

<b>Latino American Children And School Readiness: The Role Of Early Care Arrangements and Caregiver Language</b>
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**Project Description.**

The number of Latino children in the United States is steadily increasing (Mather, 2009). This demographic transformation presents several challenges for the United States, one of which is meeting the diverse educational needs of Latino children. This challenge is great; evidence from one national sample of kindergarten students estimates that by kindergarten the Latino-White achievement gaps are as large as 0.77 standard in math and 0.52 standard deviations in reading (Reardon and Galindo, 2009). Previous research indicates that high quality, center-based child care may help reduce these disparities (Bassok, 2010; Gormley, 2008). This dissertation aims to extend on this literature, using a nationally representative sample of Latino American children, to: (1) investigate selection processes into different care arrangements at 2- and 4-years of age, (2) estimate the impact of these different care arrangements on Latino American children's math, literacy and approaches to learning outcomes in the fall of kindergarten, and (3) examine whether these associations differ by the language spoken by the child's care provider.

**Research questions.**

- What factors predict Latino American children's enrollment into different care arrangements at 2-years (center-based care, parental care, or other home-based care) and 4-years (Head Start, pre-kindergarten, other center-based care, parental care, or other home-based care)?
- What are the associations between these care arrangements and Latino children's math, literacy, and approaches to learning scores in the fall of kindergarten?
- Are there differential treatment effects depending on the language of the care provider?

**Sample.**

This study will draw on a nationally representative sample of Latino American children from the birth cohort of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-B). Participating infants were followed from birth through kindergarten, with data collection occurring at 9-months (2001-2002), 2-years (2003-2004), 4-years (2005-2006), and kindergarten entry (2006 or 2007, depending on when the child began kindergarten).

**Methods.**

Question 1 will employ a series of logit regressions. Questions 2 and 3 will incorporate Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regressions, as well as Propensity Score Matching (PSM) for robustness checks. For all analyses, wave-appropriate weights that were specifically designed for ECLS-B by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will be applied to account for the multistage stratified sampling design of ECLS-B, non-response, and the oversampling of some children (e.g. twins).

**Progress Update.**

I am currently in the process of running several robustness checks, which were requested by my dissertation committee. First, the committee was concerned that the analyses did not account for differences in quality across the different centers and home-based care settings. So, additional analyses add control variables that measure aspects of classroom quality to see if this helps to explain the differences I initially found between center and home care. Second, the committee was curious how results for Latinos compare to Black and White children (for question 2). Thus, I completed additional analyses to see whether the results for Latinos are similar or

different than those results that would be found for Blacks and Whites.

**Implications for policy/practice.**

This study aims to inform policy efforts in several ways. First, the proposed study will inform efforts to increase enrollment in center-based child care for Latino children. Second, this study will provide less biased estimates of program effects at both 2- and 4-years of age on a variety of Latino children's academic outcomes. Such estimates provide evidence for states to tailor their programs and policies to best meet the needs of their young Latino children. Finally, the proposed study can inform states and federal decisions when enacting policies related to the language provided in early care arrangements.

**Implications for research.**

Several studies already show center-based care arrangements have particularly strong, positive implications for Latino children's academic outcomes (Bassok, 2010; Gormley, 2008), yet several gaps still remain. First, we know little about how Latino children select into care arrangements at age 2 or age 4. Second, while center-based care appears to have larger effects on school readiness

than parental care for Latino children, we know less about how different center-based arrangements compare to each other (e.g. Head Start vs. pre-kindergarten). Third, most studies estimate the effects of care arrangements for 3- and 4-year old children; we know relatively little about the effects for Latino children younger than that. Finally, many studies come from a single site or city, limiting the variability of data and generalizability of findings. The proposed study aims to address these limitations, using a nationally representative sample of Latino American children from the birth cohort of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study.

**For more information:**

<http://www.policyforchildren.org/>

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