. The following are responses regarding their beliefs about literacy, their approach to literacy due to or in spite of their own personal experiences, and the role of the Head Start program.
As stated earlier, the majority of the families interviewed were not read to as children. This contributed to how they approached childhood literacy with their own children. One mother stated that she had no literacy beliefs starting out. Some parents stated their beliefs were based on being read to as children. Others stated they wanted to make sure reading materials were available for their child. Most parents had some beliefs about early literacy, which they shared along with why they believed as they did.

Parents went on to describe the reasons behind their beliefs, by elaborating and using specific adjectives, such as influenced, mistakes, intelligent, drive, and motivation to help describe one of two possibilities, (1) lessons they learned and (2) thinking ahead on ways to help their child succeed. One mother shared how she and her husband were doing things differently with their youngest child. With their first child, they felt that she was too young to be learning about the alphabet and numbers before enrolling in school. They thought it best for her to begin to learn when she started school. It was not until after their daughter started school that they realized that it was important to begin early, so that their child can be prepared and be spared experiencing learning difficulties at school. Based on this realization, they made sure not repeat the same mistake with their second child, and to begin as early as possible,

_Yo creo que influyo que yo me di cuenta que entre más temprano yo le enseño a ellos, menos van a batallar en las escuelas_ (1113-18) (I believe I was influenced in that I realized that the earlier I teach them, the less they will battle once in school).

Personal experiences also played a role in how and why parents introduced their child to literacy. Some parents had positive experiences related to literacy, and it was due
to these experiences that they also engaged in literacy related activities with their own children. Those who were read to stated that this was the reason why they read to their own child. One mother said, “I like to read to her a lot, because I was read to a lot and I think that helped me to learn how to read quicker.” (1128-15) Others saw benefits to reading as well, such as creating desires in children, that it helps children to learn and thereby be prepared for the future, and how it helps with language development. One mother shared about her love for music and song, and how she shares this same passion with her own children. She stated that it motivates them to learn to read the words of the hymns they sing. Another parent said that like her mother, who would gather her and her siblings together to read, she also gathers her children together to read.

For other parents, what they are doing with their own children now is in spite of their own personal experiences. They aspire to do for their own children what was not made available to them. One mother said,

_Pero, yo he tratado de lo que paso en mi casa, no tenga que ver con lo que está pasando con ellas. Porque, como yo vi que a mi no me ayudo, entonces yo hago, trato de hacerlo distinto para ellas_ (1116-22) (But, I have tried, that what happened in my home, will not have anything to do with what is happening with them. Because, since I saw that it did not help me, so then I do, try to do it differently with them).

For another mother, it was the fact that she never had books as a child,

_Pues, por ejemplo, yo nunca tuve libros y a mis hijos, desde chiquitos, antes de que pudieran leer, ni nada, yo le compraba libros siempre, y les leía_ (1114-28) (Well, for example, I never had books and my children, from the time they were
little, before they could read or anything, I would buy them books, always, and would read to them).

Another mother, reflecting on her own childhood, said, “I just did for her what I would’ve wanted. Like, I really don’t remember, myself being young and my mom reading to me. But, I read to her the way that I wanted to me, if I was young. I did whatever I wanted for myself, for her.” (1120-15)

In sum, the childhood literacy experiences of most of the parents who were interviewed differed greatly from the experiences that their own child was now experiencing. Of the 28 families who were interviewed, 17 (61%) said they had not been read to as children. These parents expressed their intent of providing a better experience for their own child.

**Theme 2. Parent’s Role**

*Pues que tiene uno que estar enseñando día tras día. Hacerle, darle entender la importancia que tiene la educación (1114-37)* (Well, that you need to be teaching day after day. Make them, have them understand that it’s important to have an education).

**Literacy in the home.** Whether from their personal experiences or because of what they have learned by participating in a preschool emergent literacy program, parents give thought to what their role is and how they can contribute to their child’s success.

The parents in this study articulate about the role of the parent, the types of literacy activities they engage in at home, and how participating in a preschool emergent literacy program has contributed to how they work with their children. They expressed that they, as parents, play an important role in their child’s learning and that it is very important
they do their part. Some parents used the term “role model,” stating they needed to set the example, as well as demonstrating an interest in their child’s school success. One parent put it this way,

“I think they need to show their children, they need to be their role model, like they need to see their parents reading more. They need to see them excited about reading, because if they’re not, then the child is not going to read.” (1128-23)

**Basics begin at home.** Parents pointed out that the basics about learning begin in the home, along with the parent’s responsibility of teaching them. The basics include teaching the alphabet, numbers, how to read, all related to school success,

Como ejemplo, ayudarlos en lo que es el abecedario, los números, empezar primeramente en el hogar. Para que cuando vaya a la escuela, pues ya vayan sin miedo y ya sepan que responder (1108-23) (As an example, help them with the alphabet, numbers, first begin in the home. So that when they go to school, well they go without fear and they already know how to answer).

Parents also talked about other forms of instructions that are just as important for school success. They state that parents need to love, motivate, and propel their children. One parent made this statement, “Y también enseñarles, darles amor, pero también darle el rigor por otro lado” (1103-59) (And also teach them, give them love, but on the other hand, also provide rigor). One father said that as parents they need to provide rigor and be committed, in addition to keeping bad influences away from their children. Another parent also need to provide support and the necessary tools children need for learning, as well as time, especially one-on-one time.
In sum, the parents who were interviewed opined that parents played an important role in their child’s early education. They had a responsibility to assure that their child would begin school with a good grasp of what school is about and the skills to have a good start.

**Theme 3. Home literacy activities.**

*Teaching.* Parents were asked to provide details about the types of literacy related activities they engaged in at home. Parents demonstrated pride and excitement when talking about what they did at home with their child. The parents spoke about the importance of teaching their children. Teach them lessons that will help them succeed, along with teaching academics. One parent pointed out that it was important to teach the child that education is important,

“*Pues que tiene uno que estar enseñando día tras día. Hacerle, darle entender la importancia que tiene la educación*” (1114-37) (Well, that you need to be teaching day after day. Make them, have them understand that it’s important to have an education).

Parents also spoke in detail about specific things they did with their child, such as writing,

*Yo pongo esta figura y el niño tiene que seguir y llenar toda la hoja de esta figura. Y luego pasamos a la segunda plana, entonces vamos a poner la “i,” la “u,” la “o.” Él tiene que seguir toda la plana completa de lo mismo, para que él vaya aprendiendo* (1111-148) (I place this character and the child has to follow and fill up the page with this character. And then we go to the second page, then we are going to write the “i,” the “u,” the “o.” He has to follow the entire complete page with the same thing, so that he can learn).
**Activities related to reading.** Following the subject of literacy in the home, some parents spoke about reading activities, such as reading in the home. One parent stated that it is necessary to instill the importance of reading. Another parent said that it was important to read with the child and form a habit of doing it. They also spoke about dialogic reading, how when they read with their child they converse and ask questions about the reading:

*Well, pretty much what we do is, like when V*, we are like, at bedtime, we always select a book to read to them. Or we give them, we read it to them and we ask them if they understood. Do you understand what the picture is demonstrating? I mean, we give, well, them a chance, the opportunity to say, What do you think it’s going to do? Or what, I mean, yes, we make them think.)*

Other types of activities related to reading that parents said they engage in are pointing to words as they read to their child,

*Go along, placing the finger and pointing to the letters, so that she will see how, well, where you are reading.*

Parents also spent time teaching their child how to read. For example, one mother shared how she would teach her daughter how to read a word,
Una de las formas que hemos hecho, es decir palabra por partes, una palabra por partes y cuando la terminas aplaudes y tratas de decir toda la palabra complete y vas aprendiendo palabras (1105-98) (One of the ways we have done, is to say the words by sections, one word by sections and when you finish you applaud and try to say the entire word completely and you go on learning words).

**Resourcefulness.** As parents spoke about the types of literacy-related activities they engaged in at home, they also shared how they went about the activities. As they began to talk about what they did, the resourcefulness and creativity of the parents was apparent in what they did to engage their children and to provide best ways to help their children learn at an age appropriate level.

One mother shared how church related activities contributed to the types of literacy related activities the family did together. They would sing, and the child would sing, following the words written in the hymnbooks. Another mother talked about singing the stories in the books, because she enjoyed singing. One mother spoke about the word games she plays with her daughter, using news words they come across when they are reading a story,

*Este, una palabra que encontramos, por decir que no conoce, en un libro. Lo que tratamos de hacer es, la practicamos toda la semana, y ella asocia cosas con esa. Como por decir, si encuentra una palabra que quiere decir “¡inspirado!” Entonces toda la semana la practicamos, ella me dice, “Mami hoy estoy ‘inspirada’” o dice, “Mi hermana se ve ‘inspirada’ o “Esto necesita inspiración (1116-94) (Well, we find a word; let’s say one that she is not familiar with, in a book. What we try to do is, we practice it all week, and she associates things with
it. Let’s say if she finds a word that means “inspired!” or she says, “My sister looks inspired” or “This needs inspiration”).

Parents shared how they would obtain resources, such as books, workbooks, and games, to help their children with literacy related activities. One mother shared that she took notice how the preschool classroom was set-up and decided to provide her daughters a similar learning environment in the home. She said her husband was fixing the basement and providing the girls with an area where they can do the similar activities to those they did at preschool. She brought me to the basement and showed me how she had set up a library with a table and bookshelf with books, a kitchen, and a hair salon station (Figure 4). She went on to say that, she would continue going to yard sales and looking for items that were for the age and size of her daughters because she has come to the realization that this was part of learning.

![Figure 4. Home Based Learning Center (1122)](image)

In sum, the parents related that it was not just for learning’s sake, but they considered the bigger picture, such as wanting their child to understand that education was important and why. They expressed these beliefs by what they did with and for their child, such as the changes they made in the home to provide learning environments.

**Theme 4. Family Literacy Events.**

The Family Literacy Events (FLE) was a unique component of the emergent literacy program in this study. Held throughout the school year, the events proved parents
an opportunity to engage in one-on-one literacy related activities with their child. The design of the FLE took into consideration the busy lives of families. A sit down family-style dinner for the families and childcare for siblings was provided. The focal point of the FLE was to engage parent and child in literacy related activities. The parents who participated in the in-depth interviews and who had attended the FLE expressed great appreciation. Some parents commented that it was due to being a part of the Head Start program and participating in the Family Literacy Events that they have come away with best practices to work with their child. They shared how this one-on-one time with their child was precious, that the knowledge gained would help them continue to work with their child at home, and that these types of activities should continue.

**One-on-one time.** For the parents, the one-on-one time with their child was precious. Within the discussion of the overarching point that participation in the FLE was beneficial, the parents pointed to two salient constructs, (1) *convivir* and (2) how it made their child feel. A close English translation for the word *convivir* would be live + share. The parents used this word to describe the time they spent together with their child during the FLE. They discussed how it was difficult, while at home, to give their child undivided attention. Attending the FLE granted them the opportunity for one-on-one time with their child, something that they truly appreciated because of what it meant to their child, “*Este, ellos se sienten más a gusto de que uno, como padre, conviva con ellos*” (1110-21) (Well, they feel more pleased that you, as a parent, live and share with them). The parents made a point in discussing how this time with their child was special because they were able to spend time together, without interruptions, doing things together and enjoying each other’s company.
The second salient point was how these activities and time together made their child feel. The parents voiced a deep appreciation for the opportunity to see the pleasure in their child’s eyes during the FLE. One mother stated, “That was her [daughter’s] time to show me her friends and everything she did in her class.” (1120-126) Another parent went into more detail about these opportunities,

Eso los hacen, los niños más especiales, que se sientan más a gusto con, pues, con uno mismo, de que uno le dedica tiempo, de que son importantes para la familia y que pueden lograr muchas cosas con la ayuda de los papas (1110-28)

(That makes them, the children more special, that they feel more pleased with, with you, that you dedicate time to them, that they are important to the family and they can achieve many things with the help of their parents).

Some parents even commented that their children were aware of when the events would take place and would remind that parent that it was “family night.”

Learning through the program overall and the FLE. Overall, parents shared how much the program (including a center-based program with a literacy focus and the FLE) had helped them and their child. They mentioned the different skills their child had acquired, such as learning the alphabet, counting, coloring, and learning how to cut. They watched as their child advanced in learning. They also talked about how their child is now better prepared to begin kindergarten, not only because of the academic skills they have gained, but also because they understand the school structure. The parents also showed appreciation for the skills they gained, as parents, of how to work with their child, because they were provided with ideas. One parent gave an example of how participation was helpful,
I think though the information they gave us was always helpful. They always had different suggestions of what you could do. Um, not just reading, like with writing, but giving them words. I can’t think of the word, but they were some sort of words, juicy words, they were making us come up with juicy words. And I had never heard of it put that way. (1128-94)

Another parent also expressed how much she had learned due to participation, she spoke how learned the importance of having rich conversations with their child, of how details were important,

Que le tiene uno que hablar a los niños, como se dice... de manera que, por ejemplo, no nada más “come esta fruta. Sino, esta fruta se llama manzana, y es roja... detalles (1114-48) (That you need to speak to the children, how do you say… in such a way that, for example, not just “eat this fruit.” But, this fruit is called an apple, and it’s red… details).

**Barriers to attendance.** Parents who did not attend the FLE shared their reasons as to why they did not attend. One mother commented that during the winter she did not like to drive if there was inclement weather, or even the possibility. A couple of parents talked about conflicting schedules, such as soccer games for a child. Work schedules was also a reason for non-attendance, for example a parent was coming home at the same time as when the event was scheduled or they worked second shift. One mother shared that she had experienced a difficult year with depression and did not have the energy to go. None of the parents said they did not attend because they did not feel it worth their time; they all spoke regretfully that they could not attend events.
In sum, of the 17 families who had not been read to as children, 15 attended the FLE, compared to nine who had been read to when they were children. In addition, there were differences between those who had attended FLE and those who had not, in the types of literacy activities the families reported doing at home (Table 14).

Table 14

**Self-Report Home Literacy Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Literacy Activities</th>
<th>Did Not Attend FLE</th>
<th>Attended FLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alphabet</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word games</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colors</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter sounds</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write name</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn the vowels</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetitive alphabet letter writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retell stories from English to Spanish</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities sent home from school</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create learning centers in the home</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach their child Spanish</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read to their child</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogic reading</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workbook activities</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the signs out in the community</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell the words on the signs</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach shapes and sizes</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing songs/church hymns</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point to words while reading</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to read short words</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling/make-up stories</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set subscripts on DVDs and TV</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra talk (vocabulary rich conversations)</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Theme 5. Spanish language instruction at home.**

*Teaching Spanish at home.* During the in-depth interviews, I gathered additional demographic questions with regard to language in the home. I asked the parents their preferred language and the preferred language of the target child and when the target child spoke with siblings (Table 15). I also asked about preferred language for television viewing (Table 16). Parents shared that it was important to help their children keep the home language. They shared their own difficulties navigating within a community that has a dominant language different from theirs. There were no negative comments about “only English” being taught in the schools, instead they felt that it was up to them and what they did at home to maintain the Spanish language. Some of the parents commented that they taught their children Spanish the same way they remember learning Spanish in their home country, which was with the use of workbooks, and repetitive writing of letters and numbers.

Table 15

*Preferred Home Language*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parent Preferred Language</th>
<th>Target Child Preferred Language</th>
<th>Preferred Language Spoken Between Target Child and Siblings*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>57.1% (n=16)</td>
<td>3.6% (n=1)</td>
<td>10.7% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>46.4% (n=13)</td>
<td>39.3% (n=11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>39.3% (n=11)</td>
<td>50.0% (n=14)</td>
<td>39.3% (n=11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish and Indigenous Dialect</td>
<td>3.6% (n = 1)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Three families had only one child*
Table 16

*Preferred TV Viewing Language*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parent’s Preference</th>
<th>Target Child’s Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>25.0% (n=7)</td>
<td>7.1% (n=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>10.7% (n=3)</td>
<td>60.7% (n=17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>64.3% (n=18)</td>
<td>32.1% (n=9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One mother shared that her home visitor (who was of the same ethnicity) would sing songs and play games that were native from the parent’s home country. This made the mother very happy that her own daughter would also learn the same songs and games that she had enjoyed as a child. Another family spoke of how they brought with them the schools books they had received in Mexico and were using those books to teach their own children Spanish, “*Ahorita estamos tratando para enseñarle español. Con este libro que él tiene, para todo el primer año*” (1111-85) (Now we are trying to teach them Spanish. With this book that he has, for the entire first year). Then the father went and brought out the book to show me (Figure 5).

*Figure 5 Elementary School Book from Mexico (1111)*
Some of the parents shared that their children would refuse to respond in Spanish when addressed in Spanish. One couple came up with the idea of getting the children a pet hamster (Figure 6) as a way to get the children to speak Spanish. The children were very excited about their new pet, but when they started to talk to the hamster in English, the parents informed them that this was a Spanish-speaking hamster who did not understand English. For this reason, the children would need to speak Spanish to the hamster. Without a pause, the children immediately began to speak to the hamster in Spanish. Moreover, when their English-speaking friends would come over and would begin to speak to the hamster, the children would inform their friends that the pet only understood Spanish and they would begin to translate for their friends:

*Nosotros le decimos que, que el animalito es, no más entiende español. Que ellos tienen que hablar en español, porque no les entiende el inglés. Y así es que, y que tienen que venir a contarle, como una historia, para que ellos comiencen hablar en español con el animalito* (1113-148) (We told them that, that the pet is, only understands Spanish. That they need to speak Spanish, because it does not understand English. And that is how, and that they need to come and tell, like a story, so that they will begin to speak Spanish with the pet).

*Figure 6. Spanish Speaking Pet Hamster (1113)*
This mother also commented that she noticed that her child’s Spanish had improved because of reading to the child in Spanish. She showed me the small library she had set up with sections labeled for the different books (e.g., Spanish, English, Workbooks; Figure 7).

![Figure 7. Child’s Home Library](image)

**Teaching both English and Spanish.** Parents spoke of how it was important for them that their children learn both English and Spanish. Some parents spoke of how they include a mixture of both Spanish and English when they teach and read to their children at home. They realize that it is important for their child to have a good grasp of both languages for future success,

*Quiero que lleve bien fijo los dos idiomas. O sea, un día ella puede ayudar a alguien* (1105-131) (I want her to have a good grasp of the two languages. I mean, someday she can be of help to someone).

Even parents who did not speak English fluently would include English in their activities. For example, several parents commented on how they would play school with their child, where their child would be the teacher and teach them English and when they were the teacher, they would teach their child Spanish. For reading, when the child chose an English book to have the parent read, the parent would retell the story in Spanish, “*Pero*
"yo agarro esos libros y yo los vuelvo en español" (1111-210) (But I take these books and retell them in Spanish).

In summary, the parents who were interviewed expressed the importance that their child learn both English and Spanish, but that they knew it would be up to them to teach their child Spanish. Some came up with creative ways to teach their child, others relied on just speaking to their child in Spanish.

**Narrated Portfolio**

Parents who participated in the FLE were given a 3-inch red binder to serve as a portfolio where they could place literacy related documentation that was created by the child or the child with the parent. The portfolios were for the families to keep and were not used for evaluation. The documents created by the children and placed in the portfolio, along with the journaling the parents did provided a window, not only into the literacy behaviors of the families, but the perspectives of the parents. Having the parents narrate as they shared the documentation in the portfolio provided an insight that was unique to each family. For example, families who attended the FLE participated in the same activity. As they narrated about a given activity, their story was their own, even when more than one family was narrating about the same activity.

As I interviewed the parents and they began to share the portfolio, I started to wonder about their reasons for keeping the portfolios. One mother had both notebooks, and in them was every single item that her child had received while in the program. For example, when the preschoolers were assessed they were given a slip of lavender colored paper indicating who did the assessment, the measure used, and the date. Her portfolio had every single slip of lavender colored paper given for each assessment. I did not have
to ask her why she had kept these, for she shared this information freely. She pointed to the slip and told me that “These are the dates and I kept who did it and what days they did it and this is her growth”… (1120-73).

I decided to ask the parents if there was a reason why they were keeping all these documents. They did have a reason, and it had to do with the goals they had for their child. One mother stated the following:

Yo los tengo, porque sé que ella va avanzando, ¿ve? Y va llegar el día en que, a lo mejor no lo voy a guardar todo, pero hay un día que voy a escoger las cosas que yo sé que voy a notar diferencia, ¿si? Que digo, esto lo hizo en tal año y hay una diferencia de este año. Y son trabajos que cuando ella este mas grande, yo le voy a decir, “mira mi hija, tú hiciste esto y así lo hiciste y fuiste superándote.”

Hasta por levantar el autoestima algún día, de que ella se sienta y diga “yo no puedo”. Como decirle, tú pudiste, si tú pudiste hacer una letra cuando estaba de esa edad, y ahora puedes hacer esto. Porque no puedes hacer lo que tú tienes en tu, o sea en un trabajo, en seguir la escuela o hasta para motivarla y que siga. Pues yo pienso (1105-88) (I’ve kept them because I know that she is progressing, see. And the day will come when, maybe I won’t keep it all, but there is a day when I will choose the things that I know I will notice the difference. Right? I say, she did this in such and such year and there is a difference from this other year. And it’s work that when she is older, I will tell her, “Look my child, you did this and this is how you did it and you continued to overcome.” Even to lift her self-esteem, some day, when she might feel and say “I can’t.” It’s like telling her, you were able to do it, and if you were able to do a letter when you were that age,
you can now do this, continuing in school or to even motivate her so she will continue. That is what I think).

The parents were thinking about the future and the obstacles that their child might face. They wanted to keep tangible proof of success to motive their child in the future. It would also serve as proof that education served as an avenue for success, “*Para que mire ella como empezó y, o sea, para que mire ella más bien que la escuela la ayuda para algo*” (1112-330) (So she can see how she started and, I mean, better said, so she can see that school is beneficial).

Through participation at the FLE and the documentation created for the portfolio, parents were able to see in a tangible manner, their child’s progress. They saw how their child’s writing and drawing progressed from scribbles to clearly formed letters and details on the drawings (Figure 8). As they narrated the different pieces of documentation in the portfolio, they would point to scribbles and then later would point to legible letters and say how their child has grown and how much they have learned. They would also point to details. For example, a number of the portfolios had family portrait drawings, where the children would draw the members of their family. You could see how early drawings would have stick figures with no details, but later you would notice detailed eyes, fingers, clothing. The parents would point to these advances as evidence of their child’s academic development, “*Ahorita, ella lo hace mejor, porque esto fue del año pasado*” (1102-161) (Now, she does it better, because this was from last year).
Section Summary

The purpose of the Phase II qualitative case study was to explore with more depth and ultimately help explain the results from Phase I, by having a sub-sample of families from Phase I participate in in-depth interviews and share their perspectives regarding their participation in a preschool emergent literacy program and to understand the contexts wherein they base their approach. Moreover, the interviews provided a unique opportunity for the families to share the literacy portfolios created by the child and parents along with narratives about the activities documented in the portfolios.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study was to understand the meaning and extent of parent engagement in literacy-related activities and to determine if participation in FLE and family literacy activities were related to child outcomes, and to use quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods for answering the questions. Essentially, the parents who participated in the in-depth interviews provided their perspectives with regard to their participation in a school-sponsored emergent-literacy program. This discussion is organized into four sections. The first three sections will discuss the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods components, focusing on how the qualitative findings help to explain the quantitative results. The fourth section will review Limitations, Implications for Head Start and Research, and Strengths of the Study.

Phase I – Quantitative Study

The active participation of parents in a child’s learning leads to positive academic outcomes for the child (Boyce, Innocenti, Roggman, Norman, & Ortiz, E, 2010). The Rural Language and Literacy Connections (Rural LLC) program provided opportunities for parents to engage in literacy-related activities with their child through a preschool-sponsored program. There were four main quantitative research questions addressing parental participation in their child’s learning and child emergent literacy skills. The questions and finding for each are as follows:

*Quan RQ 1. How involved were parents of Latino dual-language learners in a preschool-sponsored emergent literacy program, as measured by attendance at family literacy events (FLE)?*
A component of the Rural LLC program was the Family Literacy Events (FLE). FLE were designed to be inclusive so that the entire family could attend, but with the unique aspect of providing parents and the target child one-on-one time together. Slightly over 2/3 of the families attended Family Literacy Events (FLE). Parents have been found to participate in school sponsored events that will provide them with skill-sets that contribute to what they do with their own children at home (Doyle & Zhang, 2011). However, 27% of families did not attend any of the FLEs. Results in the quantitative study found a trend, such that parents born in the U.S. were less likely to attend the FLEs. Notwithstanding, parents who did not attend FLE, but who participated in the qualitative interviews, provided personal reasons for not attending, which are discussed below. One possible way to learn about how parents feel regarding attending a program such as a FLE would be to have a mechanism in place that can facilitate immediate feedback from the families who attend such events. This could be in the form of a mini interview with parents after an event. Parents might be more inclined to provide verbal feedback (e.g., general conversation) than to fill out a form. In conclusion, a trend effect suggests that the sample of who attended the FLEs may not be representative of the whole sample so it may be difficult to determine the effects of attendance with regard to the overall sample.

Quan RQ 2. What types of literacy-related behaviors do parents of Latino dual-language learners report they engage in with their children in their homes, as measured by questions on the Family Involvement Questionnaire – Home Based construct (FIQ – HB)?
The overall mean scores for each item of the Family Involvement Questionnaire-Home Based (FIQ-HB) were positively skewed with very little variance amongst the families. The overall mean score for each of the items, with the exception of two questions mentioned earlier, was above three. Notwithstanding, these previous studies did not measure change in family environment, only absolute relations. In other words, they did not look at how parents changed their home literacy practices. Perhaps we need to explore more deeply the rationale for or of parental involvement that can be generalizable to individual groups. Qualitative findings could shed further light on the findings, as will be reported in Phase II below.

**Quan RQ 3. What is the relationship between parental participation in FLE and literacy-related behaviors in the homes of Latino dual-language learners over time?**

Attending FLEs was not associated with FIQ-HB scores, contrary to the hypotheses. In addition, the FIQ-HB scores were skewed above the mean. These results are consistent with previous literature, which has found relations between parental involvement is school programs but with some exceptions (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007; White, Taylor, & Moss, 1992). The relations of participation in a family event program and family literacy behaviors in the home will need further exploration. Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack (2007) suggest that future research needs to move to a next level, such as “considering the how, whom, and why of parents’ involvement” (p. 401). Perhaps further analyses based on certain characteristics of the families might yield some insight. For example, and as will be further explained below, the in-depth interviews conducted with the families in the qualitative strand of this study resulted in learning about the childhood literacy experiences of the families and how it related to
their attendance at FLE and the types of literacy-related activities they shared they did with their children at home.

Quan RQ 4. How does parental participation in FLE and parental literacy-related behaviors in the homes of Latino dual-language learners over time relate to school readiness skills (child outcomes) as measured by scores on child assessments (e.g., receptive vocabulary, alphabet letter knowledge, letter sound) over time?

There was only one significant positive main effect, in that there was a between-person increase in uppercase letter recognition relative to FIQ-HB scores. However, there was a negative main effect in within-person print and word awareness relative to FIQ-HB scores, in that increase in home-based report of literacy-related activities was associated with a decline in print and word awareness. Moreover, there was also a significant negative main effect for both between-person and within-person Spanish Vocabulary relative to FIQ-HB scores. This was while controlling for FLE.

The results of a positive association between increase in uppercase letter recognition and parental literacy behaviors in the home, but no association with the other outcomes, may be attributed to parents focusing more on upper case letter recognition than on other forms of literacy skills. For example, working on beginning sound awareness (one of the measured subscales) would necessitate more time and a higher level of engagement, than just pointing to a letter and saying the name of the letter.

Another finding of negative relation was between Within Person FIQ-HB and print and word awareness. Within Person is the change for the individual person, and one would think that if the child’s scores are increasing, some credit would go to the increase of literacy-related activities in the home. That was not the case here. Print and word
awareness measures the child’s understanding of the printed word in book form. We can approach this from different directions, but would need more information about the family and the home literacy-related activities. For example, we might have a mother who does not speak English and the child wants an English language book read. The mother takes the book, but instead of reading the words and pointing to the words as she goes along, showing the child the connection between print and spoken word, the mother tells the story based on the pictures in the book. The FIQ-HB would not capture this scenario based on the questions in the measure.

Third, there was a negative effect on both WP and BP Spanish vocabulary. At first examination it might seem that negative effect on Spanish vocabulary could be attributed to the fact that the children in this study were not receiving center-based Spanish language instruction. All the instruction at preschool is in English, which does not provide opportunity for acquiring Spanish literacy skills. For example, at preschool children are learning alphabet letters, letter sounds, and rhyming in the English language. The possibility of any Spanish instruction while in preschool could occur if the teacher or teacher’s assistants spoke Spanish. This study did not explore that possibility. While at home, children are immersed in Spanish language, but not in an instructional format, therefore the children are learning conversational Spanish, but not Spanish in an academic. However, all the children in the study had similar center-based experience in English, so this explanation is not sufficient to explain why a negative association between FIQ-HB and Spanish vocabulary was found—that is, the higher the parents’ FIQ-HB scores over time, the lower were Spanish vocabulary scores. Thus, the findings suggest that parents who adopted higher FIQ-HB techniques may have been de-
emphasizing Spanish vocabulary. In addition, based on the FIQ-HB, we do not know in what language parents are working with their children. During the interviews conducted for Phase II of this study, I had the opportunity to learn more about language usage at home, which will be presented below. These results demonstrate the need for continual research to learn about the home learning environment and how it contributes to language development for dual-language learners. These results generate the question of how FIQ-HB is measuring what families do with their children to enhance literacy, given that other studies have found a relation between child literacy outcomes and literacy environment in the home in a Hispanic sample (Raikes et al., 2006 Rodriguez and Tamis-LeMonda, 2011).

**Phase II – Qualitative Study**

The qualitative case study approach facilitated the intent of this study, which was to hear the perspectives of parents of Latino dual-language learners who participated in an emergent literacy preschool program. More importantly, the gathering of data was to help explain the results from the quantitative study.

To learn about the perspective of the families, the interview began with learning about the childhood literacy experiences of the families. Qualitative results indicate that many of the parents had not been read to as children, nor did many have children’s books before starting their formal education. When they spoke about the books they did have, they were textbooks they received at school. Even still, they spoke warmly as they reflected on the books they had and how much they enjoyed their books. This finding contributes to the research literature, since studies that I have come across do not report about the childhood literacy experiences of parents.
As pointed out in this study, these experiences contributed to how the parents approached literacy related activities with their own children. These parents shared that they were providing for their child, what they themselves did not experiences with respect to literacy. Other parents, who had positive recollection, shared how they continued the traditions that they grew up with, such as singing or purchasing workbooks for their children. The literature is deficient when it comes to learning about the literacy childhood experiences of parents not raised in the U. S. One study asked parents at what age they recalled learning how to read (Billings, 2009), but no additional information was reported. Most of the families in this study were born outside the U.S. and they recalled learning how to read after they had begun school. The study did not explore additional questions to learn more about how their own childhood experiences contribute to what they do with their own children.

Parents also shared that they understood they had an important role in their child’s learning. They spoke of the example they needed to set for their child. Also, they pointed out that the basics, such as learning the letters of the alphabet, begin at home, which supports the literature that parents are aware that the home plays an important role in a child’s learning before starting school (Nievar, Jacobson, Chen, Johnson, & Dier, 2011).

During the interviews, parents not only spoke of, but they also demonstrated the types of activities they did at home. During this phase of the study, parents provided in detail the types of activities they did, demonstrating active participation in their child’s learning. Moreover, some parents demonstrated their creativity and determination to go above and beyond in what they did with their child.
An important component of the Rural LLC program was the family literacy events. We found that most parents who were interviewed had participated in the Family Literacy Events. We also found that many of the parents had kept the literacy portfolios that were created. They spoke about the benefits of participation and how they came away with ideas of things to do at home with their child. They also became aware about the importance of rich dialogue with their children. There were no negative comments regarding the FLE, overall parents saw the benefit. Most importantly, the one-on-one time they were able to dedicate to their child was of great value.

One final point to make is that parents shared how they go about including Spanish at home. During the interview, most parents shared that the target child, along with siblings, preferred English to Spanish at home when speaking or watching television. Parents understood that English is the language of the dominant culture, that their children would be more inclined to use English, and for this reason, they knew that it depended on them to teach Spanish at home. They shared the creative ways they came up with to get their children to engage in Spanish conversation. However, they also shared that their children preferred English and would always ask the parent to read to them in English.

**Phase III – Mixed Methods Discussion**

This design is befitting for studies needing qualitative data to help explain quantitative results (e.g., significant, non-significant, not what researcher expected; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). In Phase I of this study, data was collected from 103 children (school readiness skills) and parents of Latino dual-language learners (FLE attendance records and FIQ-HB questionnaire) who had participated in an emergent
literacy program. Phase I followed by Phase II, consisting of semi-structured interviews with a sub-sample of 28 families, to help explain the results of Phase I. Phase III presents two specific questions that guide the mixed methods component of this study, to help integrate the findings in Phase II with the results of Phase I:

1. Does parents’ literacy background (qualitative) help to explain participation at the FLE (quantitative)?

2. Do the types of literacy activities parents report occurring in the home (qualitative) help explain the FIQ-HB (quantitative), as well as the atypical associations (e.g., improved home practices and decrease in children’s Spanish)?

As I attempt to answer these two questions, evidence of overlap in discussion of both questions will be apparent.

**Family literacy events.** What light can the qualitative findings shed on the quantitative findings about attendance at literacy events, about why literacy events attendance did not predict family literacy activities, as measured by the FIQ-HB and about why literacy event attendance did not predict child literacy outcomes? Both qualitative and quantitative analyses showed some bias in who attended the events, potentially families with fewer literacy resources. For example, one unexpected phenomena that may shed some light is a characteristic of families who were more likely to attend the FLE. In the qualitative study, we learned that most of the parents who attended the FLE had not been read to when they were children, and those who had been read to were less likely to attend. Though the qualitative study does not fully answer the reason for the less than expected attendance, the interviews helped to paint a picture not
only of the families who were more likely to attend, but also presenting an interesting characteristic (e.g., never been read to) of these parents. This is interesting in that one would think the families who had exposure to childhood literacy experiences would more likely continue this behavior with their own children, due to their prior knowledge. Moreover, these results are consistent with quantitative trend effect findings showing parents who were born outside the US were more likely to attend FLEs than those who were born in the US.

**Family Involvement Questionnaire-Home Based.** Parents of Latino dual-language learners filled out a self-report questionnaire with questions about the types of literacy related behaviors they did in the home with their child and these behaviors were not quantitatively related to child outcomes, with one positive exception and a negative exception (i.e., Spanish vocabulary). What can qualitative themes tell us about why literacy behaviors in the home failed to predict child outcomes as hypothesized and as seen in other studies (e.g., Rodriguez & Tamis LeMonda, 2011)?

Several qualitative themes suggest that what the FIQ-HB measured may not be the types of literacy-supporting behaviors that these parents were engaging in. Many parents conveyed themes related to reading to children as well as to storytelling. Upon closer inquiry through in-depth interviews, I found that some families approach home literacy activities in a non-conventional way. For example, one mother explained how the singing of hymns from church is an activity she does with her children. She spoke of how this helps her child learn how to read in Spanish. A couple of parents spoke of going to Walgreens or Wal-Mart and purchasing workbooks for their children, so they can practice writing, because when they went to school in their own country, they used
workbooks at school. It was during the interviews that we learn about the specific activities parents engaged in. For example, they played word games with their children, such as learning a new word and then using it in different sentences. This is a higher order literacy activity, and as I looked over the FIQ-HB I could not find a question that would help demonstrate an activity such as this.

However, these findings do not explain why, for example child outcomes did not results in positive gains, when taking into account the FIQ-HB mean was positively skewed and except for the 27%, parents attended the FLE. The interviews conducted in the qualitative study provide some deeper insight into the cultural background of the families. The qualitative findings provide a description that demonstrates the need to design measures that will get to the essence of what parents of Latino dual-language learners understand and actually do concerning literacy-related activities. For example, during the interviews, we found that the children prefer the English language outside of the classroom. Parents try to engage the children in Spanish and sometimes have to come up with creative way to do so. This element, the intricate communication possibilities in the homes of dual-language learners, needs further exploration.

Of interest were two questions for which there was a mean score below 3.0. The first question stated, I praise my child for his/her schoolwork in front of the teacher. A little over half of the families in this study were born outside the U. S. (51%) and more than half (59%) stated their home language was Spanish. One can surmise that a language barrier may contribute to the parent’s inability to discuss their child’s schoolwork with the teacher, or any other topic for that matter, if the teacher does not speak Spanish (Finders & Lewis, 1994). However, do the parents talk positively about their children in
other circles of conversation, maybe with those who speak their native language? The FIQ-HB does ask if parents talk about their child’s learning efforts in front of family and friends. This question received a higher mean score, overall, than the question about talking with the teacher. While conducting the interviews, I had 16 children present as the parents spoke. When speaking of what they do with their children or narrating the literacy portfolios, the parents praised their children.

The findings also revealed considerable parental creativity in the area of literacy related activities in the home, but not necessarily the types of literacy activities measured in the FIQ-HB. The parents who created learning centers for their daughters, in their own unassuming way, took what they had observed at the preschool and recreated it at home, for they understood this would support their child’s learning. The parents spoke of how they used similar procedures to those they grew up with in their home country (e.g., using the textbooks they brought from their home country or implementing the use of workbooks). The parents who got their children a “Spanish speaking” pet, found a unique way to encourage their children to retain their Spanish language. Keeping the literacy portfolios enabled them to have an on-going dialogue with their child about his or her accomplishments. These are just four examples of the types of literacy-related activities parents engaged in, but are not represented in the FIQ-HB.

During the in-depth interviews parents spoke about their childhood experiences. We learned that some parents did not have an opportunity to learn how to read until they were older, that the only books they had in the home were school textbooks, and that they had not been read to when they themselves were children. However, we also learned through the in-depth interviews that the parents want a better life for their children and
they will use stories of their life experiences to show their children the importance of an education, which is what we find in the literature regarding Latino families (Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, & Ryalls, 2010).

In conclusion, the in-depth interviews provide a perspective about the literacy-related activities parents of Latino dual-language learners. Qualitative themes demonstrated that families attending the events spoke very positively about the events. They placed much value on the individual time they were able to spend with their child. These themes suggest it is possible they saw the benefits as more related to bestowing esteem and attention onto their child and less related to specifics of conveying literacy benefits of the type measured by the FIQ-HB.

However, there is more to the results and findings in this study. As pointed out earlier, child outcome scores did not reflect the contributions of participation in FLE and/or parents self-report on the FIQ-HB. That being said, the qualitative study demonstrated considerable parent involvement in their child’s learning. My goal was to have the qualitative findings provide clear and concrete answers to the quantitative results. Even though this dissertation did not provide the clear and concrete answers, it did help to demonstrate a need for continual research in this area. For example, based on the findings in the qualitative study a next step might be to replicate this study, but designing interview questions that will expand what we know about the literacy-related activities the parents engage in. This should be followed by the development of a new questionnaire, based on those findings and administering it to parents of Latino dual-language learners.
Limitations

**Quantitative study.** The use of hierarchical linear modeling is a complex approach for analyzing data. The participants in this study were involved in an emergent literacy program for two years. Considering time was part of the research questions for this study. Consultation with the Office of Statistics and Research Methodology (SRM) recommended Hierarchical Linear Modeling as a stronger approach in comparison to other traditional techniques to answering the study’s research questions. In addition, questions might be posed regarding the normal distribution and standardization. These questions were also addressed, by stating that the residual errors are normally distributed. Moreover, because the data structure of this study is time nested within subjects, it would violate the independence assumption if a different approach, such as ANOVA or ANCOVA, were used, since HLM takes care of non-independence. As to standardization, transforming the distribution to another scale (e.g., z-scores), will not change the shape of the distribution scores. Finally, the time-nested approach in this study may have been more complex than was needed, given that effects for time could not be attributed to the variables of greatest interest in the study, leaving one to consider other research approaches for future research.

**Sample.** Consultation with the office of Statistics and Research Methods confirmed that the sample size in the quantitative strand was sufficient for this study, due to data collected across four time points. However, a larger sample size may have provided for the possibility of a more homogeneous sample. For example, though the children in this study were all identified as Hispanic, approximately 23% of parents (or a primary caregiver) did not self-identify as Hispanic. Moreover, the Latino sample in this
dissertation was mostly of Mexican ethnicity (46%), with a smaller percentage (28%) from other Central American countries. For this reason, the results of this study cannot be generalized to all Latino groups. Future research would benefit in having a sample that presents results for each separate group.

**Quantitative approach.** Although the quantitative research design was recommended as a sound approach to help answer the research questions for this dissertation, future research should consider other approaches as well. For example, interaction between attendance at Family Literacy Events and scores on the Family Involvement Questionnaire-Home Base (FIQ-HB) could be a predictor in the equation.

**FIQ-HB.** The questions on the Family Involvement Questionnaire-Home Based may have failed to truly capture the literacy strengths of the parents of preschool age group and ethnic sample this dissertation was interested in. This demonstrates a need for the design of instruments that truly capture the parental literacy behaviors of parents outside of the dominant culture.

**In-depth interviews.** What this study, in written form, was not able to present was the intonation in the voices of the parents as they answered the questions and narrated the documentation in their literacy portfolios. As the researcher, who also is fluent in the language, I was able to appreciate their determination and excitement of forging better educational possibilities for their children.

**Mixed methods design.** Benefits of using the explanatory sequential mixed methods design for this study provided an avenue for the researcher to go further in-depth to find explanations for the quantitative strand of this study. The responses from the parents of Latino dual-language learners provided insight into their perspectives
regarding literacy-related activities behaviors and engagement. A next step in future research would be to consider the results and findings from this study and conduct an exploratory sequential mixed methods study. Using what is presented in this study, additional qualitative data can be collected followed by a quantitative study that can be generalized to a specific the sample. For example, as we found in this study, answers to items on a quantitative questionnaire regarding parental literacy-related behaviors did not accurately capture what parents reported doing in the qualitative strand. One reason for using an exploratory-sequential mixed-methods study, and which applies here, is the unavailability of instruments that better represent the types of literacy-related activities of families who are not from the dominant culture (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

**Implications for Head Start and Research**

This dissertation has important implications for Head Start and other programs designed to serve families who include Latino dual-language learners. One goal of Head Start, as well as other programs invested in parent and child services, is to engage parents in their child’s learning. The recent introduction of The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework (Administration for Children & Families, 2011) demonstrates a continual earnestness in facilitating this goal. One important result of this study, and which can help inform Head Start, is in describing the characteristics of who attended the FLE and who did not, and degree of attendance. The creation and implementation of activities and programs to include parental participation will not be as productive if families do not attend, or attend at a minimum. Not only should we provide these opportunities, but we also need to learn from the parents about what will work for them and what will not. Specific to the sample in this study, families who did not grow
up in home environments conducive to literacy were more likely to attend these literacy-related opportunities.

In keeping with the previous paragraph, in the qualitative study we were able to learn about the creative ways parents of Latino dual-language learner engage in literacy-related activities at home. They purchase white-erase boards for writing; they play games with their children in both English and Spanish; they incorporate what they learn from school-sponsored literacy programs in what they do at home. This demonstrates a willingness to take new skill-sets and apply them. Moving forward, and keeping this in mind, we need to take into consideration the different approaches to literacy practices at home.

Another important implication has to do with the heterogeneity within Latino sub-groups, which was the focus in this study. It is understood that there are Latino sub-groups with specific differences (e.g., regional differences and access to the U. S., length of residence in the U. S.). These differences contribute, in their own way, to how parents translate newly acquired knowledge (e.g., parental role in contributing to their child’s early learning skills). Ongoing dialogue with the families can help generate a better awareness of what parents are actually taking away.

Another implication for Head Start is in the area of measurement. The lack of congruency between quantitative measures and qualitative findings in the current study strongly suggests Head Start programs should be cautious in adapting measures of family literacy for Hispanic families without more study to determine the validity of such measures for this population. One approach might be to conduct a study with this sub-scale. Have the parents answer the questionnaire, and then through one-on-one interview,
or even with a focus group, have the parents discuss why they rated each question as they did and have the parents provide examples.

We saw in this study that the FIQ-HB was positively skewed. Would we have had different results if the questions were more in line with what parents reported doing during the qualitative interviews? In the qualitative study, mother’s shared of how they engage in role play, such as teacher/student, taking turns as teacher and student. This is how they work on Spanish and English words. To better understand these approaches, it might come down to the type of questions we ask. If we ask “do you teach your child English, yes or no” we are not going to get the same response if we were to ask “tell me about the different things you do with your child to encourage Spanish and English at home.”

**Study Strengths**

The basis for my interest in this project was the awareness that there were nuances regarding literacy related activities within this sample community that were not being captured in conventional ways. In addition, once this awareness became clearer, it would shed a light on the types of literacy-related activities parents of Latino dual-language learners actually engage in. The use of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study has provided additional insights to better understand the perspectives of these families and to help explain the results in the quantitative strand.

Parents who had not been read to as children were more likely to attend school-sponsored emergent-literacy program than parents who were read to. These parents demonstrated a tangible appreciation of the literacy-related opportunities made available to them and their child, as demonstrated by their attendance and enthusiastic comments;
even though there were no significant quantitative results associated with attending family literacy events. This study was also able to show some of the creative ways parents of Latino dual-language learners engage their children in literacy-related activities in the home. This study was able to demonstrate how parents incorporate their home language into the day-to-day interactions, and how they are observant of their child’s school environment and make note that this is important to their learning, even with variable (some positive, some negative) findings on the quantitative side of the analysis. The study clearly demonstrates the value of the mixed-method approach for bringing to light nuances that quantitative analyses alone may not be able to discern.
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<td>What did you and your child like most about this activity?</td>
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Appendix B: Letter of Support from Head Start Child & Family Development Program, Inc., Executive Director

June 1, 2010
Lisa L. Knoche, PhD  
Sandra I. Plata-Potter, MA  
University of Nebraska – Lincoln  
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools  
238 Teachers College  
Lincoln, NE 68588-0345

Dear Dr. Knoche and Ms. Plata-Potter,

We are pleased to inform you that we look forward to working with you on your proposed graduate student research project with the Grand Island Head Start program. You have been a part of the numerous projects between Grand Island Head Start and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for the last six years and you have demonstrated a strong interest in the academic success of the Latino families in our community. Your present interest in focusing on Latino parental engagement in emergent literacy and the contributions to children’s literacy outcomes are aligned with our beliefs.

Findings from your project will contribute to our goals in the types of services we provide our Latino families through the unique combination of both data and in-depth interviews. We understand that the plan of action is to begin in the fall of 2010. Thank you for your interest in the mission of Head Start.

Sincerely,

Deb Ross  
Executive Director
Appendix C: Letter of Support from Head Start Child & Family Development Program, Inc., Policy Council Chairperson

June 1, 2010

Lisa L. Knoche, PhD
Sandra L. Plata-Potter, MA
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools
238 Teachers College
Lincoln, NE 68588-0345

Dear Dr. Knoche and Ms. Plaza-Potter,

Thank you for sharing information about your Head Start Graduate Student grant proposal focused on how strategies acquired through Latino parents’ engagement in Head Start literacy program contributes to home literacy practices and child outcomes. More specifically, you intend to examine the relationship between Latino parental beliefs with respect to literacy practices and their engagement in a Head Start emergent literacy project. We are excited about participating in this research. Your focus on how Latino parental engagement contributes to children’s literacy skills directly supports our agency’s interests. As an agency, we strongly believe in and support the connection between parental engagement and child development.

Head Start Child and Family Development Program Inc. serves a diverse population of children and families in rural Nebraska through Head Start programming; approximately 48% of our families in the Grand Island Head Start program are Latino, Spanish-speaking families. We work to provide services that best fit the needs of these families. One of our goals as an agency is to encourage parental engagement in children’s development that extends to the home. Your project regarding Latino parental engagement in Head Start early literacy programs includes practices that are carried out in the home and will allow us the opportunity to better understand literacy behaviors for Latino families within our agency. This information will help us provide services that can help Latino parents support their children’s emergent literacy in the home environment.

We understand that you will be asking families from our Head Start program in Hall County to participate in this research during the 2010-2011 program year. We also understand their participation will consist of in-depth interviews at a time and place that is convenient to them and that the interviews will be conducted in the home language of the families. Additionally, you will be videotaping the portfolios that the families created during their participation in the program, along with comments they might make about the portfolios. Furthermore, you will use existing data, (e.g. Family Literacy Events attendance, Family Involvement Questionnaire) which will be provided through the Rural Language & Literacy Connections program. We are willing to provide the necessary administrative support to make this possible.

Finally, we have confidence in your research team’s approach to research; we believe our collaborative research efforts over the last six years provide evidence of our capacity to work effectively together. Additionally, Ms. Plata-Potter has worked very effectively as a
research assistant on projects within our agency, collecting information from children and families in a highly sensitive manner. We anticipate high levels of support from families, as we have experienced in our previous research collaborations. Thank you for sharing the details of this innovative project. We look forward to working together, should this project be funded.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Sieh
Policy Council Chairperson.
Appendix D: Demographic Questionnaire

Child Demographic Information

- Specification of primary caregiver
- Demographic Information of Child:
  - Birthdate
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Ethnicity
  - Race
  - Country of birth
  - Language
- Indication of enrollment in the following (start date, end date, age started, and age ended)
  - Early Head Start
  - Head Start
  - Student Parent Program
  - Early Intervention / Special Education
  - Other
- Child care outside of the home
  - Does it exceed 10 hrs per week?
  - Age child care > 10 hrs per week started
  - Number of different child care arrangements per week
  - Number of different child care providers involved in child’s life in a typical week

SPSS Items: fam_A1 –fam_A14i

Frequency of Administration: Demographic questions are asked once per year in the Fall, except in Year 1, questions were asked in the Spring semester.

Language: Translated to Spanish.

Year 1
Section A. Your Child and Family

A1. Are you the primary caregiver for the child? (please circle one) 1=Yes 0=No*

* A1a. If no, who is the primary caregiver and what is his/her relationship to the child? ________________________________

A2. What is the child’s birth date? _____ / _____ / _____ (month/ day/ year)
A3. How old is the child? ______ years ______ months

A4. What is the child’s gender? (please circle one) 1=Male 2=Female

A5. What do you consider the child’s ethnicity? (please check one)
   _____ a) Hispanic
   _____ b) Non-Hispanic

A6. What do you consider the child’s race? (please check one)
   _____ a) White, non-Hispanic
   _____ b) Black/African American
   _____ c) White, Hispanic or Latino
   _____ d) American Indian/ Alaska Native
   _____ e) Asian American
   _____ f) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
   _____ g) Other: Please specify ______________________________

A7. Was your child born in the United States? 1=Yes 0=No*

   *A7a. If no, where was your child born?
      ______________________________ (Province/ Country)

   *A7b. At what age did your child move to the United States? ______ years ______ months

A8. Does your child (or if infant, will your child) speak English? 1=Yes 0=No

A9. Does your child speak any other language? 1=Yes* 0=No

   *A9a. If Yes*, what language? ______________________________

   *A9b. If Yes*, at what age did you (or anyone) start speaking English to your child?
      _______ years _____ months   OR       ____ do not speak to child in English

A10. Please indicate if your child has attended any of the following programs, and the dates:
      Write “prenatal” if you enrolled before your child was born.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Age started</th>
<th>Age ended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Early Head Start</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Head Start</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Student Parent Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Early Intervention/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
151

e) Other _________ to _________   _________ to _________

(Please specify: __________________________)

Please answer these questions if your child is enrolled in care. This might be someone you pay for service, a family relative or friend. This should be a person who regularly cares for the child.

A11. Is your child currently enrolled in child care or cared for outside of the home on a regular basis (10 hours/week or more) by someone other than yourself?
   1=Yes  0=No

A12. How old was your child (in months) when he/she first started in a child care arrangement for 10 or more hours/week? ____________ (age in months)

   A12a. Has your child ever been in a child care arrangement?
   1 = Yes    0 = No

A13. How many different care arrangements does your child spend at least 10 hours in per week? ____________ number of different arrangements

A14. In a typical week, how many care providers are involved in your child’s life (including parent/s, grandparent/s, child care providers, other relatives, etc.)?
   a. 1    b. 2    c. 3    d. 4    e. 5    f. 6    g. 7    h. 8    i. 9 or more
Sección A. Su Hijo/a y Su familia

A1. ¿Es usted la persona encargada del cuidado de su hijo/a? (por favor encierre en un círculo una respuesta) 

1=Sí    0=No*

*A1a. Si respondió no, ¿quién es la persona encargada del cuidado de su hijo/a y qué es su relación con su hijo/a? ____________________________________________

A2. ¿Cuál es la fecha de nacimiento de su hijo/a? _____ / _____ / _____
(mes/día/año)

A3. ¿Cuántos años tiene su hijo/a? _____ años _____ meses

A4. ¿Cuál es el sexo de su hijo/a? (por favor encierre en un círculo una respuesta)
1= masculino  2= femenino

A5. ¿Cuál considera que es el grupo étnico de su hijo/a? (por favor marque una respuesta)
   _____ a) hispano/a
   _____ b) no hispano/a

A6. ¿Cuál considera que es la raza de su hijo/a? (por favor marque una respuesta)
   _____ a) anglosajón/a, no-descendencia hispana
   _____ b) afro-amerícano/a
   _____ c) blanco/a, hispano/a o latino/a
   _____ d) indio americano/a / nativo/a de Alaska
   _____ e) asiático/a
   _____ f) nativo/a de Hawai o de otra descendencia de las Islas del Pacífico
   _____ g) otro: por favor especifique ______________________________

A7. ¿Su hijo nació en los Estados Unidos? 1= Sí    2= No

*A7a. Si no nació en los EEUU, ¿dónde nació su hijo/a? ______________________________ (Ciudad/ Estado/ País)

*A7b. ¿A qué edad llegó su hijo/a a los Estados Unidos?
   _____ años _____ meses

A8. ¿Su hijo/a (o si es bebé, hablará su hijo/a) habla inglés? 1= Sí  0= No

A9. ¿Su hijo/a habla otro idioma? 1= Sí*    0= No

*A9a*. Si contesta sí, ¿cuál idioma? ______________________________

*A9b. Si contesta sí, ¿a qué edad comenzó usted (o alguien) comenzó hablarle en inglés a su hijo? _____ años _____ meses OR _____ no se le habla inglés al niño/a
Year 3
Section A. Your Child and Family

A1. Are you the primary caregiver for the child? (please circle one)  ○  Yes
         ○  No*
*A1a. If no, who is the primary caregiver and what is his/her relationship to the child?
         ______________________________________

A2. What is the child’s birth date?     _____ / _____ / _____ (month/ day/ year)

A3. How old is the child? ______years    ______months

A4. What is the child’s gender? (please circle one)  ○  Male
         ○  Female

A5. What do you consider the child’s ethnicity? (please check one)      ○   Hispanic
         ○   Non-Hispanic

A6. What do you consider the child’s race? (please check one)
         ○   White, non-Hispanic
         ○   Black/African American
         ○   White, Hispanic or Latino
         ○   American Indian/ Alaska Native
         ○   Asian American
         ○   Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
         ○   Other: Please specify ______________________________

A7. Was your child born in the United States?      ○    Yes
         ○    No*
*A7a. If no, where was your child born?
         ______________________________ (Province/ Country)

*A7b. At what age did your child move to the United States? ______years ______
       months

A8. Does your child speak English?  ○  Yes
         ○  No*

A9. Does your child speak any other language?       ○  Yes
         ○  No*
*A9a. If Yes*, what language? _____________________________

*A9b. If Yes*, at what age did you (or anyone) start speaking English to your child? 
_______years _____months OR ____ do not speak to child in English

A10. What languages do you use when you talk to your child? (Check all that apply)

○ English
○ Spanish
○ Another language

A11. What languages do other people at home use with your child?  (Check all that apply)

○ English
○ Spanish
○ Another language

A12. What languages does your child use when talking at home?  (Check all that apply)

○ English
○ Spanish
○ Another language

A13. What language do you think your child is most comfortable with now?  (Check one)

○ English
○ Spanish
○ Another language

**Children with Special Needs Information**

- Identify if the child has an identified disability
- For an identified child
  - Indicate whether they have been referred to the public school Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT)
    - Indicate if the child has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
    - Indicate if the child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

**SPSS Items:** fam_B1 – fam_B2b

**Frequency of Administration:**
Parent Questionnaire (All Times)

**Language:** Translated to Spanish.

**Section B. Children with Special Needs**

If you answer Yes* to any question in this section, please answer the follow-up questions.

B1. Does the child have an identified disability, such as physical, emotional, learning, language, hearing difficulty or other special needs?  
1=Yes*  
0=No

B2. Has the child been referred for evaluation for developmental delays through the public school Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT)?  
1=Yes*  
0=No

B2a. If Yes*, does child have an Individualized Family Service Plan?  
1=Yes*  
0=No

B2b. If Yes*, does child have an Individualized Educational Plan?  
1=Yes*  
0=No

**Sección B. Los Niños con Necesidades Especiales**

Si usted responde a cualquiera de las preguntas en esta sección afirmativamente (Sí)*, por favor conteste las siguientes preguntas.

B1. ¿Tiene su hijo/a una discapacidad identificada, la cual puede ser física, emocional, de aprendizaje, de lenguaje, una deficiencia auditiva u otras necesidades especiales?  
1=Sí*  
0=No

B1a. Si la respuesta es afirmativa* ¿Cuál es la discapacidad de su hijo/a o el diagnóstico?  
____________________________________________________________

B2a. ¿Ha tenido preocupación por retrasos o diferencias en el desarrollo de su niño/a?  
1=Sí*  
0=No

B2b. ¿Ha mostrado la persona encargada de cuidar a su hijo/a preocupación por retrasos o diferencias en el desarrollo de su niño/a?  
1=Sí*  
0=No

B2c. ¿Ha mostrado el maestro/a preocupación por retrasos o diferencias en el desarrollo de su niño/a?  
1=Sí*  
0=No
B2d. ¿Ha mostrado alguien más/otra persona preocupación por retrasos o diferencias en el desarrollo de su niño/a? 1=Si* 0=No
¿Quién? ____________________

B2aa. Si su respuesta es afirmativa* ¿Cuál es la preocupación? ________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

B3. ¿Se ha hecho algún tipo de discusiones/métodos informales para remediar estas preocupaciones? 1=Si* 0=No

B3a. Si su respuesta es afirmativa* explique los esfuerzos y los resultados
____________________________________________________________________

B4. ¿Ha sido el/la niño/a referido/a para una evaluación de desarrollo tardío a través del Equipo Multi-disciplinario de la escuela pública (MDT)? 1=Si* 0=No

B4a. Si su respuesta es afirmativa* Fecha que fue referido ______ Fecha que fue evaluado ______

B5. Si su respuesta es afirmativa* ¿El equipo multi-disciplinario de la escuela pública (MDT) ha identificado que su niño/a tiene necesidades especiales o desarrollo tardío? 1=Si* 0=No

B5a. Si su respuesta es afirmativa* ¿Tiene el niño un Plan Individualizado de Servicio Familiar (IFSP)? 1=Si* 0=No

B5b. Si su respuesta es afirmativa* ¿Tiene el niño un Plan Individualizado Educacional (IEP)? 1=Si* 0=No
Parent Demographic Information

- Parent Demographics
  - Relationship to child
  - Age
  - Birthdate
  - Gender
  - Ethnicity
  - Race
  - Birth country
  - Language of the home
  - Age at birth of first child
  - Age at birth of this child
  - Marital status
  - Highest level of education completed

- Household Configuration
  - List of people living in the home
  - Father figure in home
  - Mother figure in home
  - Frequency the child sees his/her biological father
  - Frequency the child sees his/her biological mother

- Current employment or school situation
  - Specify job
  - Specify if spouse or partner is employed

- Monetary Activities in the Household
  - Specify forms of assistance received in the past year
  - Specify total income for the household last month
  - Specify total income for the household last year
  - Specify amount paid in rent each month

- Household Safety
  - Indicate number of times moved in the last 12 months

**SPSS Items:** fam_C1 – fam_C24d

**Frequency of Administration:** Demographic questions were collected each year during the Fall assessment period, except in Year 1 when they were collected in the Spring semester.

**Language:** Translated to Spanish.

**Section C. You and Your Family**

C1. What is your relationship to the child? (please check one)

_____ a) Mother

_____ b) Father

_____ c) Grandmother

_____ d) Grandfather
e) Stepmother
f) Stepfather
g) Foster mother
h) Foster father
i) Other: Please specify ___________________________

C2. What is your age? ____________________

D2a. What is your birth date? _____ / _____ / _____ (month/ day/ year)

C3. What is your gender? (circle one)
1=Male 2=Female

C4. What do you consider your ethnicity? (please check one)
   _____ a) Hispanic
   _____ b) Non-Hispanic

C5. What do you consider your race? (please check one)
   _____ a) White, non-Hispanic
   _____ b) Black/African American
   _____ c) White, Hispanic or Latino
   _____ d) American Indian/ Alaska Native
   _____ e) Asian American
   _____ f) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
   _____ g) Other: Please specify ______________________________

C6. Were you born in the United States? 1=Yes 0=No

D6a. If no, where were you born? ______________________ (Province/ Country)

D6b. How long have you lived in the United States?
   _____ years   _____ months

C7. What language is spoken most frequently in your child’s home?
   ________________________________

C8. How old were you at the birth of your first child? _______________ years old

C9. How old were you at the birth of THIS child? _______________ years old

C10. What is your current marital status? (please check only one)
   _____ a) married
   _____ b) divorced
   _____ c) single, never married
   _____ d) separated
   _____ e) widowed
   _____ f) with partner/ not married
C11. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (please check only one)

- a) no formal schooling
- i) some training beyond high school but not a degree
- b) less than 8th grade
- c) 9th grade
- d) 10th grade
- e) 11th grade
- f) 12th grade
- g) High school diploma
- h) GED
- j) one year vocational training certificate
- k) two year college degree
- l) four year college degree
- m) some graduate college coursework
- n) graduate college degree

C12. Who lives in your home?
List all of the people living in your household (including yourself and all adults and all children, including child in the study). First names or initials can be used to protect privacy, if you wish to do so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initials</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex (circle)</th>
<th>Relationship of this person to your child (father, sister, cousin, grandparent, friend etc.)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>M or F</td>
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<td>M or F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C13. Is there a father figure living in the home?  1=Yes  0=No (may be biological or other person who is like a father to the child)

C13a. If so, who is it? (please check one)

- a) Biological father
- b) Step father
- c) Uncle
- d) Grandfather
- e) Mother’s boyfriend
- f) Adoptive father
g) Foster father
h) Other: _______________________________________

C14. Is there a mother figure living in the home? 1=Yes  0=No
(may be biological or other person who is like a mother to the child)

C14a. If so, who is it? (please check one)
   a) Biological mother
   b) Step mother
   c) Aunt
   d) Grandmother
   e) Father’s girlfriend
   f) Adoptive mother
   g) Foster mother
   h) Other: _______________________________________

C15. How often does your child see his/her biological father? (please check one)
   a) Rarely or never
   b) Several times a year
   c) Several times a month
   d) Several times a week
   e) Every day
   f) Don’t know

C16. How often does your child see his/her biological mother? (please check one)
   a) Rarely or never
   b) Several times a year
   c) Several times a month
   d) Several times a week
   e) Every day
   f) Don’t know

C17. Are you currently (please provide answer for each item):
   a) Working full-time (30 or more hours/week) 1=Yes  0=No
   b) Working part-time (less than 30 hours/week) 1=Yes  0=No
   c) Unemployed 1=Yes  0=No
   d) Looking for work 1=Yes  0=No
   e) Laid off 1=Yes  0=No
   f) In school/ training (full-time) 1=Yes  0=No
   g) In school/ training (part-time) 1=Yes  0=No
   h) In military 1=Yes  0=No
   i) Something else 1=Yes  0=No

   Please explain: _______________________________________

C18. If you are currently working, what is your job?

   ______________________________________
C19. If applicable, is your spouse/partner currently employed?  
1=Yes  0=No  
2=N/A

C20. Did you receive assistance from any of the following sources over the past year (12 months)?

a) WIC  
   1=Yes  0=No

b) School lunch/ breakfast program  
   1=Yes  0=No

c) Earned income tax credit  
   1=Yes  0=No

d) Childcare assistance  
   1=Yes  0=No

e) Housing assistance  
   1=Yes  0=No

f) Energy/ fuel assistance  
   1=Yes  0=No

g) Transportation assistance  
   1=Yes  0=No

h) Education grants or loans  
   1=Yes  0=No

i) Medicaid  
   1=Yes  0=No

j) Welfare (TANF)  
   1=Yes  0=No

k) Unemployment Insurance  
   1=Yes  0=No

l) SSI or SSDI  
   1=Yes  0=No

m) Social Security Retirement or Survivor’s benefits  
   1=Yes  0=No

n) Veteran’s benefits  
   1=Yes  0=No

o) Spousal support  
   1=Yes  0=No

p) Food stamps  
   1=Yes  0=No

q) Child support  
   1=Yes  0=No

C21. Thinking about all the sources of income you and your family received, including those from the list above, what was the total income for your household last month (your best guess is fine):

   ____ a) Less than $250
   ____ b) Between $250 and $500
   ____ c) Between $501 and $750
   ____ d) Between $751 and $1000
   ____ e) Between $1001 and $1250
   ____ f) Between $1251 and $1500
   ____ g) Between $1501 and $1750
   ____ h) Between $1751 and $2000
   ____ i) Over $2001
   ____ j) Don’t know

C22. Thinking about all the sources of income you and your family received, including those from the list above, what was the total income for your household last year (your best guess is fine):

   ____ a) Less than $8,000
   ____ b) Between $8,000 and $10,000
c) Between $10,001 and $12,000
d) Between $12,001 and $14,000
e) Between $14,001 and $16,000
f) Between $16,001 and $18,000
g) Between $18,001 and $20,000
h) Between $20,001 and $22,000
i) Between $22,001 and $24,000
j) Between $24,001 and $28,000
k) Between $28,001 and $30,000
l) Over $30,000
m) Don’t know

C23. Housing is usually the largest expense for families. About how much do you pay for housing each month (e.g. rent)?
a) Housing is subsidized, paid in full
b) Less than $100
c) Between $100 and $200
d) Between $201 and $300
e) Between $301 and $400
f) Between $401 and $500
g) Between $501 and $600
h) Between $601 and $700
i) Between $701 and $800
j) Between $801 and $900
k) Between $901 and $1000
l) More than $1001

C24. How many times have you moved in the last 12 months?
a) Never moved
b) 0-1 moves
c) 2-3 moves
d) 4 or more moves
Appendix E: Family Involvement Questionnaire

Section J. Family Involvement

How frequently do you do the following? Please circle the number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- J1. I attend conferences with the teacher to talk about my child’s learning or behavior. 1 2 3 4
- J2. I schedule meetings with administrators to talk about problems or to gain information. 1 2 3 4
- J3. I talk to my child’s teacher about his/her daily school routine. 1 2 3 4
- J4. I participate in planning classroom activities with the teacher. 1 2 3 4
- J5. I attend parent workshops or training offered by my child’s school. 1 2 3 4
- J6. I talk to my child’s teacher about the class rules. 1 2 3 4
- J7. I talk with my child’s teacher on the telephone. 1 2 3 4
- J8. I participate in planning school trips for my child. 1 2 3 4
- J9. I talk to the teacher about how my child gets along with his/her classmates in school. 1 2 3 4
- J10. I volunteer in my child’s classroom. 1 2 3 4
- J11. I participate in fundraising activities at my child’s school. 1 2 3 4
- J12. The teacher and I write notes to each other about my child or school activities. 1 2 3 4
- J13. I talk to my child’s teacher about my child’s accomplishments. 1 2 3 4
- J14. I go on class trips with my child. 1 2 3 4
- J15. I participate in parent and family social activities at my child’s school. 1 2 3 4
- J16. I hear teachers tell my child how much they love learning. 1 2 3 4
- J17. I talk to my child’s teacher about his/her difficulties at school. 1 2 3 4
<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J18.</td>
<td>I talk with other parents about school meetings and events.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J19.</td>
<td>I talk with people at my child’s school about training or career development opportunities for myself.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J20.</td>
<td>I talk with my child’s teacher about school work he/she is expected to practice at home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J21.</td>
<td>I talk with my child’s teacher about our personal and family matters.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J22.</td>
<td>I meet with other parents from my child’s classroom outside of school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J23.</td>
<td>I feel that parents in my child’s classroom support each other.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J24.</td>
<td>I review my child's schoolwork.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J25.</td>
<td>I keep a regular morning and bedtime schedule for my child.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J26.</td>
<td>I praise my child for his/her schoolwork in front of the teacher.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J27.</td>
<td>I share stories with my child about when I was in school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J28.</td>
<td>I take my child places in the community to learn special things (e.g. zoo, museum, etc.).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J29.</td>
<td>I check to see that my child has a place at home where books or school materials are kept.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J30.</td>
<td>I talk about my child's learning efforts in front of relatives and friends.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J31.</td>
<td>I talk with my child about how much I love learning new things.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J32.</td>
<td>I bring home learning materials for my child (tapes, videos, books).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J33.</td>
<td>I maintain clear rules at home that my child should obey.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J34.</td>
<td>I spend time with my child working on reading/writing skills.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J35.</td>
<td>I spend time with my child working on creative activities (like singing, dancing, drawing and storytelling).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J36.</td>
<td>I spend time with my child working on number skills.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix F: Recruitment Flyer

Hello,

I am a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln who has conducted Spanish focus groups and child assessments for children in Head Start centers. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project. You have been selected because your child was enrolled in the Head Start program and you may have created a portfolio with your child, which was given to you at the beginning of the school year in a red bag.

I would like to interview you so that you can share your beliefs about your child's literacy practices with your child. You will also have an opportunity to share about the portfolio that you and your child created (the portfolio you received in a red bag) and share how it was created and the things you put into it.

The purpose of this research study is to learn about Latino parents' beliefs and how they engage in literacy practices in the home with their children. This study can serve as an avenue to help define Latino parental engagement as it translates into home literacy practices which enhance preschool children's skills for success in kindergarten and beyond.

For your participation and appreciation for your time, you will receive a $20 gift card.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, you can do one of the following:

- Call me at 402-472-2448. I am bilingual and can communicate in English.
- Return the self-addressed stamped envelope that is included in the packet; the enclosed form with your contact information and I will call you.

Looking forward to hearing from you and in sharing your experiences. Thank you.

[Image of a child holding a book]
Appendix G: Recruitment Letter of Interest

**Letter of Interest**

**PARENTAL LITERACY BELIEF AND ENGAGEMENT STUDY**

Dear Parent,

This letter is to inform us of your interest to participate in this study. Please fill in the information below, which should include your name, telephone number where we can reach you, and the best time and day to call. Put it in the self-addressed stamped envelope included with your packet and send it to us through regular mail. You also have the option to call us to let us know your interest to participate in this study. If you get voice mail when you call, please leave your name and telephone number, and we will return your call as quickly as possible. You can also call this number if you have questions about the study.

Telephone number to call if interested in study:

Sandra Plata-Potter  402-472-2448

Your name: ________________________________

Your telephone number: ______________________

Best time to call you: _______________________


Appendix H: Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form

Project: Parental Literacy Beliefs and Engagement in Homes of Dual Language Learners: A Mixed Methods Study

You are invited to participate and to permit your child, ______________ , to participate in a research study that will help us understand parental beliefs and engagement in home literacy practices. You have been invited to participate in this study because of your participation in the Rural Language and Literacy Connections (Rural LLC) project through Head Start or Grand Island Public Schools. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision.

Purpose of the research: To learn about parental beliefs and engagement within the homes of dual language learners. This study will help inform practitioners on the types of strategies employed by Latino families to help their children succeed academically.

Procedures: You will participate in an in-depth interview that will take place at a time and location convenient to you, where you will have an opportunity to share how you engage in literacy practices in the home. You will be asked to share the Literacy Portfolio created by your child and you during your involvement in Rural LLC. All comments about the portfolio will be welcomed, including comments made by the focus child. During this time, with your permission, you and your child, depending on their choice of involvement, will be audiotaped and videotaped as you are interviewed. In addition, researcher with take photographs of the portfolio. You will also complete a demographic questionnaire. You will meet with a researcher for approximately 90 minutes.

Risks and/or discomforts: There are no known risks for participation in this study. Your participation in this study will not affect your relationship with Head Start in any way.

Benefits and compensation: Participation in this study can be a pleasant experience for you as you share your child’s progress. You will receive a $20 Wal-Mart gift card for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: All information collected will be completely confidential. All identifying information will be removed and your participation and identity will be confidential. Tapes and completed papers will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings, but you and your child’s identity will be kept strictly confidential.

Opportunity to ask questions: You can ask questions about the Parental Literacy Engagement and Beliefs in Homes of Dual Language Learners study and get answers to your questions now or at any time during the study. You may call Sandie Plata-Potter (402-472-2448) or Lisa Kroche (402-472-4212) to discuss the study, or email splatapotter@gmail.com. If you have concerns about the study or if either Ms. Plata-Potter or Dr. Kroche cannot answer questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board, telephone 402-472-3665.

Freedom to withdraw: Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time. If you withdraw from the study, it will not harm your relationship with the researchers, the University of Nebraska, or Head Start. If you withdraw, you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.

Consent: You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.
Check if you agree to the use of your child’s comments about the portfolio as part of the research.
Check if you agree for both you and your child to be audiotaped as part of the research.
Check if you agree for both you and your child to be videotaped as part of the research.
Check if you agree to have the portfolio photographed as part of the research.
Check if you permit use of audio recordings, video recordings, still photos, and/or other documents for use in professional situations (your identity will be withheld in these situations).

________________________________________
Child’s name

________________________________________
Signature of Parent

Date

Name and phone number of investigators:
Sandra Pata-Potier, M.A., Principal Investigator  Office: (402) 472-2448
Lisa Knoche, Ph.D., Supervising Investigator  Office: (402) 472-4921

IN MY JUDGEMENT THE PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN IS VOLUNTARILY AND KNOWINGLY GIVING INFORMED CONSENT AND POSSESS THE LEGAL CAPACITY TO GIVE INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY.

________________________________________
Signature of investigator

Date

2 of 2
Appendix I: Supplemental Demographic Questions

Supplemental Demographic Questions

Name: ______________________________________ Date: ______________

1. What is your country of origin? ______________________________________
   a. If not U.S., how long have you lived in the U.S. ______________

2. What is your parent’s country of origin? Father: ___________ Mother: ___________

3. In what country was your child born (focus child)? _________________

4. The language spoken in the home is:

   a. Spanish ( ) English ( ) Both ( )
   b. If both, would you say more Spanish ( ) more English ( )

5. What language does your child prefer to speak?

   a. Spanish ( ) English ( ) Both ( )
   b. If both, would you say your child prefers Spanish ( ) English ( )

6. (If there are siblings in the home) What language does your child speak with siblings?

   a. Spanish ( ) English ( ) Both ( )
   b. If both, would you say it's more Spanish ( ) English ( )

7. When you watch television do you watch:

   a. Spanish programs ( ) English programs ( ) Both ( )
   b. If both, do you prefer Spanish ( ) English ( )

8. When your child watches television, is it:

   a. Spanish programs ( ) English programs ( ) Both ( )
   b. If both, is the preference Spanish ( ) English ( )

9. Persons living in the home:  No  Yes  How many
10. Do you have relatives who live in your same town? No____ Yes____
Check all that apply:
Parent(s) ( ) Siblings ( ) In-Laws ( ) Other Relatives ( )
If other relatives, please describe:
________________________________________________________________________

11. Do you have relatives who live in another town, but within a day’s driving distance No____ Yes____
Check all that apply:
Parent(s) ( ) Siblings ( ) In-Laws ( ) Other Relatives ( )
If other relatives please describe:
________________________________________________________________________

12. Mother’s highest level of education

12. Father’s highest level of education
completed (years):

a. Less than 1 year (  )
b. 1 year (  )
c. 2 years (  )
d. 3 years (  )
e. 4 years (  )
f. 5 years (  )
g. 6 years (  )
h. 7 years (  )
i. 8 years (  )
j. 9 years (  )
k. 10 years (  )
l. 11 years (  )
m. 12 years (  )
n. More than 12 years (  )

completed (years):

a. Less than 1 year (  )
b. 1 year (  )
c. 2 years (  )
d. 3 years (  )
e. 4 years (  )
f. 5 years (  )
g. 6 years (  )
h. 7 years (  )
i. 8 years (  )
j. 9 years (  )
k. 10 years (  )
l. 11 years (  )
m. 12 years (  )
n. More than 12 years (  )
Appendix J: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Project: PARENTAL LITERACY BELIEF AND ENGAGEMENT IN HOMES OF DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

Date of Interview: _____________  Time of Interview: _____________  Location: ___________

Interviewer: ______________________________  Interviewee: _________________________

Introduction: (a) Describe purpose of study, (b) how confidentiality will be main-
tained, (c) approximate length of interview, (d) if they have any questions. [Turn on audio and video recorder]

## QUESTIONS

| 1. | To begin, talk to me about your experiences as a child in relation to literacy, reading.  
\> Did you have books at home, were you read to?  
\> Did you have a favorite book?  
\> How did your experiences as a child contribute to how you introduced your child to reading? |
| 2. | What do you believe is the role of the parent with regard to literacy in the home?  
\> Probe for views they may have had before participating in the Head Start project.  
\> Probe for specific examples. |
| 3. | Now that your child has been enrolled in Head Start and you have participated in an emergent literacy project, have you seen changes in how you view literacy and the role of the parent?  
\> Probe for specific examples. |
| 4. | I would like you to now share with me about your different home literacy practices.  
\> Probe for specific examples.  
\> Keep in mind other siblings or relatives in the home and their involvement.  
\> Probe about Read Together Talk Together: if it was used,  
\> what did they think about it, |
was it followed in its entirety,
what changes were made,
were these changes made to match the culture
was there a favorite book, was it requested repeatedly
did they enjoy the bilingual books, did they prefer the monolingual books, why?

NOTES:

5. Did you participate in the construction of a Family Literacy Portfolio?
   - If yes and if they gave consent, state that you would like to look at the portfolio and video tape and take pictures of the contents.
   - Tell parent that as the pages are turned you would like parent to narrate something about each page, (i.e., why something was done, what did it mean (to the child), do they see progress in their child's work.

NOTES:

6. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about literacy in the home, your experiences in the project?

NOTES: