

# *Latinos and Early Education:*



*An Account of Diversity and Family  
Involvement*

# Overview

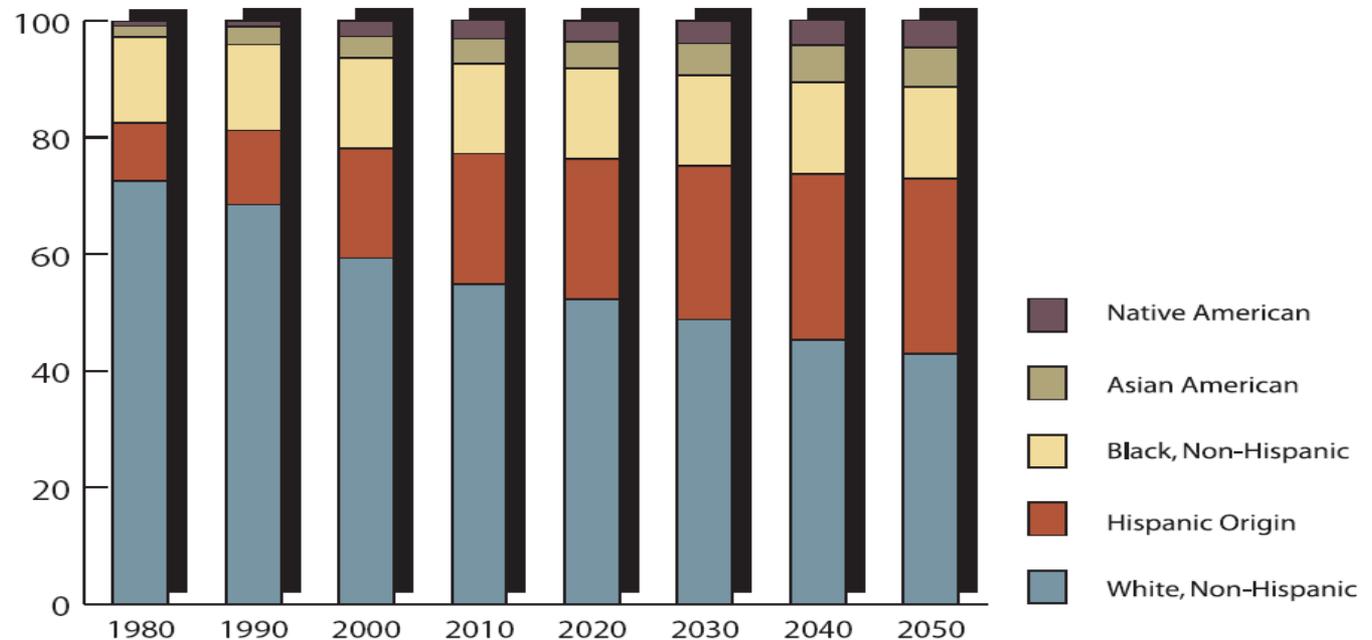


- Latino demographics
- Educational circumstances
- Parent Involvement and Positive Effects
- Latino family characteristics & academic effects
- Promising early childhood and education programs with a parent involvement focus
- Conclusion

# Latino Demographics

- Largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group in the US

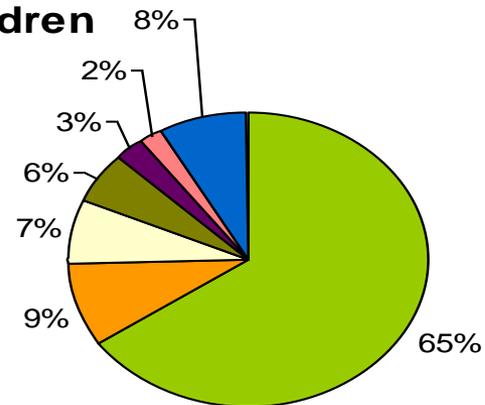
Figure 1: Percentage of U.S. Children Ages 0-8 in Specified Racial/Ethnic Groups  
1980 - 2050



# Latino Demographics

- Representing various Latin American countries
- Majority are of Mexican descent

Year 2000 National Heritage Breakdown for Young Hispanic Children

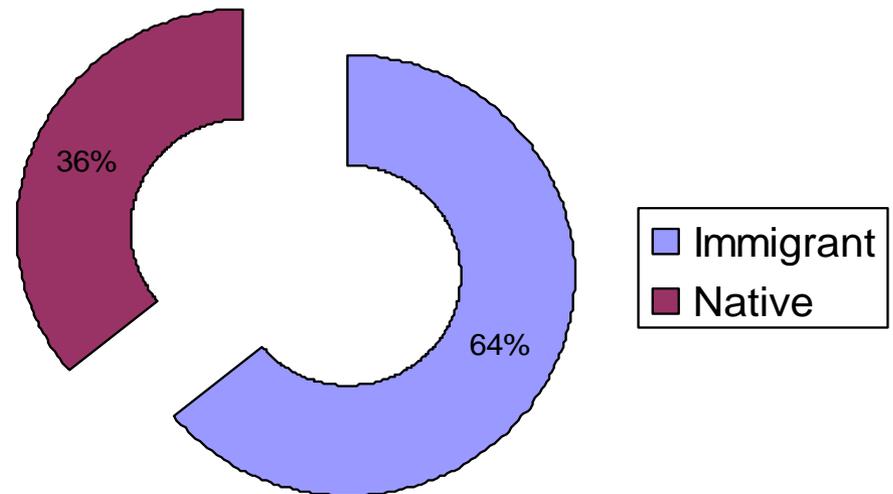


■ Mexican  
■ Puerto Rican  
■ Central American  
■ South American  
■ Dominican  
■ Cuban  
■ Other Hispanic/Latino

# Latino Demographics

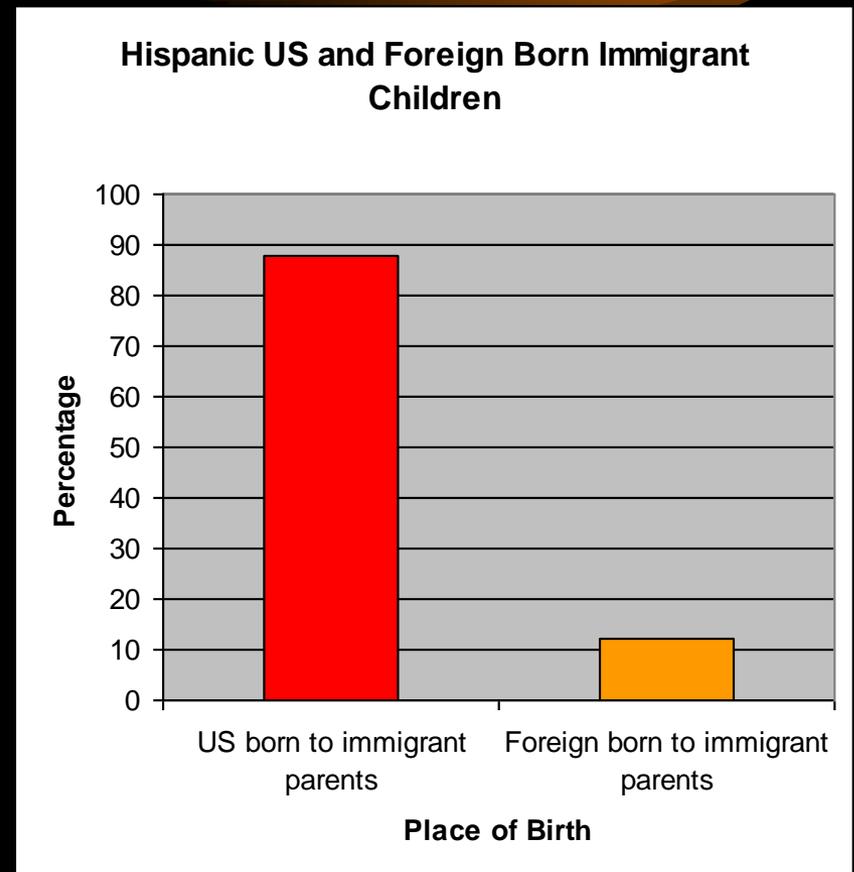
- Most young Hispanic children come from immigrant families

Young Hispanic Children's Families' Immigrant Status



# Latino Demographics

- 88% of all Hispanic immigrant children are US born



# *Latino Demographics*

- Hispanic maternal educational attainment varies by:
  - Immigrant status
    - Native mothers are 50% more likely than immigrant mothers to hold a college degree.
  - National heritage
    - Mexican and Central American mothers are the least likely groups to have college degrees.
    - South American and Cuban mothers are the most likely groups to have finished college.

# *Young Hispanic Children's Educational Circumstances*

- Academic Gap
  - Hispanic children start kindergarten behind in mathematics and English knowledge when compared to White children
  - However, at nine months of age no gap is identified by race/ethnicity in infant development outcomes

# *Young Hispanic Children's Educational Circumstances*

- Early achievement gap varies by national heritage
  - Cuban, Puerto Rican and South American children start kindergarten approximately half a standard deviation below White students in math
  - However, Mexican and Central American children start about one standard deviation below those of White children

# *Young Hispanic Children's Educational Circumstances*

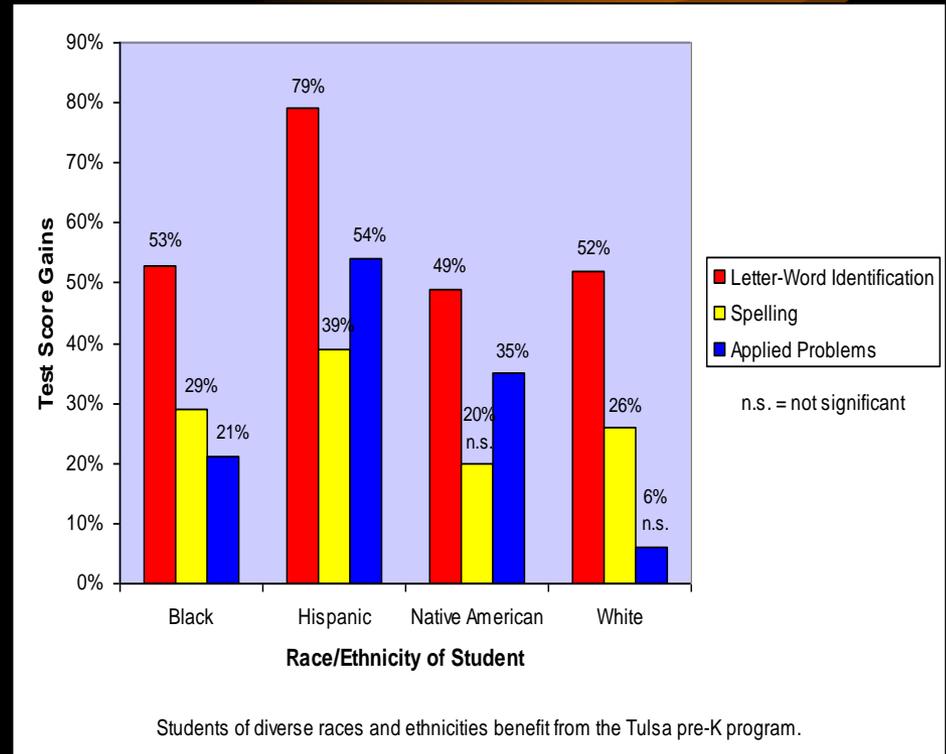
- Language spoken at home and achievement
  - Children whose only or main language at home is Spanish start kindergarten with weak skills in math and reading compared to those of children whose dominant language at home is English
  - Rapid success in kindergarten and first grade, primarily in reading is more apparent in children from homes in which Spanish is the only language spoken

# *Young Hispanic Children's Educational Circumstances*

- Hispanic children face negative structural educational circumstances and segregated schooling
- Latino children
  - are the most segregated group of children in the American educational system
  - are much more likely to attend schools that are overcrowded, with a high proportion of students of color who live in poverty, with under-qualified teachers
  - are the least likely group of children to attend preschool
    - Although Hispanic parents have demonstrated great interest in enrolling their children in preschool programs if programs were available

# Young Hispanic Children's Educational Circumstances

- High quality preschool positively affects young Latino children's academic wellbeing



# *Parent Involvement and Positive Effects*



- When parents are educationally involved:
  - students improve academically
  - students have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in post-secondary education
  - teachers hold higher opinion of parents (Antunez, 2000)

# *Parent Involvement and Latinos*



- Parent involvement initiatives that are normally in place in schools better complement the values of mainstream, middle class families
- Schools are particularly challenged when providing services to Latino immigrant families

# *Common Factors Dissuading Immigrant Parent Involvement*

- Language and cultural differences
- Lack of familiarity with U.S. school system
- Inflexible work and school functions schedules
- Lack of transportation
- School's climate toward immigrants & parent involvement

# *Successful Parent Involvement Strategies for Immigrant Families*

- Initiatives should be carried out in the families' home language
- Programs should be community based
  - Families should be consulted when creating programs intended for their use
  - When possible programs should be facilitated by members of the community
- Information about schools and programs, leadership and decision making power needs to be shared with parents

# *Hispanic Family Characteristics & Positive Educational Effects*

- **Familism**

- family identification, obligation and support (Velez-Ibañez & Greenberg, 1992).
- Positively affect Latino students' academics (Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994).

- **Intact Families**

- help contribute to Mexican-American children's high levels of psychological wellbeing, which in turn positively affects academics (Crosnoe, 2006).

- **Educational “Positivism”**

- *Esperanzas; Educacion; Confianza* have been linked to family education participation (Garcia, Schribner & Cuellar, 2009).

# *Promising Hispanic Parent Involvement Programs*



- Abriendo Puertas
- Home Instruction of Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPOY)
- AVANCE
- Project FLAME (Family Literacy: Aprendiendo, Mejorando, Educando)
- Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)

# *Abriendo Puertas*

- Parent leadership program
- Based in Los Angeles County
- Serves first-generation, Latino immigrant families
  - Children ages zero to five
- Curriculum based on cultural strengths
  - Uses dichos (culturally-based proverbs) to frame sessions
- Facilitated by members of the community in Spanish

# *Abriendo Puertas: Ten Sessions at a Glance*

- Learning about being a child's first teacher
- Setting goals for the future
- Learning about child development
- Promoting literacy at home and in the community
- Accessing community resources
- Accessing child health and nutrition information
- Learning about children's and parents socio-emotional needs
- Promoting early childhood education
- Advocating for children
- Discussing future plans and a graduation ceremony

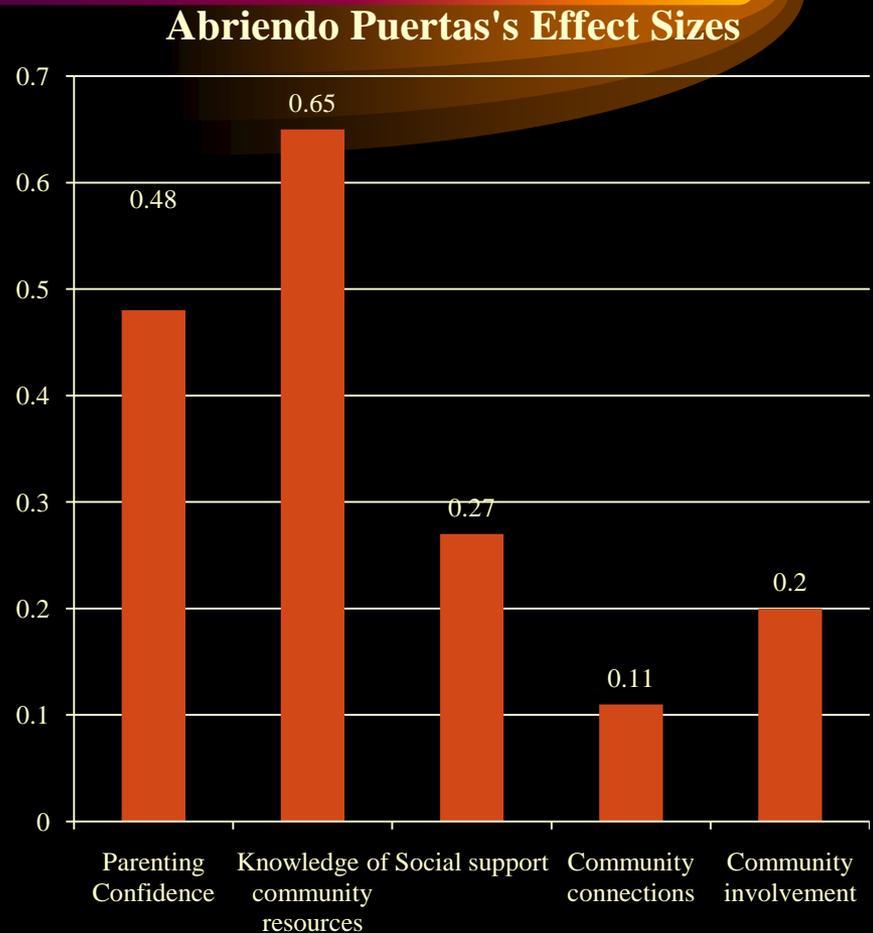
# *Abriendo Puertas Research*

- An evaluation of Abriendo Puertas's impact on participating parents was conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods
- The participants were mostly:
  - Mexican nationals(70%+)
  - In their 30s (57%)
  - Married (70%+)

# *Abriendo Puertas Research*

**Parents in the Program  
have an increased sense of:**

- Parenting confidence
- Knowledge of community resources
- Social support
- Community connections & involvement



# *Abriendo Puertas Research*

- Qualitative Findings
  - Many parents had the misconception that public libraries offered services only to U.S. citizens
  - Before program participation were often unaware about mental and health services available to them and their families in their own communities
  - Many parents were unaware of the high dropout rate for Latinos
    - *“...with the information that was provided we became critically conscious of the state of Latinos in public schools, and this has created a commitment to do something different—to help in any way that I can.”*

# *Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)*

- A school readiness and literacy home visitation program
  - Develop children's language, visual-motor, sensory, perceptual and problem solving abilities
  - Families with children ages three, four and five.
- First instituted in Israel to serve immigrant families
  - Established in 7 countries
- 30 weekly visits conducted by people who are part of same community
- In the U.S., it serves a large proportion of Latino immigrant families

# *HIPPY Research*

- Children whose parents participated in HIPPY were found to outperform children whose parents were not part of HIPPY :
  - HIPPY Children:
    - Had higher classroom grades and reading and language arts
    - Significantly less likely to be suspended
    - Had higher standardized math scores
    - Were rated by their teachers as having higher academic performance
    - Experienced reduced levels of suspension
  - No significant differences in
    - Absenteeism
    - Special education placement

# *HIPPY Research and Latino Families*

- Quasi experimental design comparing Latino immigrant HIPPY families with Latino immigrant waitlisted families
- Dependent Variables:
  - Parent involvement, stress, depression, marital satisfaction, home environment and children's behavior and vocabulary.
- Parents in HIPPY treatment were found to have higher:
  - Parental efficacy
  - Marital satisfaction
- No significant differences in
  - Children's behavior, vocabulary, marital conflict or stress, maternal depression and social support

# *HIPPY Research and Latino Families*

- Quasi experimental design comparing Latino, English language children whose parents took part of HIPPY with those whose parents did not.
- Dependent Variables:
  - Texas based standardized testing in reading, mathematics and language arts
- HIPPY children
  - Outperformed the control group in all academic measures
  - Results were still found at the end of the third grade

# AVANCE

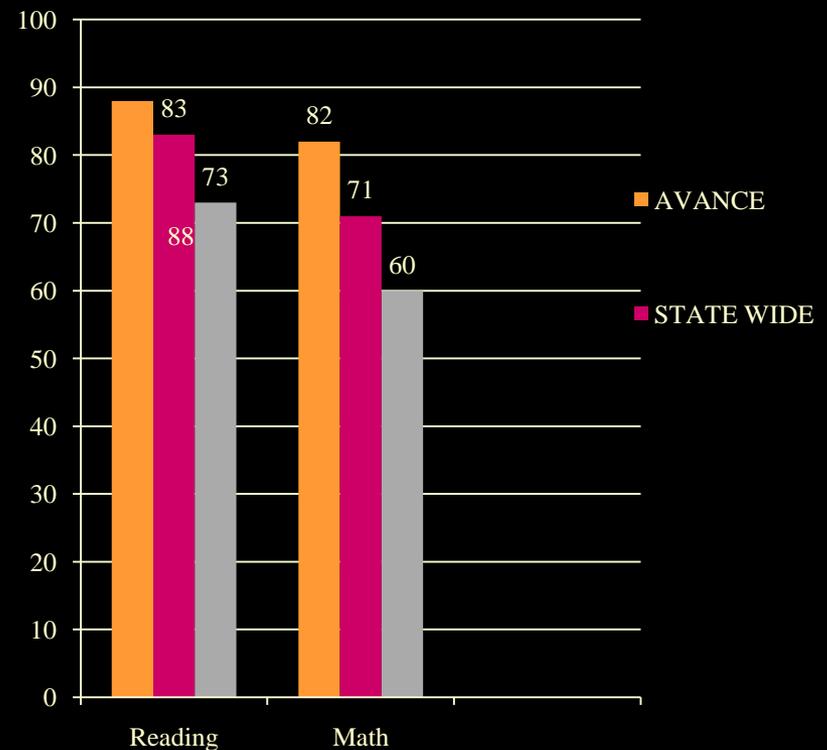
- Parent education program
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Year
    - Nine-month system with weekly meetings and monthly home visitations
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Year
    - Parents have option to complete a second year
    - Attend ESL and GED courses and/or take classes local community colleges
- Serves low-income Latino immigrant families
  - Children ages zero to three
- Implemented in 11 cities in Texas, in Los Angeles, California and expansion plans exist for New Mexico
  - Home visitors and facilitators are bilingual and live in the community of the participants

# AVANCE Research

## Quasi-Experimental study

- AVANCE Children compared to Non-AVANCE children
- Using the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TASK)
- In the 2005 TASK assessments a higher percentage of AVANCE children met state standards than students at DISD and state-wide

## Percentage of Children Meeting State Standard



# *AVANCE Research*

- Quasi-experimental design that matched participants and compared AVANCE impact on Mexican-American mothers of low-income circumstances.
- Dependent Variable:
  - Home Observation for the Measurement of the Environment (HOME)
  - Early Literacy Questionnaire (ELQ)
  - Coded videotapes of mothers interacting with their children
- AVANCE mothers achieved higher scores on all measures
  - higher levels of teaching efforts
  - Higher quality of mother's communicative vocalizations,
  - More encouragement of child's verbalizations

# *Project FLAME*



- Family literacy program
  - Grounded in sociocultural theory
  - Six monthly workshops
  - Biweekly ESL classes
- Serves first-generation, Latino families that are limited English proficient
  - Children ages three to nine
- Program has been implemented for twenty years
  - British Columbia, California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, South Carolina and Texas

# *Project FLAME Goals*

- Improving the school preparation of preschool children (ages 3 to 5) and the school achievement of school-aged children (ages 6 to 9) from families who participate in the program
- Increasing the parents' knowledge and confidence to provide literacy support for their children
- Increasing the parents' own literacy in both Spanish and English

# *10-Year Project FLAME*

## *Evaluation*

- An evaluation from 1999 to 2009 of Chicago sites found that the great majority of the parent participants are:
  - Women (95%+)
  - Of Mexican background (90%+)
  - Who speak Spanish at home (85%+)
  - Who have 8-10 years of formal Mexican education

# *10-year Project FLAME*

## *Evaluation*

- Estimates of impact of Project FLAME on children's school readiness and literacy development
- Pre and Post- test design of FLAME children
  - Pre-test at beginning of parent involvement with FLAME
  - Post-test toward the end of the parent's participation
- Dependent Variable
  - Letter awareness test (3-year-olds up to Kindergarten)
  - Print awareness test ( 4-year-olds up to 1<sup>st</sup> grade)
  - Boehm Test of Basic Knowledge (3-year-olds up to 1<sup>st</sup> grade)
  - Pre-LAS (4 to 6 year olds)
  - LAS oral test (1<sup>st</sup> grade and higher)

# *10-year Project FLAME*

## *Evaluation*

- The mean scores in the post tests were always significantly higher (.001 significance level) than the pre-test scores
- They had significant improvements in
  - Spanish letter recognition
  - Spanish print awareness
  - Spanish and English word concept at both preschool and school-age levels
  - Oral English proficiency

# *10-year Project FLAME*

## *Evaluation*

- Self-report data showed that parents were significantly more involved in the following behaviors after participation:
  - Showed their children signs and words in the street or market
  - Obtained a library card
  - Took their children to the library
  - Read books, newspapers, and magazines
  - Read books to their children
  - Encouraged their children to write
- Furthermore, more parents
  - Had knowledge of how to teach their children the alphabet
  - How to choose a developmentally appropriate book for their children.
  - Felt more competent in helping their children with homework.

# *10-year Project FLAME*

## *Evaluation*

- Estimates of impact of Project FLAME'S ESL classes on parents' English language and literacy skills
- Participants were pre and post tested
  - Adult LAS Oral and
  - LAS Reading tests
- The mean differences between the pre and post test of all areas but one were significant at .01 or .001.
- Parents significantly improved in
  - Oral vocabulary, oral sentence completion, reading vocabulary, reading fluency, reading for information, reading mechanics
- Parents did not significantly improve in
  - Oral conversation

# *Project FLAME*



- The analyses show that Project FLAME has positively impacted:
  - Parent's knowledge of literacy
  - The literacy activities that occur in the homes
  - Children's literacy
  - Parent's English skills

# *Parent Institute for Quality Education*



- Parent Involvement Program
- Works with Latino Immigrant Families
- California, Dallas, TX, Phoenix, AZ and Washington DC area
- 9 weekly, 90 minute sessions
- Conducted by bilingual facilitators who live in the community
- Received the 2005 National Council of La Raza's Affiliate of the Year Award

# *9 Week Sessions Discussion*

## *Topics*



- Orientation
  - Stresses the importance of parent involvement and the high drop-out rates of Latino students
- Building children's self-esteem
- Understanding the school system
- Learning strategies to support the child's education
- Disciplining children
- Communicating with teachers
- Preparing for college early
- Field trips to near by colleges
- A graduation ceremony

# *PIQE Research*

- An experimental study to measure PIQE effects found positive effects
- Participating parents showed significant treatment effects for
  - Home learning activities
  - Parents' expectations that their children would attend college
  - Academic knowledge
  - Parenting practices
  - Parent-child dialogue
  - Sense of self-efficacy for supporting their children's education
- Treatment and control groups were not significantly different in the home-school connection variable

# Conclusions

- Parent involvement can improve children's educational outcomes
- Schools are often ill-equipped to work with linguistically and culturally diverse immigrant families
- Community-based programs have tried to mitigate this program
  - providing parents with information about parenting, the US. Schooling system, parent involvement, literacy, and ESL classes
- Evaluations of the programs on average show promising findings for Latino immigrant parents
- More rigorous research is needed to conclusively decide if programs have positive effects on the children **and** the parents