A Two-Generation Approach to Supporting Immigrant Families

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Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium Meeting
Washington DC, April 17, 2019
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RISE OF CHILDREN AGES 0-5 IN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN U.S.

0% 10% 20% 30%

1990 2000 2015 2017

13.5% 20.3% 25.2% 25.0%

Migration Policy Institute, 2017
CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN THE U.S.: LOWER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

4th Grade Reading Proficiency
- Dual Language Learner: 7%
- English-Only Learner: 37%

4th Grade Math Proficiency
- Dual Language Learner: 14%
- English-Only Learner: 44%

Hernandez & Napierala, 2012
PARENT ESL PROGRAM: BENEFITS

- Higher levels of English language literacy are associated with increased levels of education, employment & wages
  
  Zong & Batalova, 2015

- Parents’ English proficiency plays a key role in children’s development and academic achievement
  
  Sibley & Dearing, 2014
HEAD START AS A PLATFORM FOR ESL SERVICES

- Head Start serves 300,000 Dual Language Learner (DLL) children annually
  - 97% speak Spanish as primary language
- Only 5% of Head Start parents receive ESL services

Office of Head Start, 2016
COMMUNITY-BASED ESL PROGRAMS: PRACTICE & RESEARCH

- Community-based, federally-funded
  - Often open enrollment
  - Few attendance requirements or supportive services

- Fewer than half of ESL students advance one or more instructional levels

TWO-GENERATION ESL APPROACH

Child

Two-Generation ESL Program
- Early Childhood Centers
  - High-quality Head Start Classrooms
  - Family Support Services

Parent

ESL Program
- Family-centered ESL curriculum
- Coordinated parent & child classes
- Small classes with coaching support
- Additional childcare & financial supports

Intermediate Benefits to Families
- Higher parent attendance & persistence in ESL
- Improved parent English-language skills
- Increased parent engagement in children’s schooling

Positive Child Development

Long-term outcomes
MODEL TWO-GENERATION ESL PROGRAM:

COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT OF TULSA COUNTY
COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT OF TULSA COUNTY

- Comprehensive anti-poverty agency with explicit two-generation mission

- Large Head Start & Early Head Start grantee

- Serves over 2,000 families in 13 Head Start centers in Tulsa County, OK
CAP TULSA’S ESL PROGRAM ADDRESSES KNOWN BARIERS

- Family scheduling difficulties
- Social isolation, limited connectedness
- Parent self-reported limited confidence and skills to advocate for children
CAP TULSA’S ESL PROGRAM: KEY TWO-GEN ELEMENTS

- Coordinated parent-child schedules
- Small classes (15-18 parents) for Head Start parents only
- ESL curriculum focused on parents’ interest and motivation to be involved in children’s schooling
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESL Curriculum Unit</th>
<th>Sample Classroom Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding Children’s School</td>
<td>Practice vocabulary related to children’s developmental domains</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Write sentences describing children’s progress in domains</td>
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<td>Role play parent-teacher conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents as Teachers/Family Literacy</td>
<td>Support interactive (dialogic) reading at home</td>
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CAP TULSA’S ESL PROGRAM: ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

- Greater intensity
  - Classes 4 times per week, 11 hours instruction
  - Weekly parent meetings

- Other supportive and financial services for parents and children (e.g., wrap-around child care, incentives)
Focus on all pre-college pathways, yet ESL became the largest

Experimental, mixed methods

Parent surveys, child assessments, focus groups, administrative data

Longitudinal study (N = 300), followed 3 years
EMBEDDED STUDY OF TWO-GEN ESL PROGRAM

- **Quantitative**
  - 3 ESL cohorts who entered fall 2014, spring 2015, and fall 2015
  - All eligible for 2 ESL program semesters

- **Qualitative, focus groups and interviews**
  - 35 eligible parents
  - 11 staff (ESL instructors, coaches, family support, leadership)
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS: SUB STUDY

- 97% Hispanic parents (84% born in Mexico)
- 94% mothers in two-parent households; 74% not employed at baseline
- 58% household incomes between $15,000 and $24,999
PARENT EDUCATION AT BASELINE

Less than a high school diploma or GED: 43%
High school diploma or GED: 43%
Postsecondary education: 14%
MEASUREMENT: PARENTS’ PROGRESS

- ESL program completion, persistence, attendance
- English language development
- Parent engagement with children
ESL PROGRAM COMPLETION AND PERSISTENCE

- High levels of program completion
  - 83% completed semester 1
  - 70% completed semester 2

- Two-thirds (66%) moved on to second semester

- About half (46%) completed semesters 1 & 2
ESL PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

- Average attendance rate (number of days attended out of days enrolled)
  - Enrolled in semester 1: 94%
  - Enrolled in semester 2: 88%
Parents who completed semester 1 and/or semester 2 advanced in their English language skills

- Moved 2 NRS ESL levels: on average from beginner to high intermediate level
- On average
  - Able to communicate basic needs
  - Participate in conversation in some social situations
  - Have some control of more complex grammar
INDICATORS OF PARENT ENGAGEMENT

- Increased knowledge of children’s development
- Improved parent-child learning
- Improved confidence, skills, and self-efficacy
My daughter can be friends with other kids.

My son can follow the rules.

My son can not be friendly.

My daughter can share with her friends.

My daughter can work hard at school.

My daughter.

My son can.

My daughter.

My son can.
Shared parent-child activities

- Reading together at home
- Shared homework
- Expanded language and literacy development
[The coach] also helped us to communicate better with our children when we read them a story… how we can interact with them to ask them questions about the book, which I had never done before…. I read to them in English since it helped me, but I didn’t know what I was saying. …they [in the ESL program] taught us to gesture while we are reading the book so that the children get excited.
One learns from children, they – I mean, my daughter is just learning the syllables. I say, I’m going to copy her, I mean, one learns from children, they go to school, right? But one learns from them also, and one practices what one learned at school with them....
Parents improve their confidence, skills, and self-efficacy
- Regular communication with doctors and teachers
- Completion of administrative forms
- Practice for key events (e.g., parent-teacher conferences)
[This class] has helped me much when I have to help my children do their homework, or if I have to go to the school because there is a problem there to talk to the teacher, or if they get sick, I can take them to emergencies. These classes have helped me to communicate, to be able to talk to my children’s teachers and not to depend much on my husband because I used to depend much on him.... Now I’m more independent.... It gives you much confidence because we don’t need a translator much.
COMPARISONS TO OTHER STUDIES

- Nationwide, 46% of students in federally-funded single-generation ESL programs advance at least one NRS level in a year

- 87% of CAP Tulsa students advance at least one level over two semesters

- Immigrant parents who pursue additional schooling increase their engagement with their children’s schooling

Kalil & Crosnoe, 2010
CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Holds great promise but jury is still out, especially for children
- Experimental study needed and planned
- Significant momentum in practice and policy
THANK YOU

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