



# Child Care Utilization Issues for Diverse Families: The case of Latino Families

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## **Demographic shift: National**

- Latinos constitute 14.4% of the US population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).
- 23% of all babies born in 2004 were of Latino mothers.
- Latino children comprise 33.9% of all children in poverty (US Census Bureau, 2004).



## **Critical issues related to Latino low-income families and the child care system are:**

- Low rate of utilization of licensed or registered child care.
- Low percentage receiving subsidies.
- Information about the quality of the child care they do access.



# Low child care utilization rate

- Among children ages 3-5 attending some form of center-based child care program:
  - 66% were African-American/Black
  - 53% were European American/White
  - 43% were Latino/Hispanic

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2006)



# Low percentage receiving subsidies

- Among children living in poverty, those using child care subsidies are:
  - 24% African-American/Black
  - 17% European-American/White
  - 5% Latino/Hispanic

(Kinukawa, Guzman & Lippman, 2004; study using data from National Household Education Survey)



# Quality of child care used by Latino families

- Among children who attended child care, Latino children lag behind at Kindergarten entry:
  - In a national sample (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten) Latino children lagged behind other racial/ethnic groups in letter recognition, phonemic awareness and reading proficiency (Reardon & Galindo, 2006).



# What explains low utilization rates among Latino families

- Research suggests that :
  - The role of race/ethnicity in child care utilization varies, and
  - Economic and structural factors may be more salient than demographic and/or cultural factors in explaining low utilization rates.



# What explains low utilization rates among Latino families (cont'd)

- Limited knowledge about the availability of child care services,
- Limited accessibility (shortage of center-based child care slots in Latino neighborhoods)
- Limited affordability, and
- Differences in child rearing perspectives.

(Becerra and Chi, 1992; Hernández, 2006; National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics, 2007; Valencia, Perez, & Eschevista Public Relations & Thomas Rivera Policy Institute, 2006).





# What explains low utilization rates among Latino families (cont'd)

- A study analyzing data from the US Census 2000 (Hernandez, 2006) found that among Mexican immigrant and Mexican-American 3- and 4-year-old children (72% of all Latino children):
  - Cultural factors (i.e., child's generation, number of years parents have been in the U.S., and mother's English fluency) accounted for no more than 15% of the child care enrollment gap compared to White children.
  - Socio-economic and structural factors (i.e., poverty level, mother's education, and parents' occupations) accounted for half or more of the enrollment gap.



# Other factors that need to be studied

- The complexities of the influences and interactions among factors such as:
  - Parenting practices,
  - Large family households,
  - Immigration status,
  - Children's developmental status, and
  - Use of several types of child care arrangements by one family (e.g., half day center plus relative-care; frequent changes in child care provider).



## **Demographic shift: The South**

- The South has the fastest growing Latino population in the country.
- Latino population increased about 400% in North Carolina in 1990-2000.
- Babies born to Latino mothers in NC grew from 2% in 1990 to 14% in 2004.



# Latino population in the New South

- Most are recent immigrants.
- The majority from rural communities in Mexico and Central America.
- Young adults (average age 26) starting their families.



# Goal of the study

- To increase knowledge about child care needs and factors related to child care utilization among Latino low-income working families living in the South.



# Research questions

- How are family characteristics associated with Latino low income parents' choice of care for their preschool age children?
- How are program characteristics associated with Latino low-income parents' choice of non-parental care?
- What are Latino parents' views about quality of care and about the extent to which the type and quality of child care they use meet their child care needs?



# Measures

- Semi-structured family interview
- Ethnographic family interview
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)
- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale –Revised (FCCERS-R).



# Study sites

- Three regions of NC:
  - Year 1: Western – Davidson, Guilford, Forsyth, Randolph, Rockingham Counties.
  - Year 2: Central – Alamance, Durham & Orange Counties.
  - Year 3: Eastern – New Hanover.





# Child care settings

- Child care centers (includes Head Start, for profit and not for profit)
- Family child care homes (regulated and unregulated; includes Spanish speaking providers)
- Parent / relative care



# Study design

Data	Year 1 (07/08): Western			Year 2 (08/09): Central			Year 3 (09/10): Eastern			Total
	Center	FCCH	Parent/ Relative	Center	FCCH	Parent/ Relative	Center	FCCH	Parent/ Relative	
FI <sup>a</sup>	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	450
QP <sup>b</sup>	24	24	--	24	24	--	24	24	--	144
EI <sup>c</sup>	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	45

<sup>a</sup> Family Interviews; <sup>b</sup>Quality practices; <sup>c</sup> Ethnographic interviews.



# This study will contribute to:

- **Advance knowledge** about family and child characteristics, and parenting practices related to Latino families' choices of care for their preschool age children.
- **Increase understanding** of program characteristics that are associated with Latino parents' choice of care for their preschool age children.



# This study will contribute to:

- **Increase knowledge** about Latino parents' views of child care quality and the extent to which the type of child care they access meets their child care needs.
- **Provide valuable information to policymakers** for the analysis and revision of policies and practices to address the child care needs of Latino families and increase access to high quality, culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate care for young Latino children.