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Gabriela Bustamante
Parent Education Para Mi?
The Relevance and Usefulness of
Mainstream Parent Education for Latino
Parents

ABSTRACT

This study involved the development of a parent education curriculum derived from the evidence-based parenting literature, and the pilot testing a single intervention from this curriculum to compare responses of Latino and non-Latino parents to interventions originally designed for the mainstream culture. Parents also received and responded to an overview of the curriculum as a whole. It was expected that Latino parents would rate the curriculum content and the single intervention as less relevant and useful than their non-Latino counterparts; and would rate instructor modeling, and opportunities for support as more relevant and useful than non-Latinos.

The pilot test was conducted in partnership with a middle school, allowing for examination of the feasibility of social workers collaborating with schools to provide parent education. Unexpected difficulties arose with recruitment that resulted in a sample size too small to establish statistical significance. Nonetheless, between group differences were observed suggesting that Latino parents valued the overall content of the curriculum and the pilot intervention at least as much as non-Latino parents. They rated the expected ease of implementation and likelihood of using elements of the curriculum highly. Gender differences may have accounted for higher ratings among Latino parents. Based on these findings, recommendations are made for culturally sensitive parent education interventions, recruitment, and implementation.

Parent Education Para Mi?

The Relevance and Usefulness of Mainstream Parent Education for Latino Parents

A project based upon an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Social Work.

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2013

Acknowledgments

This thesis could not have been accomplished without the assistance of many people whose contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

I wish to thank my research advisor, Natalie Hill, for her patient help; my fellow students for all the direction and pointers they offered, and my family for their wonderful support and encouragement.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The goal of this project was to advance understanding of the experience of Latino parents of who participate in parent skills training delivered in a school setting with access to parent support and communication with a school adjustment counselor. This project involved the development of a curriculum for a culturally sensitive, school based parent group that combines parent support and skill education, and the pilot testing of an intervention derived from that curriculum. The analysis addressed the perceived relevance and usefulness of a combination of parent education and support with emphasis on relevance of the curriculum and intervention to the Latino culture. The project was supplemented by an offer to parents to increase their interaction with the school that sponsored the study.

A school based parent group can include two useful components: parent support and skills education (Espinosa 1995; Zuniga, 1992). There is growing evidence that parenting skill education can produce a significant positive impact on a host of issues and problems that normal families face (Garland, Hawley, Brookman-Frazee & Hurlburt, 2008; Sanders, 2008). Effective parent intervention can offer several key benefits to homes and schools: improved school behavior in children, improved fulfillment of chores and assignments, improved social skills in children, and improved confidence, confidence and self esteem in children, and protection from negative peer influences (McConnell, Breitzkreuz & Savage, 2012).

Parent education seeks to impart skills to target parent-child behavior patterns associated with family conflict, negative peer affiliations and problems at school (Patterson, 1982, (Patterson, 2002; Zisser & Eyberg, 2009). These skills cover the gamut from positive attention, positive discipline, limit-setting and contingency management, to self-regulation, communication and a variety of social skills (Querido, Warner & Eyberg, 2002; Sanders, 2008). Parent education borrows from a variety of leading theories, including behavioral (Dadds & Hawes, 2006; Querido et al., 2002), social learning (Patterson, 2002; Sanders, 2008; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003), cognitive attribution (National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2006),

systemic and strategic theories (Dadds & Hawes, 2006). These can be used to foster strength development and bolster positive interaction, as well as counter dysfunctional interactions (McConnell et al., 2012).

The support function of a parent group may enhance motivation and facilitate attendance and adherence (Moran, Ghate & van der Merwe, 2004). The support component of a parent group offers the potential for a unique environment of understanding and camaraderie that can only result from those who share the experience of raising a son or daughter. Parents in a support group format are in a position to exchange hard-earned wisdom derived from many challenges and struggles endured over years of child rearing. Parents quietly carry a wealth of valuable information on a host of issues based on experience, and are often in a position to help and influence each other in managing complex and sensitive situations, like suspicion of substance use among peers, and family problems. Parents may also have valuable information to offer on referral sources for professional services, like doctors, dentists, counselors and advocates. They may be in a position to help each other direct requests to the right person within the school system in the correct way to address the special need of a child.

Cultural differences are likely to exert strong influence in child-rearing practices. Cultural factors may have the potential to interfere with or facilitate willingness to participate in a school related parent group, manner of approaching schools on issues pertaining to their children and willingness to try new parenting skills (Espinosa, 1995; Zuniga, 1992). One would expect that values, expectations and approaches would differ with cultural background. Thus a school based parent support group stands to benefit from sensitivity to cultural needs and differences to enhance usefulness of the parent group.

The quality of the relationship between the home and school can also exert a strong influence in the life of a child. It can have considerable impact on the experience of a family. It follows that a school based parent support group would seek to bolster and direct the relationship between parents and educators for the betterment of the children.

Some schools may be in uniquely good positions to sponsor parent groups. Schools can provide the physical space, teaching aids, supplies and other resources to support the various functions of such a group. Schools may stand to benefit from sponsoring parent groups. The benefits the students derive at home will

likely translate to their school lives. School-based parent support groups can evolve to create a vehicle for parent-educator communication. The school, the children and the families could all stand to benefit.

This project involved a first step toward the development of a school based parent group that combines parent support, skill development education, opportunity for more efficient interface with the school, and sensitivity to cultural needs of Latino families. The project involved the design of a curriculum for intervention along with a quantitative study of the response of Latino and non-Latino parents to the designed intervention. The theoretical contribution involved the development of the curriculum and the pilot testing of a single intervention derived from that curriculum. Latino and non-Latino parents of middle school students were offered an overview of the intervention program and trained in a single skill derived from the developed curriculum.

The quantitative study involved the participants' response to an anonymous questionnaire with quantitative items to survey the perceived value, usefulness and expected ease of implementation of the overall program and the single intervention delivered. The survey included an open-ended qualitative item to invite suggestions and feedback and allow expression of experiences related to participation in this parenting intervention. Parents unable or unwilling to complete the written quantitative questionnaire were given the opportunity to complete whatever portion they could of the quantitative questionnaire and to offer private comments. It was expected that the anonymous questionnaire would provide useful disclosures that participants would feel uncomfortable sharing in an interviews given the investigator's role as group leader.

The study borrowed its various components from available evidence based parent education programs and includes elements tailored to address common obstacles to parenting skills acquisition derived from the leading theoretical schools, namely Social Learning Theory and positive parenting (Patterson, 2002; Querido et al., 2002; Sanders, 2008) The field of parent education considers Social Learning theory the leading and most validated option. Its interventions are consistent with those of behavioral programs, but add the valuable component of modeling and emphasize how the parent applies the learned skill. Positive parenting represents a more recent development that is based on the concept of Positive Discipline and is

consistent with the leading theoretical contributions to the field, including attachment theory, cognitive attribution theory and motivational theory (Nelsen, 2006).

This project is relevant to the field of social work in that it adds to our understanding of the relevance and value of participation in a school based parent support and skills development groups to Latino and non-Latino parents. It sought to explore the experience of Latino parents who participated in a parenting program that sought to impart an approach to parenting and a set of skills proven effective with parents of the prevailing culture. It sought to explore the value of shared experiences, support and direction among Latino parent participants. And finally, it sought to explore the value of the opportunity to interface with the school via the school adjustment counselor, an individual designated by the school to facilitate the positive adaptation of students to academic and social life.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter reviews the definition, established value, theoretical contributions, evidence-based intervention programs, and cultural factors that have evolved in this area of study. The section defines parent education, summarizes expected benefits, and reviews contributions from various theoretical schools. It reviews leading evidence-based intervention programs and extracts common elements that leading programs share. It considers cultural critiques of existing parent education models and the contrasting needs and perspectives of Latino and dominant cultures. It reviews current applications of the literature, with emphasis on cultural factors. The section concludes with the thesis hypothesis.

What is Parent Education?

Parent education is any course designed to impart a set of parenting skills to improve the parent-child interaction and foster healthy development in children and families. Parenting courses can range from covering the most common to the most specific issues parents may encounter. Parent education courses may target infants, toddlers, children and teenagers, and may also be geared towards parents who are considering having a child, adopting a child, or are pregnant.

Studies suggest that parent training programs can promote self-efficacy, social self-efficacy, parent effectiveness and improved outcome, even with difficult students in alternative school placements (McConnell et al., 2012). Barth (2009) described the role and importance of parent education as “the fulcrum of fairness” to help the disadvantaged families. He calls for research to determine the effectiveness of programs to educate parents in specific skills to counter dysfunctional parent-child patterns (Barth, 2009).

It is unfortunate that many families who stand to derive major benefits from leading parenting programs will fail to participate in these programs in a meaningful way (Scott & Dadds, 2009). Leading programs seek to offer the best way to parent. They assume a logical process by which prospective parents will accept the opinions of the experts and implement their recommendations to correct their children’s problem behavior. However, experience suggests that people can be irrational and unpredictable, and that

the families that stand to benefit most from parent intervention are often the least likely to adopt the recommendations of experts (Forehand, Middlebrook, Rogers & Steffe, 1983; Kazdin, Holland, Crowley & Breton, 1997). This suggests the need to better understand the factors that make parent intervention effective, and that facilitate adherence to parenting program recommendations. It also calls for exploration of the obstacles and experiences of parents and families who attempt to participate in leading parent effectiveness programs.

Theoretical Frameworks

Several authors have documented the availability of effective, evidence-based parenting education programs, and the importance of utilizing interventions from such programs to derive desired benefits (Garland et al., 2008; Barth, 2009; Scott & Dadds, 2009; Moran et al., 2004). Recent literature indicates that parenting programs have produced highly successful outcomes by improving the quality of parent-child bonds, and by adjusting the expectations parents hold for their children (NASP, 2006). Effective programs teach the use of Positive Discipline instead of corporal punishment. The components of Positive Discipline (Nelsen, 2006) include: 1) being kind and firm while administering consequences; 2) offering sense of belonging and significance; 3) holding the expectation that interventions will produce long-term results, even if they cause a modest initial increase in difficulties encountered and effort required; 4) imparting valuable social and life skills (not entrenched in daily routine); and 5) developing a sense of competence in children by supporting their areas of talent, interest and strength (Barth, 2009).

Several theories contribute to our understanding of factors likely make parent intervention effective, and obstacles to adherence to the recommendations of experts. The leading contributors to this understanding come from Attachment Theory, Cognitive Attribution Theory and Social Learning Theory. Attachment theory offers a relatively unique perspective on factors likely to obstruct or facilitate positive outcomes. Cognitive Attribution and Social Learning Theory have been combined to attain a positive interaction. A brief summary of leading contributions follows.

Attachment theory. Attachment theory addresses essential factors to consider for an effective parent education intervention. Attachment theory presents a model for parenting that describes the functions

of the attachment between a parent and child, and the influence this has on behavior (Bowlby, 1982; Bowlby, 1988; K. E. Grossmann, K. Grossmann & Waters, 2005). The functions of the parent-child relationship involve protecting the child from harm, providing a sense of security, and providing a secure base for exploration. Hence the parent-child relationship holds an emotional significance that goes far beyond external interactions shaped by rewards and punishments (Grossmann et al., 2005). Attachment theory teaches that children will pursue interactions charged with strong levels of attention or emotion referred to as “attachment rich,” whether positive or negative (Dadds, 2002).

Attachment theory warns that behaviors associated with a relationship of significant attachment will override logic. It is possible for reward strategies to remain attachment neutral and exert little influence on behavior. Yet punishment strategies delivered with intense emotion can become attachment rich and produce an increase in the undesirable behavior one is seeking to correct (Dadds & Hawes, 2006). It is the intensity of attention or emotion that makes an interaction attachment rich. It is important to consider that attachment rich dysfunctional behaviors can interfere with the implementation of a new behavior, even when the individual realizes that the new behavior is clearly superior.

The implication of attachment theory for parent education is that it may be most effective to increase desirable behavior by offering attachment rich positive interactions (eye contact, hugs and praise), while reducing unwanted behavior by responding with consequences delivered in an attachment neutral manner (Dadds & Hawes, 2006).

The “will and skill” model. Schraw and Brooks (2001) have proposed a model for applied learning that borrows elements of social learning (self-efficacy) and attribution theories. They present the model as a process of improving the “will and skill” to self-regulate and learn. “Will” refers to self-efficacy that produces motivation. “Skill” refers to the strategy required to succeed at a given task.

Self-efficacy refers to confidence in the ability to achieve a specific goal (Bandura, 1997). High self-efficacy has been demonstrated to positively impact engagement, persistence, goal setting and various aspects of performance (Schunk, 1989). Research shows that self-efficacy appears to sustain learners until they acquire the knowledge and strategies needed to master a task (Pajares, 1996). The authors point out that

there is a reciprocal relationship between will (self-efficacy) and skill (strategy instruction). Increased self-efficacy will increase implementation of strategies, and successful implementation will increase self-efficacy (Schraw & Brooks, 2001).

The attribution component of the “will and skill” model interacts with self-efficacy in important ways. Attributions are causal explanations people create to explain their success and failure (Weiner, 1986). One of the most important findings from this literature is that attributing failure to lack of effort produces a much better chance of improvement than attributing failure to lack of ability (Stipek, 1993). Attribution of failure to lack of ability is related to low grades, less help seeking, vaguer goals, poorer use of strategies and lower performance expectations (Peterson, 1990). Fortunately, negative attributions can be changed with Attributional Retraining.

Cognitive attribution theory. Cognitive attribution theory contends that parenting programs can fail to produce results because participants may hold to expectations or entrenched beliefs that conflict with a prescribed principle or behavior (NASP, 2006). Expectations can also be excessive for a given child’s capacities, or under-stimulating for a child’s needs. Thus, a parenting program can fail to produce desired results, or achieve fleeting gains, by failing to address factors related to cognitive attribution theory.

Parents may be clear on what experts recommend, but may maintain conflicting beliefs that lead them to drop out. For example, parents may feel that the cause of the problem is the child, yet the very nature of parenting intervention appears to attribute child misbehavior to parents. Parents may hold to the causal attribution that the child is responsible with strong emotion, and this may lead to poor compliance (Peters, Calam, & Harrington, 2005). Parents may resist or even drop out of parent training as a result. Similarly, parents may harbor unrealistic expectations for how the intervention should work, or how the child should respond. This may lead parents to feel disappointed and give up (Kazdin, 2007). Parents may expect reduced effort, increased convenience and short-term improvements. Yet the recommendations of experts tend to prove challenging to implement, inconvenient at first, but offer major long-term benefits.

Research has shown that parents of children with behavior problems may interpret their children’s behavior in a way that entrenches and worsens their behavior (Dadds, Mullins, McAllister, & Atkinson, 2003).

Parents may arrive at dysfunctional attributions about the reason for the children's behavior that lead them to give up prematurely (Dadds et al., 2003). Thus a parent may believe that an undesirable behavior is intentional, controllable, or a sign of serious mental illness. They may believe the behaviors are inherited from a problematic family member and thus unchangeable. Conversely, they may interpret spells of good behavior as fleeting, the result of some external factor, and otherwise limited. One could imagine how difficult it would be to work toward behavior changes that contradict such beliefs.

Attribution theory (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Dix & Grusec, 1985) has organized a set of principles for addressing parental beliefs that threaten to undermine attempts at behavior change. Sanders, Cann, and Markie-Dadds (2003) supplemented a basic parent-training program with attribution retraining and anger management. Parents in the enhanced condition showed fewer unrealistic expectations and improved adherence

Attributional retraining. Attributional retraining refers to helping individuals become aware of their negative attributions and replace them with attributions that encourage increased effort (Schraw & Brooks, 2001). The majority of attributional retraining programs have been found to be highly successful (Försterling, 1985). These programs teach participants how to identify undesirable behaviors, evaluate attributions underlying avoidant behavior; explore alternative attributions, and implement favorable attributions (Försterling, 1985).

Most retraining programs try to shift attributions for the cause of success to effort rather than ability (Schraw & Brooks, 2001). This is because effort is controllable and ability is not. Schraw and Brooks (2001) recommend an attributional retraining strategy of discussing the distinction between ability and effort, and emphasizing the crucial role of effort. It is essential for parents to understand that effort is the key to successful childrearing, regardless of ability.

Social learning theory. Social Learning Theory (SLT) has produced highly effective parent intervention programs (Sanders, 2008; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003) and made key contributions to the understanding of child behavior problems (Patterson, 1982). SLT addresses the question of how parents can best acquire desired skills. It offers an effective medium of delivery to produce desirable behavior change.

SLT considers the complex interaction that takes place between the environment and a person's behavior at any given time to produce a specific outcome. The theory states that we learn behaviors socially, primarily by observing and imitating the actions of others. SLT refers to the individuals we observe and imitate as models.

Modeling refers to the process of demonstrating and describing the component parts of a skill to a novice. Modeling is the most effective way to improve self-efficacy (Schunk, 1991). Moreover, it has been shown to increase both self-efficacy and use of modeled skills/behaviors (Schunk, 1989). Modeling works because it provides a great deal of explicit information about a skill and raises the novice's expectations that a new skill can be mastered (Schunk, 1991). Peer models are usually the most effective because they are most similar to the individual observing the model (Schunk, 1989).

SLT proposes a four-step modeling process to address the variables associated with the learning process as follows. First is attention: the individual must pay attention to the features of the modeled behavior. Second is retention: the individual must remember details of the behavior to later reproduce it. Third is reproduction: the individual organizes his/her responses in accordance with the modeled behavior. This phase requires practice. Fourth is motivation: there must be an incentive to drive the practice involved in the reproduction phase of the learning (Bandura, 1977). SLT relies on video recording and role-play to facilitate the modeling process.

Schraw and Brooks (2001) introduce a process for effective modeling with specific steps relevant to parent training. The first step is to offer a rationale for the value of learning the new skill, and provide examples of how, when, and where the skill can be used. The second step is to model the skill in its entirety while participants observe. The third step is to model components of the overall skill, if possible, breaking the skill down into parts. The fourth step is to have participants practice component steps under teacher guidance and receive feedback on each one. The fifth step is to practice the entire procedure under instructor guidance. This involves merging component steps into a single, fluid procedure. The sixth step is to have participants engage in self-directed performance of the task.

Scott and Dadds (2009) cite solid empirical support for the effectiveness of SLT-based parenting interventions. However, their evaluation of even the best of these SLT evidence-based programs shows that

a quarter to a third of families and their children fail to benefit (Scott & Dadds, 2009). One way to understand this is by the inherent limitations of any given theory. Programs need to consider attributions and expectations of participants that can facilitate or conflict with the recommendations of any program. Will and skill represent the heart of what parenting programs need to impart to succeed: the motivation to implement the prescribed methods and the strategies to bring about the desired behaviors in children. Parent groups can employ strategies to improve self-efficacy in the skill learning process by including modeling, attributional retraining and informational feedback from peers.

Existing Evidence-Based Parent Education Programs

Leading evidence-based parenting programs that emphasize SLT, attachment theory and attribution theory include the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P; Sanders, 2008), The Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003), Parent Management Training (PMT; Patterson, 2002) and Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT; Chaffin et al., 2004). Triple-P is the only one of these that was designed for non-clinical implementation. The Incredible Years and PMT share a common grounding in research and application of SLT (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2001; Patterson, 1982; Patterson, 2002). The Incredible Years has greatly expanded to applications in non-clinical settings (Webser-Straton & Reid, 2003). PMT and PCIT have remained close to their clinical roots and are delivered mostly as a systematic intervention within psychotherapy. The summaries that follow will show how these programs share common theories and interventions.

The Triple-P Positive Parenting Program. Triple-P is a multilevel parent education program designed to increase knowledge, skills, and confidence of parents. It is the product of the Community Psychology field, a form of psychological practice that focuses on primary prevention. The Triple-P program aims to prevent mental, emotional, and behavioral problems in children and adolescents. Triple-P was designed to benefit all members of the family but tailors selective interventions for at risk children and parents (Sanders, 2008). Triple-P has demonstrated effectiveness in a wide range of cultures through trials in Hong Kong, Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (Sanders, 2008).

The goals of Triple-P include the promotion of: self-sufficiency to increase confidence in ability to implement skills independently; self-efficacy to increase confidence in overcoming problems; self-assessment to facilitate selection of child management techniques; and personal agency to help own the improvements in the family situation (Sanders, 2008). Triple-P seeks to promote healthy development by creating a safe and engaging environment that is supervised, and provides opportunities to explore, play, and learn. It teaches parents to be their children's first teacher. This means that parents must learn to respond to their children's requests in a positive and constructive manner while also helping them learn to solve problems on their own (Sanders, 2008).

Triple-P teaches Assertive Discipline to replace ineffective and coercive discipline such as physical punishment, shouting and threatening. The program teaches parents how to select ground rules for specific situations, discuss rules with children, give clear, calm, and age-appropriate directions and requests, present logical consequences, use quiet time and time out, and employ planned ignoring (Sanders, 2008).

The program also introduces Realistic Expectations and Parental Self-Care. Realistic Expectations promote developmentally appropriate and realistic goals and challenges. This is especially important in youths with special needs, who might fail to respond to interventions because they lack the capacity to meet expectations and not even realize it. Parental Self-Care helps parents view childrearing as part of a larger context related to self-care, resourcefulness, and wellbeing needed to maintain self-esteem (Sanders, 2008).

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy. Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is a form of behavioral parent-training developed by Dr. Sheila Eyberg for children ages 2–7 and their caregivers to improve the quality of parent-child interaction patterns (Querido et al., 2002). PCIT combines behavior therapy, play therapy and parent training to teach more effective discipline techniques and improve the parent-child relationship (Zisser & Eyberg, 2009). PCIT draws on attachment and social learning theories to achieve authoritative parenting (Querido et al., 2002). The authoritative parenting style has been associated with fewer child behavior problems than alternative parenting styles (Querido et al., 2002).

PCIT includes a Child-Directed Interaction (CDI) portion that prescribes daily use of a form of play guided by a series of methods embodied in the acronym of PRIDE skills (Querido et al., 2002). PRIDE

stands for Praise, Reflect, Imitate, Describe and Enjoyment. This acronym reminds parents to describe the actions of the child, reflect upon what the child says, imitate the play of the child, praise positive actions, and enjoy the special time (Chase & Eyberg, 2008).

PCIT also includes a Parent-Directed Interaction (PDI) portion that aims to teach the parent more effective means of disciplining their child, relying on similar play therapy and behavior therapy principles. PDI has been shown to work well with abused children (Chaffin et al., 2004).

Parent Management Training. Parent Management Training (PMT) is an evidence-based program that utilizes SLT techniques to alter both the parents' and the child's behavior to decrease oppositional or antisocial behavior patterns (Patterson, 2002). Parents learn to define, observe, and record children's behavior and then apply appropriate methods of positive reinforcement and punishment.

PMT relies on positive reinforcement as its key intervention (Patterson, 2002). The parent utilizes various techniques to deliver positive reinforcement, including increased attention, praise and awarding points for positive behavior. Parents use verbal reprimands, time outs and privilege removal to punish negative behavior. PMT teaches parents to effectively communicate contingencies and to problem solve for challenging situations.

PMT is most often delivered in clinical settings to address oppositional defiance and antisocial behavior. However, it is a systematic program that shares common elements with other leading evidence-based programs.

Common Elements of Parenting Programs

Parenting programs from various theoretical schools recommend goals consistent with those of attachment theory. SLT emphasizes parents modeling positive, composed behavior while administering consequences for misbehavior (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003). A review of evidence-based programs described as having track records of success (Triple-P Positive Parenting Program, Incredible Years, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, and Parent Management Training) identified common elements associated with success shared by these programs (Garland et al., 2008). These included: 1) strengthening positive aspects of the parent-child interaction; 2) decreased use of parent commands; and 3) specific behavioral interventions

with detailed support materials for parent skill building (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003; Garland et al., 2008). There is likely a parallel between strengthening positive aspects of the parent-child interaction and offering attachment rich positive interactions. Similarly, one can see how reducing the number of parental commands can reduce negative interactions likely to become attachment rich.

The above suggests that we can improve the quality of parent-child interactions with methods derived from evidence-based parenting programs informed by various theoretical schools that share common elements. These methods seek to strengthen parent-child bonds by increasing positive attention, correcting unwanted behavior with firmness and kindness, reducing the number of commands to prevent coercion and negativity, and adjusting expectations of parents to invest in long term benefits despite possible short term difficulties. Parent efforts should target meaningful social and life skills, and foster a sense of competence and autonomy by supporting strengths and talents.

Culture in Parent Education

One can see how cultural affiliation can interact with the attribution issues and support functions described above. Cultures differ in a myriad of significant tendencies: punctuality, openness, formality, lifestyle, goals and childrearing practices. Such differences can easily produce incompatible attributions between group leaders and parents, when the leaders and parents do not share a cultural background. These can create misunderstandings that interfere with the sense of belonging, a significant pre-requisite to the support function of a group. The resulting sense of alienation threatens to interfere with adherence and attendance in group members who make the assumption that the content applies to the mainstream culture, the rich, the highly educated, etc., but not to them. It may difficult for members of different cultures to share their concerns or derive a sense of belonging from an offering designed for the mainstream culture.

Cultural critique of existing parent education models. Much of the parenting skills literature assumes the content of established programs will be universally applicable and acceptable across cultures, but the literature on cultural differences suggests otherwise. It is important to clarify that, for the purposes of the current study, the focus is on the cultural differences between Latinos in the US, and the prevailing culture. However, factors likely to influence acceptability of a parenting group, like the role of the parents, influence

of extended family and religious practices, are likely to vary greatly among Latino subgroups. Latinos are united by a common language but are not a homogeneous group. They vary due to socioeconomic status, race, country of origin, and the nature and timing of their immigration (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). In fact, differences among Latino subcultures in socialization practices may in some instances be greater than the differences between Latinos and non-Latinos (Haycock & Duany, 1991).

Cultural factors play a central role in the successful provision of support services to Latino groups. There is evidence to suggest that Latino parents have lower rates of school involvement, and that merely increasing their involvement with school staff and activities fails to produce a significant change in their satisfaction with their schools (Bauch, 1992; Costas, 1991). Their beliefs and tendencies seem to have remained unchanged after increased exposure to cultural values foreign to them, and in the absence of efforts to consider their values, strengths and concerns. Low-income Latino parents are primarily interested in strong discipline and safe surroundings and those issues need to be addressed before meaningful exchanges can take place (Baush, 1992).

Latinos may hold to cultural beliefs and traditions that directly conflict with the traditional way of delivering parent groups in the United States. Expectations of many Latino cultures vary from the non-Latinos in terms of the role of the parent or the child. Latino parents tend to believe in the absolute authority of the school and teachers, and tend to separate education from parenting (Espinosa, 1995). They tend to delegate their children's education to professionals and defer to their recommendations. They accept responsibility for nurturing their children, and teaching moral and ethical values, tend to emphasize obedience and respect for adult authority (Espinosa, 1995).

Contrasting needs and perspectives of Latino and dominant cultures. There is reason to believe that the Latino culture may differ from the prevailing culture on issues like corporal punishment and level of authoritarianism (Varela, Sanchez-Sosa, Riveros, Vernberg, Montserrat & Mashunkashey, 2004). Latinos of low socioeconomic status often feel threatened by their surroundings and protective of their children. They see strict authoritarian parenting with corporal punishment as a way to protect their children from exposure to risk factors like negative influences, gangs and violence (Varela et al., 2004). They may also

feel they are in an alien culture and insecure about their ability to effectively advocate for their children should they inadvertently get themselves into trouble. Thus Latino parents will rely on authoritarian and strict parenting techniques to prevent having to interact with authority figures from the dominant culture.

The Latino culture holds to positive values that compliment their authoritative and protective tendencies. Nicolau and Ramos (1990) have referred to the Latino parent as a great "untapped resource." They cite the Latino parents' concern for their children, commitment to family, respect for education, and desire for a better life as untapped resources. Latinos maintain strong family ties, believe in family loyalty, and tend to support community life. There are ample strengths and positive characteristics of Latino cultures that can enhance a school related group offering.

Latinos tend to learn better in a group setting. Latinos have been found to be field dependent learners (Zuniga, 1992), a learning style with implications for how one would structure a skills acquisition group. The field-dependent learner must see the context that surrounds individual characteristics or behaviors. It can be compared to a field-independent learning style, which involves a tendency to separate individual characteristics from the surrounding context. Field-dependent learners are skilled at interpersonal relationships and work well in teams.

The Latino culture emphasizes warm, personalized styles of interaction, a relaxed sense of time, and a need for an informal atmosphere for communication (Espinosa, 1995). These factors should be considered for the support and motivation portion of a parent group offering for Latinos, as they may clash with the more task-oriented style of US culture.

Efforts to reach Latino parents call for strategies different from the mainstream culture. Organizers should emphasize personal contact to invite participation. Written flyers sent to the home have proven ineffective, even when written in Spanish (Espinosa, 1995). It may take several personal contacts to elicit active involvement. Home visits have proven effective. This suggests the need for culturally sensitive recruitment efforts (Haycock & Duany, 1991).

Latino parents are likely to benefit from a participation in a parent group that invites social services specialists from the community to attend one of the meetings and remain available to consult with interested

parents (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). Many Latino families stand to benefit from family literacy programs, vocational training, English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, improved medical and dental services, and other community-based social services. Such offerings should be emphasized in the initial communication with the participants, and can be integrated into the support component of the group.

Application of the Literature

The current study will design and pilot test a parenting intervention program based on the reviewed literature. The study will present an overview of the program to parent groups comprised of Latino and non-Latino parents of junior high school students; and will pilot test a specific intervention with the groups. The study will survey the parents to ascertain the usefulness of the intervention to Latino and non-Latino parents. The study will include a proposed intervention program and group curriculum for consideration in future work in this area.

General applications of the literature. Cognitive retraining is likely beyond the scope of the program to be offered in this study. However, the program will borrow from cognitive attribution theory to offer healthy attributions for challenging child behaviors that the program hopes to target. For example, an introduction to a module for messiness may offer a benign explanation for the reasons children avoid responsibilities. This may help reduce parent-held beliefs that threaten to undermine implementation. Facilitators will also set basic expectations for the investment required and the likely results derived over the short-term and long-term from implementing recommendations. The group can recommend parenting expectations that will foster cooperation and long-term healthy development. Persistent inability to adjust expectations may be a sign that parents should be offered a referral for mental health services.

Culturally relevant applications. The literature on cultural sensitivity has much to contribute to the process of motivating Latino parents to attend and adhere to a school sponsored parenting group. The organizers need to validate the importance of authoritarian parenting to secure the safety of the children before they suggest alternatives to corporal punishment. They need to demonstrate knowledge of the many strengths the Latino family offers to compliment their authoritarian stance and their tradition of punishment.

The support portion of the group needs to celebrate their loyalty, strong ties to extended family, concern for the safety of their children, commitment to family, and respect for school authority.

Parenting groups that target Latino parents should place emphasis on validating strengths. Latino parents are sensitive to nonverbal indicators of feeling (Zuniga, 1992) and thus likely to respond negatively to being judged. They need to be supported for their strengths, not judged for perceived failings.

The Latino field-dependent learning style also has implications for the presentation of material. The group should structure lessons to connect different parts of the material. For example, learning exercises can include presentation of knowledge of the skill, prediction of how children would respond, and presentation of how the skill fits with the overall program.

Culturally sensitive parenting groups need to address the differences among the subcultures present within Latino participants. Cultural differences among Latinos suggest the need for the leader of a culturally sensitive parenting group to become familiar with the beliefs of participants, and facilitate dialog among like-minded parents to help them address their particular issues. Organizers should treat the understanding of these differences as an essential component of the support phase of the group, and a pre-requisite to the sense of belonging necessary for motivation.

Culturally sensitive parenting groups need to consider that Latino children of low socio-economic status often face surroundings that seriously threaten the safety and integrity of the family. This group needs a viable alternative to corporal punishment that accomplishes the valid benefits the culture extracts from this practice. It needs a safe way to collaborate with police to report dangerous surroundings, recognizing that, in some communities, being labeled a “chota” (snitch) could jeopardize the physical safety of the family. The challenge is to combine evidence based parent education with culturally sensitive considerations to create effective parenting interventions that leverage the special strengths of Latino families and promote their children’s safety.

The literature recommends that recruitment efforts targeting Latinos should emphasize personal contact and valuable offerings (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990; Espinosa, 1995). A school sponsored parenting group can emphasize offerings essential to the wellbeing of the Latino family such as ESL, literacy programs

and medical services. These offerings can be emphasized in an initial personal contact that is part of the recruitment process, as noted in the literature (Espinosa, 1995).

The group should integrate this component into the core support activities of the group. This means surveying the needs of the various Latino subcultures within the group and having a social services specialist attend a group meeting to process and inform the requests and needs of the parents. The group can offer an opportunity to interact informally with the social services worker to create the familiarity that will invite Latino parents to contact the worker for follow up.

The support component of a group for Latino parents should emphasize team learning. Team learning would leverage the Latinos field-dependent learning style and emphasize their strengths in interpersonal relationships and capacity to work in teams.

Summary of applications of the literature. The above evidence suggests that the support component of a parent group, with the opportunity for bonding and collaborating can play a vital role in the promotion of attendance and adherence. The support will provide the motivation to actively participate and apply new knowledge, and the skills training will offer solutions to specific problems and thus produce the desired effectiveness. The goal of this study is to document the experiences of Latino and non-Latino parents who participate in a culturally sensitive parent education and support group that fosters adherence and willingness to implement skills in positive attention and Positive Discipline, as well as specific skills derived from leading parent education programs to target issues that the parents elect to address.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The current study will investigate the extent to which cultural factors influence the relevance and value of parent education. Research questions include: To what extent do Latino parents accept and value mainline parent education? How relevant are the areas of focus? How valuable are the teaching method, and the skills taught?

It is hypothesized that Latinos would find the support, discussion, collaboration and modeling opportunities of the group more important and rate the specific skills taught as less relevant and useful than their non-Latino counterparts. It is hypothesized that Latino parents would give a lower rating to the

likelihood of implementing the skills as presented, supporting the observations in the literature that Latinos derive motivation and confidence from bonding and collaborations with others in similar situations. It is expected that Latino parents would find interventions designed for the mainstream culture as less relevant, but would utilize the interactions with other Latino parents to adjust the recommended skills to fit their specific situations.

It is also hypothesized that Latino participants would report increased familiarity with the school adjustment counselors as a result of their participation, and report increased likelihood of active participation in school-sponsored events and in advocacy efforts on behalf of their children. This is a secondary hypothesis derived from the suggestion that Latino parents are more likely to leave education to the experts and stay out of the way. However, it was expected that the familiarity resulting from group participation and collaboration would likely increase motivation to participate in future events.

The following chapter presents a parent education curriculum developed for the intervention delivered in this study. It was derived from the literature on leading evidence based parent education programs and an overview of it was presented to parents to survey their response. The curriculum could serve as a basis for a future parent education effort for Latino parents. The curriculum focuses on parent education derived from social learning theory, which emphasizes modeling and behavioral principles, but it is consistent with elements surveyed in the literature on attachment and cognitive attribution theories. The curriculum is limited to what is referred to as Positive Discipline, and focuses on inducing states of self-control (referred to as self-discipline) in children who are emotionally labile and/or engaged in undesired behavior. Sections could be added on behavioral intervention (e.g., consequences) and expectations to make a complete parent education curriculum. However, the Positive Discipline model can be combined with a standard behavioral intervention program to create a comprehensive parent education program. A combination of the curriculum presented below and a behavioral program is beyond the scope of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Positive Discipline Intervention: A Proposed Curriculum

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the proposed intervention followed by a comprehensive curriculum. The overview provides a context for understanding the intervention program. The overview itself is written directly to parents who might participate in the intervention curriculum. It provides a rationale to implement the exercises that are introduced.

The intervention program designed for this study extracts three key elements from the evidence based parent education literature. These include modeling, reflection and faith. The heart of the intervention is showing children how to handle life situations more effectively by modeling the calm, friendly and respectful (of the child) attitude and behavior that parents want their children to display. The approach is known as Positive Discipline. It is contrasted with the instinctive approach to handling undesirable behavior in children, referred to here as Negative Discipline. Negative Discipline is easy to engage in, as it comes naturally to most adults. However, it is burdensome and potentially costly to endure. The following content speaks to parents.

Program Overview for Parents

Research has shown that, in the long run, the “active ingredients” of Positive Discipline can promote self-control, self-discovery and valuable life skills (Nelsen, 2006). We start by contrasting Positive Discipline with Negative Discipline to make the point that Positive Discipline asks you, the parent, to model desired behaviors and place responsibility for life decisions on your child, and teaches you to believe that your child will learn to make the right decisions over time. Negative Discipline, by contrast, employs high emotional tones, seeks to coerce, and instills doubt in your child’s capacity. A parent engaged in the cycle of Negative Discipline doesn’t see beyond the next half an hour, assuming that she must make sure her child does each thing correctly with endless reminders, directions and, if necessary, threats.

This program offers an alternative to this cycle through a curriculum of specific objectives and accompanying exercises to facilitate states of self-control and respect, invite reflection, and encourage logical

choices. The specific exercises aim to help you acquire the relevant skills. Exercises include: inducing states of composure, inviting reflection, designing consequences, delivering consequences, and setting expectations. Each exercise module includes the benefits you can expect to derive, an explanation of how the skill should work, a specific exercise and/or role-play, and a recommended implementation strategy.

What is Positive Discipline?

Positive Discipline (Nelsen, 2006) is a model based on the idea that there are no bad children, just good and bad behaviors. Positive Discipline shows us that we can teach and strengthen good behaviors, while weakening bad behaviors without hurting a child verbally or physically. Positive Discipline teaches us how to access the power of modeling, based on the idea that our children will do as we do, not what we say. You will learn to model the calm, friendly and respectful behavior you want your children to display. We can use Positive Discipline to help children develop self-discipline, and to show them how to handle relationships and life situations more effectively.

Negative vs. Positive Discipline

Contrasting Negative Discipline and Positive Discipline can help us to grasp the essence of Positive Discipline and provide a reference point for key issues in this curriculum. It helps us understand the reason it is so easy to enter into the cycle of Positive Discipline.

Reflections on a tantrum. When a child has a tantrum, you could make the case that they learned their angry and retaliatory stance. However, you can't say that about babies, who express anger the same way older children do. The tendencies we will call Negative Discipline are probably instinctive and natural – not learned. We parents have the same instincts and are very likely to respond according to the children's emotion-driven behavior. Our children's innate expressions of distress naturally elicit distress in us parents. However, when that results in negative interactions, the children's inappropriate expressions of emotion are strengthened.

Positive Discipline, as used in this program, refers to the process of going from an angry tantrum to calm cooperation. What is the fastest way to get a child to shift from a state of emotional upheaval to one of calm, cooperation and positive emotion? Behavioral psychology tells us that, left to their own devices, life's

consequences teach children how to get themselves to the desired state. It suggests that your attention feeds emotional negativity, and the fastest way for children to get to a state of self-discipline is to be left alone to reflect. Assume that looking at your child will add two minutes to her tantrum. Talking to her will add five minutes.

Positive Discipline will not come naturally and will feel difficult to execute. You will have to learn it, and it will require effort for a time until you and your child discover how liberating it can be and how successful you can be together. Positive Discipline delivers strong consequences, but delivers them in a kind, encouraging, and firm manner. Positive Discipline addresses emotional and defiant children calmly and with positive regard at all times. This is clearly not natural. Your child learns to regain composure on her own and you arrive at a sense of connection (offering belonging and significance), mutual respect and encouragement. Positive Discipline offers lasting results over the long-term, rather than living in the daily struggle.

Negative Discipline. The cycle of Negative Discipline involves your child losing control of her emotions, followed by you becoming more emotionally forceful than your child and coercing your child into obedience. It often involves you solving your child's problems or giving them something they want. Negative Discipline is as natural to you as to your child. You don't have to learn it. Negative Discipline often involves angry, critical, or threatening responses to inappropriate behavior.

The following section is designed to help you understand Positive Discipline by contrasting it to its opposite – Negative Discipline. It also serves as a warning for parents of a negative pattern that is very common. Don't be too surprised if you recognize it in your own life or have seen it the homes of others close to you. Gerald Patterson and colleagues at the University of Oregon conducted studies on parent-child interactions over a span of thirty years, and documented a strikingly predictable pattern that produces misbehavior in children and loss of control in parents. (Patterson, 1982; 2002). They called it the Coercive Cycle. The descriptions of Negative Discipline below are based on this cycle.

The term "Wheel of Life" serves as a metaphor for how parents in our society are always on the go. Get up in the morning; make sure the kids are up on time; make sure they have their clothes ready, the right clothes; make sure they eat breakfast, a healthy breakfast. Once the kids are on the bus, the parents have to

go on about their own affairs, probably put in a hard day's work, and, in addition to everything else, make sure that after-school child-care is in place.

After school, the parent must make sure the kids do their homework. There are always notices from school about all kinds of activities – Scouts, basketball, soccer, swimming, religious activities. All of these entail transportation, practices, registrations, games and parents' meetings. Parents must make sure all activities are well coordinated and successful. The kids must have snacks; dinner must be prepared. Of course, there is laundry, too, and the house must be picked up. Kids must be bathed. They must all eat a good meal – another “make sure.” Clear the table, do the dishes, clean up the kitchen. Make sure the children get to bed on time. They all need a bedtime story. Teeth must be brushed, pajamas located and donned, backs scratched, and fears of the dark allayed. Once the children are asleep, the parent can finally read their mail, maybe exercise, maybe even talk to a friend by phone.

One of the risks of entering into the cycle of Negative Discipline is of doing too much for our children. Most parents want to see their children function in a mature way. Yet, by instinctively entering into a cycle of Negative Discipline, they end up performing critical functions for their children. This can delay or interfere with the development of the children's ability to deploy these capacities effectively. Children may sense the pressures brought upon their parents by the Wheel of Life. They may learn to exploit this parental disadvantage (the fact that parents have to get things done), and turn the situation to their own advantage. Having realized that their parents will invariably take care of everything, they learn to live mindlessly. Some realize that the more irresponsibly they behave, the more ardently their parents will work to solve their problems and gratify their desires. In short, the less they think, the more they force their parents to think.

Allison Bottke (2009) addresses the issue of long-term problems that can develop when parents do too much for their children. She makes a clear distinction between helping and enabling. Helping is when you do something for your child that he is incapable of doing for himself. Enabling is doing something that he should be doing for himself. Parents can become enablers when they see wrongful behaviors lead to problems and continue to help.

Parents who do too much for their children may come to doubt them. These parents will attempt to micromanage their children and worry excessively when the children take charge of important aspects of their own lives. The parents' lack of faith will limit their ability to supply confidence for their children, especially when they need it most. Children can come to feel embarrassed of their parents who they fear will "baby them" in public.

Positive Discipline (Nelsen, 2006) was developed to prevent and escape this cycle of Negative Discipline. It may take some getting used to, but there is a good chance that your children will welcome the change, and it can produce very good results, especially in the long run.

Positive discipline. The research behind the Positive Discipline model has spawned numerous commercially available parenting programs that offer to inspire children. They share key common elements. Rather than having children lead their parents to lose control, the parents remain composed and allow their children to regain self-control, utilizing their own internal resources. Positive Discipline never forces. It invites reflection and lets children come to their own decisions, choose their own consequences. Parents remain friendly and encouraging, confident that their children will make the right choices given sufficient time. Parents remain firm in administering consequences. Parents practicing Positive Discipline look past today's Wheel of Life agenda and into next week, next month and on to adulthood. They accept short-term mistakes in exchange for new learning, self-improvement and lasting changes for the better. Their children learn to make smarter choices quickly. You never have to worry about a problem behavior again once a child makes a genuine decision to succeed at a challenge.

Ultimately, Positive Discipline liberates children from the torment of incessant urges, the burden of work avoidance, and the barrage of threats and coercion at the hands of their parents. It liberates parents from slipping into the dysfunction and upset of the cycle of Negative Discipline. Children don't know better. They need to develop self-discipline to realize that there is a better way to live – a life where they are content with what they have, strong enough to meet responsibilities, a source of joy to their parents, and a success in their lives. In time, they will choose self-discipline, good relationships and success.

Five values of positive discipline. The five values of Positive Discipline emphasize connection, respect, encouragement, a shift in perspective, and an investment in essential life skills. Connection refers to a sense of belonging. Belonging requires respect, operationalized by Positive Discipline as being kind and firm. Positive Discipline invites your family to handle your lives together in partnership, and practice what you preach. Encouragement involves looking for the good and praising effort rather than results. The shift in perspective involves stepping back from the daily grind (the next item on the Wheel of Life) and looking at the longer term. This approach invites you to get yourself out of the next meal, shower, or homework assignment, and focus on how your children will do in two weeks, two years, or as adults. The investment to impart key life skills includes respect, concern for others, problem solving, cooperation and contribution to others, including causes. Positive Discipline seeks to impart these life skills over the long term.

In her book, *Inspired children: How the leading minds of today raise their kids*, Rosita McAlpine (2011) offers parents the opportunity to base their most important decisions on scientific evidence, rather than by trial and error or the advice of others. The combination of the natural love of parents and the latest research in child development offers parents a chance to provide better long-term outcomes for their children. Positive Discipline (Nelsen 2006) documents the development of key life skills over time (see Figure 1). Children learn respect, concern for others, problem-solving skills and cooperation. They develop genuine interest in contributing to causes and the wellbeing of others. Positive Discipline associates these target skills with healthy adult relationships and life success.



Figure 1. Life skills of Positive Discipline. PD develops key life skills associated with success in relationships and in life.

Three Active Ingredients of Positive Discipline

The work on Positive Discipline suggests that children develop key life skills over time, once they are invited to reflect, make decisions and engage in self-discovery. Parents who practice Positive Discipline learn to believe in their children. They see how children sooner or later make the right choices. They learn to discover the best in their children and bring out the best in themselves, both as parents and as people. This process unfolds using three active ingredients: modeling, reflection, and faith (see Figure 2).

3 ACTIVE INGREDIENTS OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE	
ACTIVE INGREDIENT	FUNCTION
Modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaches/instills desired behavior
Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes self-discovery, in turn, fosters investment in developing strengths/talents
Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings out best in parent, child and relationship ... • Inspires

Figure 2. Active ingredients of Positive Discipline. Combine modeling, reflection and faith to inspire. Faith brings out the best in parents, who model their best to the children.

Modeling. Modeling may be the single core element that differentiates Positive Discipline from other methods of its kind. The principle of modeling is that you drive the long-term development of your child with the example you set. Think that your child will be watching you. He may not show it overtly, but he will look at the way you handle a particular situation and be influenced by what he sees. Positive Discipline invites us to take a good look at our own lives from the perspective that our children will likely follow in our footsteps. It calls for us as parents to make fundamental changes to our lives, if necessary. Positive Discipline tells us to treat our children the way we want them to treat us; to address them the way we want them to address us. If you want your child to speak to you with respect, then speak to her with respect. Positive Discipline suggests that we model patience, moderation and calm. It instructs us to be kind and firm. Children will eventually learn to model us, and the change will likely become permanent.

Reflection. A critical transformation takes place after an upset child attains a state of self-discipline and calm. This transformation is the cornerstone of this intervention program. Think of it as if dealing with two separate people. The upset person is unable to reason or consider another person's input. The calm person is logical, communicative and considerate. High emotion causes distortion, so any interaction that takes place in an emotional state can feel upsetting and produce misunderstanding. Everything will look different once cool heads prevail. If you attempt the interventions that follow without attaining the calm and reflective state described in this section, you will likely end up in a struggle. The difference can be as decisive as dealing with a different person.

A review of Positive Discipline (Nelsen, 2006) tells us that reflection invites self-discovery, and self-discovery produces a number of positive developments over time. We as parents can invite reflection in a number of ways. One is by setting the condition on an emotionally upset child that she must gain composure before addressing an issue. Another is simply to allow children to come to their own life decisions whenever possible. A scolding, respectfully delivered with an invitation to reflect, can also produce remarkable results. Dr. Gerald Nelson (2009) describes the One-Minute Scolding as a simple technique for children of all ages that is strong yet gentle to change unwanted behaviors and teach desirable behaviors. The parent is firm, identifies an undesirable behavior, expresses the feeling it induces in him, but provides encouragement and models a kind and affectionate tone when requesting the desired behavior.

Blanchard and Johnson (1982) offer very interesting techniques that invite reflection to produce positive transformations in their classic book, *The One Minute Manager*. They present the secrets of one-minute goals, "praisings" and reprimands that have been credited with positive transformations and peak performance in individuals of all ages. The authors recommend their approach to anyone who manages any organization, including a family. A summary of the approach reveals the extent to which it invites reflection. There's much more to this approach than inviting reflection, but it is also a very strong way to invite self reflection. The results this approach has produced in the business world can attest to the power of inviting reflection.

Blanchard and Johnson's approach has the person in authority (the parent in our case) instruct the individual that "this is not a conversation," and then proceeds to give them something to reflect upon. Applied to child rearing, the components of a reprimand include: 1) a statement that the child is to listen: "This is not a conversation;" 2) a statement that you have been watching your child (this is attention rich and likely to influence); 3) a description of the specific behavior; 4) a statement of how it made you feel, for example: "I was really sad when I saw this;" 5) a statement that separates the person from the behavior, for example: "That's not you. You're better than that;" 6) Finally, you end with "I don't want to see that again." Now it's time to reflect. The praising is similar; just substitute positive behaviors in steps 1 to 3. In step 4, you associate the real self of your child with the behavior: "now that's the child I know." You close with an expectation to see more of this. You keep your child from speaking the entire time, and send her off to reflect. The next section on self-discovery helps explain the value of consistently inviting reflection over time.

A journey in self-discovery. The work on Positive Discipline shows that children develop key life skills over the years once invited to reflect, make decisions and engage in self-discovery. The process of self-discovery in younger children may start with wondering about minor issues, like physical attributes, but it will often evolve into a wonderful transformation into authenticity and self-realization. A child may start out wondering about the shape of her nose, for example. Sooner or later she will start to ask herself who she is, and what she wants to be. Questions about herself and her life then become: What makes me special? What are my strengths, interests and talents? The process of self-discovery then leads to developing a mind of one's own and to empowerment. This can serve as a great protection for your children against negative peer influences. Children who know themselves and know where they are going in life will find it easier to dismiss the lures of peers involved in alcohol, drugs and other high risk behavior. This is the power of self-discovery, something you can cultivate with simple reflection.

Personal strengths. Investment in personal strengths that meets with success produces a greater desire to discover and develop more personal strengths. This creates a self-reinforcing cycle of each strength creating the desire to develop more strengths, and strengths driving the impetus for further self-

discovery. Think back in your own life to times of developing new interests, applying existing strengths to them, and developing new strengths. Recall the excitement of seeing yourself become truly skilled in an area. This cycle can become a growth producing and enjoyable experience associated with increased confidence based on past successes. The more past successes, the greater the confidence you develop. This may explain the findings of Nelsen (2006) that key life strengths develop over time.

Talents. The key to the development of new abilities is allowing the child to be who he really is. The good news is that children possess a natural drive to discover this. All we have to do is get out of their way. Children express their true selves through the wants they convey and the choices they make. This means that you must allow the child the opportunity to select what activities to pursue, peers to befriend, interests to develop, food to eat, and clothes to wear.

When the true self seeks expression through a desire, you will know it. The intensity of the interest, and the perseverance you will witness is remarkable. You witness passion, willingness to learn, work and sacrifice. The passion for the activity fuels persistence and maturity. Most importantly, you see enthusiasm and joy. The activity is not as important as the abilities it drives. Many times it makes no difference to children whether they adopt a particular look, or engage in a specific activity. However, at other times, participation in a given activity becomes a passion. Consider these interests vital, even if they seem selfish or frivolous at the time. This is the faith you must adopt, and it will make you your child's greatest ally.

Faith. Parents who practice Positive Discipline learn to believe in their children through the self-discovery process that emerges from the reflection process described above. They will see how children sooner or later make the right choices. They learn to discover the best in their children and bring out the best in themselves, both as parents and as people. To foster trust and healthy intimacy, it behooves the parent to honor and celebrate the child as an individual with equal or greater potential than the parent. The parent should learn to trust that, given reasonable expectations and learning opportunities, the child will learn to choose what is right for the child at each important juncture in life.

Negative Discipline produces the opposite effect. Why do some youths seem embarrassed to be seen with their parents? It may be due to lack of faith in that child, namely the ability to see a child's capacity

to achieve what he seeks on his own, or with reasonable assistance. It can also be that the child lacks faith in herself, and thus is self-conscious of parents witnessing failure. The capacity to believe in the inherent potential of a child, and the confidence in the child's ability to achieve what she wants serves as a catalyst for growth. The parent cannot trust the child if she lacks faith in the child's inborn ability to learn, grow and succeed. If the parent, child, or both, fail to "believe," the child will sense that hesitance and the resulting insecurity can subvert the child's development.

Looking for the best. Think of the faith element of Positive Discipline as looking for the best in your child. William Arthur Ward (1970) once said: "when we seek to discover the best in others, we somehow bring out the best in ourselves." Once you start seeing your child as likely to make the right choice given time to reflect, you start discovering the best in your child. Once you start discovering the best in your child, you bring out the best in yourself. Once you bring out the best in yourself, you model the best, and have the best long-term possible influence on your child.

Faith is a choice you must make. This program invites you to choose to believe that everything your child needs to succeed as the person she was meant to be lies within her. This asks you to place your faith in the strengths and abilities that are inherently present in your child, but aren't apparent yet. Once you assume this, you will see your child face situations that she cannot yet master, and common sense will suggest impending failure for your child. However, necessity is the mother of invention, and as your child experiences need in areas that matter to her, hidden potential and new abilities will awaken.

The perspective of faith allows you to see looming challenges as nature's call to awaken dormant strengths and talents. Keep in mind, however, that your child doesn't have infinite natural skills and talents. The dormant abilities are there strictly to help her become the person she has the potential to become. In other words, some children are born to be carpenters, others farmers, doctors or computer programmers. If a child faces a challenge, and new abilities fail to emerge, we conclude that this skill is not central to the development of this child – not at this time. We assume this is the case, and remain confident, even as the child fails. When important abilities fail to emerge, we may have the child looked at by professionals to determine if there is a health or learning problem that is interfering with

development. However, in the absence of clear evidence to that effect, we assume that the activity at hand is simply not that important to the development of this particular child.

Becoming inspired. Inspiration pertains to the fostering of talents, skills and abilities, and the use of these to find our life's purpose. Dr. Robert Brooks' (1991) groundbreaking book, *The self-esteem teacher: Raising resilient children*, coined the term "Islands of Competence" to describe the importance of finding and fostering areas of talent in children who might otherwise be at-risk. Dr. Brooks also studied the importance of a significant adult, say a teacher, in the lives of children. Such mentors model strengths that produce dramatic turn-around experiences in their lives. The work of Dr. Brooks speaks to the transformational power of combining two powerful factors: modeling an inspired life, and focusing on the strengths and talents of children.

Modeling, Reflection and Faith: Applications

We now enter into applications of Positive Discipline theory. This program is not a "quick fix." It calls for living the life you want your child to live; making the sacrifices and hard choices it takes to succeed in your own life. However, it promises to make your effort worthwhile by detailing the steps you can take to bring out the best in yourself as a role model, and use that influence to bring out the best in your child. Yes, this is hard, but you will find it well worth the effort. We will learn to apply modeling, reflection and faith to the three types of situations that Negative Discipline presents. We will manage badgering, dawdling and personal attacks.

Badgering situations. The following exercises are designed to handle situations where your child wants something from you and tries to get it from you with persistent demands. This is what we call badgering. Your child will come at you tormented by a desire and ready to lose emotional control at the first sign of a "no" response. You will model self-discipline as you take your child through the process of controlling the emotions, applying self-discipline and overcoming obstacles to getting needs met with responsible behavior.

Exercise 1: modeling self-discipline. Behavioral studies show that the fastest way to foster self-control in a child is to ignore the unwanted behavior. We want to teach your child to go from being

controlled by urges and emotions to being in control of these. Your child will probably start with a soft whiney or pleading tone, a bit like singing. You know the sound. You want to start this intervention as soon as you notice the first emotional tone in your child. You will catch your child's attention, with: "look at me." Your child will respond because she is pleading and wants an answer. You will NOT address the content of your child's plea until the next intervention. Instead, you will call for a calm tone, while modeling respect and friendliness. You say: "I can't think unless the tone is like this (model desired tone)." From this point, if you hear emotion in the tone, ignore (don't look, don't talk). Think that each glance you offer will give your child two minutes of fuel for a tantrum; each statement five minutes. Your child's calm tone is the price of speaking with you. It means self-discipline has been attained. It means the child is liberated for the moment from the grip of the urge.

The moment your child imitates your tone and speaks calmly, rejoice! Your response is to praise your child for speaking calmly (not talk about the subject area). Now you begin exercise 2: active listening. A return to a whining and emotional tone (singing) means loss of control again, and you say: "Sorry, can't think," then walk away and go back to the start of the exercise (see Figure 3).

EXERCISE 1: MODELING SELF CONTROL		
CHILD STATE	SIGNIFICANCE	PARENT RESPONSE
Whining/Emotional Tone	Loss of Control	"I can't think unless the tone is like this (model control) ... Ignore (don't look, don't talk)
Calm Tone	Self Discipline Attained	Compliment Tone Active Listening
Return to Whining	Loss of Control	Sorry, can't think ... Walk away

Figure 3. Exercise 1: Modeling self-discipline. Maintain self-control and respect and wait for your child to regain composure.

Exercise 2: active listening for badgering. You ended exercise one by complimenting your child on her tone; now you begin active listening. You simply invite your child to tell you everything she wants, and your tone (which you model) is friendly and generous. The steps are the same regardless of whether your child wants something from you and is badgering, or you want something from your child and face dawdling. You handle personal attacks and attitudes in separate exercises. We want to go for a genuine shift in disposition to authentic cooperation, consideration and respect.

There are two components of active listening: listing your child's wants, and assessing your child's willingness to earn those wants (see Figure 4). The first step includes asking for wants as follows: "I like how you're talking. What do you want?" (act as if you heard nothing when the tone was emotional). Step 2: respond to the request with "anything else?" Continue to ask the same thing to get a list of all wants. Be natural in getting a list of what your child wants. It becomes active listening because periodically you repeat

what you were told to make sure you understood correctly and help your child feel heard. Step 3 is summarizing what you heard. “So you want (list all items and summaries of other content), right?” You can write a list if your child wants many items.

The second part of the active listening process is to ask questions about how your child expects to earn things and whether she has thought of making things fair. This includes whether your child has behaved well, is willing to do things to earn the desired items, and other logistic questions that may pertain to the situation. You shift to questions like: “Have you thought about how you can earn these things?” “Have you been behaving?” “Have you done your chores and homework?” “Have you thought of how are you going to get there?” You close this step with a request for reflection. You provide a summary and say, “let me think about this. I’ll get back to you.” Your next step is to enforce reflection – Exercise 4.

EXERCISE 2: ACTIVE LISTENING	
Child Statement	Parent Response
I want (insert item 1)	Anything else?
Yea ... (insert item 2)	Ok, Anything else?
No	Ok, so you want (summarize) ... Is that it?
And can I have (item 3)? (explains the reason)	Summarize what child says, including all items and explanations
Ok, can I?	So how are you going to earn this?
I don't know	Have you done your chores and your homework?
No, but I will.	Let me think about it ... (transition into reflection step)

Figure 4. Exercise 2: Active listening and compromise. Get a list of wants and question willingness to earn these.

If you are going to have a battle with your child, it will be over your right to reflect. So far you have provided supportive functions for your child. You have helped her to attain control over emotions by modeling friendly respect and self-control. You have listened to your child's wants and demonstrated understanding of her point of view. You've asked him to consider earning things and expressed faith in his ability to do the right thing. Now you assert that you are the parent and what you say goes. Some children will have a problem with that, until they come to trust this process.

The reason for requesting time to reflect is to ensure that you can address your child when she is free of the discomfort of the immediate want. You may have a good idea of what you're going to decide and say, but you want to make sure your child is in state to listen, understand and compromise fairly. If your child tries to stop you from taking time to reflect, you can be confident that she is in the grip of some urge. You know the impulse that was bothering your child has temporarily passed when he gets involved in another activity. You will probably find that your child looks at you with surprise when you interrupt the new activity to present your response. However, if your child returns to you to ask if you've thought it over, you've waited too long. The urge/need has returned, and you need to let it pass again.

Exercise 3: asserting your right to reflect. We start the reflection step by giving a clear choice that we will enforce in the spirit of Positive Discipline, with respect and firmness. This is your first request for compliance, and you are going to make the choice obvious: either give me a few minutes to think about how to make this work as allies, or you will get absolutely nothing from me. As shown in Figure 5, the statements pertain to the three target situations as follows: 1) the badgering statement is "give me time to think or the answer is no." 2) The dawdling statement is "do what you have to, or take your consequences (for example, you will have turned off all electronics to eliminate distractions)." 3) The reflection statement for personal insults will be handled in a unique manner. It involves asking questions designed to expose the child's attitude and invite reflection. It starts with: "What's your point?" Then whatever the child says, implement the same steps as in active listening: "Anything else?" At the end of the interaction, offer to think about it. The rationale behind this approach to personal insults is that there is often an unspoken attitude or belief behind expressions of disrespect. There may be some hurt feelings or resentment. If so, you may hear

something like: “you always give him everything and me nothing!” You would still invite reflection to cool down. However, this subject may be worth reflection and discussion at an appropriate time. Sometimes the insult is a deflection because the child doesn’t like the way things are going. Either way, the goal is to address the issue that is leading to the attack, and how the parent can manage her own emotions and tone.

EXERCISE 3: INVITE REFLECTION

SITUATION	CHOICE	ACTION
Badgering	Give me time to think or forget about it?	Wait for agenda shift and offer compromise
Dawdling	Display desired behavior or description of what will happen	Remove access to all electronics, privileges and favors to invite reflection
Personal Attack	Respect or be on our own	What’s your point? ... So? ... Anything else?

Figure 5. Exercise 3: Establishing the right to reflect. Treat refusal to let you reflect as unacceptable. Assume that reflection time (self-discovery) is all you and your child need to be your best.

We will treat any refusal to allow reflection as an attempt to deprive us of our right to think for ourselves, and strongly assert this right. Let your child know that “refusing a person reasonable time to think about things is wrong, and I won’t have it.” You enforce your rights by offering the choice: “let me think or the answer is no.” Most children will elect to give you a while for reflection and to cool down. Remember to

maintain composure. The formula of Positive Discipline is modeling a positive attitude with firm and strong consequences.

The next exercise involves helping your child realize that she has to earn things. We are replacing the early childhood idea of crying to get what you want with the mature idea of working for what you want. Your child has expressed desires. Now it's time to look at the cost. Then comes the hard decision of whether to work for the desire, or do without. We teach this valuable lesson through the exercise of compromise – the subject of exercise 4.

Exercise 4: arriving at compromise. A compromise is a social/interpersonal skill essential to maintaining friendships and keeping relationships healthy. We use it to balance desire with responsibility, want with earning, getting with giving. You will be strengthening your child and teaching her a necessary skill for maintaining good friendships.

Think of your child as going off to a mental gym to strengthen control over impulses. Your child has decided to go off to a different area of the house and give you time to think. Your child has cried for what she wants and may feel entitled to get it. It is likely that she will initially see the reflection time in a passive way. You are deciding her fate. Your child will love you if you say yes; hate you if you say no. The first time you do this your child will likely be unprepared for what is about to come. Reflection will feel like a long wait under the discomfort of an unmet need and an unresolved situation. Your child may even be praying, “Please let her say yes! I really need this.” You will help her process these desires using the following steps (see Figure 6).

EXERCISE 4: COMPROMISE

Child Behavior	Parent Response
Focused on wants	Wait for evidence of distraction
Distracted, engaged in another activity, calm	Approach with offer, catch by surprise
Listens, caught off guard	Specify offer and invite reflection
Rejects offer/objects	Invite counter-offer, insist on reflection
Presents counter offer	Request reflection, wait for evidence of distraction
Distracted, engaged in another activity, calm	Make counter offer (repeat 2 steps above until arriving at compromise)
Accepts offer	Express appreciation for effort

Figure 6. Exercise 4: Compromise teaches social/interpersonal skills. Think of this as teaching your child to have good friendships.

The first step is to *let the urge pass*. Take time to reflect and don't go to your child until you have evidence of his liberation from the painful state of urgency associated with badgering. You know this has happened when your child is no longer coming back to you asking if you've thought about it, but has become distracted doing something else. You can use re-direction to get your child to do something else while you think. It is best when your child is quietly playing with something else. If your child gets distracted from the desires and you wait too long, your child will come back to ask you about your decision. If so, ask for more time, but catch your child off guard, involved in something else.

The second step is to *make an offer*. You return from your personal reflection time with an offer on what your child can do to get what she wants, or the closest thing possible to these wants. You should get back to your child as quickly as possible, and be fair, wise and a bit generous with your offer. You set a price. For every want there is a "have-to." Some requests are more reasonable than others are. Say your

child asks for an extreme like car or a bicycle. You simply inform your child of what it would take to earn something of that magnitude. For example, use of a car might cost two years of excellent school grades. A bicycle might require three months of success maintaining expected positive behaviors, and earned outings on Saturdays to visit tag sales to look for affordable bicycles. Your child earns the outings by helping you with house chores to buy you the time it takes for bicycle shopping.

Step 3 is to *invite a counteroffer*. You do not negotiate with your child after you set the price for the request. You don't need this step if your child agrees with the price you set. Chances are that your child will become emotional again or return to a negative attitude if your demands are more than your child expects. You simply close the interaction by inviting your child to think over your offer and get back to you with a better option if she can think of one.

Step 4 is to *repeat steps 2 & 3, if needed*. Listen to your child's response to your offer after due reflection time and treat it as a request in step 1. You can discuss the offer with your child and respond with a counteroffer if your child remains calm and composed with the positive attitude you are modeling. If your child starts to become emotional, repeat the offer as stated by the child, return to reflection, and come back with another offer for your child to consider. Repeat the offer and counteroffer cycle until you arrive at a compromise.

Step 5 is a *final offer*. This is where you make your final offer and let your child come to a decision. Your offer will take the form of a choice. The choice will be to pay whatever price you offered for whatever reasonable approximation to the desire you offered, or not have the desire met at all. State that this is the best you can do, ask your child to think it over and take personal space for reflection again. You close this with a statement of faith – the subject of Exercise 5.

Exercise 5: expressing your faith. You have walked away from your child and left her to reflect and make a difficult decision. The choice of the reflection step – “let me think it over or forget about it” – was easy to make. Now your child needs to decide whether to work for desires and consider your needs, or try force you into retracting your position. This is the time to be firm. You need to show your child that the option of babyhood – crying to get what she wants – is over. Your child can try hating you, suffering in

front of you, becoming irresponsible or getting even. You need to expect this, and your faith statement needs to reflect it. Your faith statement needs to disarm your child's threats and weapons (see Figure 7).

EXERCISE 5: STATEMENT OF FAITH	
SITUATION	STATEMENT OF FAITH
Badgering	"I know you'll come up with something fair for all of us ... maybe not today, but with time."
Dawdling	"I know you'll make the right decision ... maybe not today, but eventually you'll find the best option for yourself."
Personal Attack	"You know how to respect mother/father." ... Or ... "You know better than that." (Walk away)

Figure 7. Exercise 5. Statement of faith. Express faith to transition from active listening to reflection. Make these the last words your child hears.

You know your child can't keep up a retaliatory and coercive stance forever, unless you let these tactics get to you and give your child the satisfaction of feeling that negativity is winning. Your faith statement communicates that you believe in the power of reflection, which is the power of the child's conscience, the power of self-discovery that we discussed above. You believe in the ultimate goodness of your child once liberated from intense emotions and desires. The thinking behind the faith statement goes something like this: "I know you will use these negative behaviors for a while, but you will eventually discover that it isn't working, it isn't worth it, and you will be facing consequences for your behavior. You will then decide to do the right thing." For the sake of brevity, you say something like: "I know that you will eventually make the right choice, maybe not today, but by next week, or next month ... you will do what is right."

Dawdling situations. Dawdling occurs when your child delays when you want something from her. It is a lot easier to learn to handle dawdling than it is to learn to handle badgering (see Figure 8). However, dawdling can be a lot harder to endure.

Exercise 6: Managing dawdling situations. You can reverse the dawdling dynamic by inviting reflection, and removing all distractions to reflection. This is not grounding or punishment. It is the creation of a space to think. You remove all electronics (TV, cell phones, stereo, video games, computer access), access to friends, favors, money, rides, parental help, and participation in family activities. You always provide food, shelter and medical care. This state of separation from the family lasts until your child makes the choice to complete work due. The steps of the dawdling intervention are as follows.

MANAGING DAWDLING	
STEPS	ACTION
1 – GET ATTENTION	get your child's attention without words
2 – SET TIME LIMIT	use non-verbal cue to notify when time is up.
3 – REMOVE ENTERTAINMENT TO INVITE REFLECTION	disable or confiscate all electronics, refuse favors, no interactions, no distractions
4 – POST WRITTEN LIST OF WORK DUE	write down a list of the responsibilities due by your child.
5 – STATEMENT OF FAITH	detail consequences of non-compliance and express confidence hat child will make the right choice, eventually.

Figure 8. Exercise 6: Managing dawdling situations. Invite reflection by removing distractions. If your child comes to you, follow procedure for badgering.

Step 1 is to *get attention*. You get your child's attention without words by gently grabbing his hand or physically interrupting an activity. Make eye contact and inform your child that a responsibility is due – homework, dishes, cleaning, bed time, etc.

Step 2 is to *set a time limit*. You can use a countdown from three to zero, or give a specific period of time, such as half an hour. This all depends on the situation. Prepare for step 3 if your child fails to comply. Use a non-verbal signal to notify your child that time is up.

Step 3 is to *remove distractions* (sources of entertainment). You cut off access to all desirable activities if your child doesn't comply in time. Disable or confiscate all electronics, refuse favors; no interactions, no distractions.

Step 4 is to *post a written list of work due*. Write down a list of the responsibilities due by your child.

Step 5 is to *offer a statement of faith*. Your statement of faith for dawdling includes the expected consequences of failing to complete the work due and a statement of confidence that she will do the right thing eventually; maybe not today, but eventually.

You make one statement after removing all distractions to invite reflection. "You need to think about what you did and decide how you're going to make things right." You follow this with a statement of faith. "I'm sure you will do the right thing, sooner or later." You DO NOT speak to your child once you remove distractions and make these statements. Think of yourself as another TV set or video game your child can use to avoid meaningful reflection. Then turn yourself off. Your child may come to you asking you to restore lost privileges of seeking an explanation of what she did. Treat that as reflection. Your child may present with an attitude when approaching you to discuss the situation. That is the subject of exercise 7 – managing attitudes.

Addressing attitudes. An attitude is an unspoken message conveyed by body language; negative attitudes can cause harm. Take a moment to reflect upon the importance of exposing and addressing attitudes and their underlying assumptions. Attitudes convey unspoken messages that undermine important relationships in our lives. A tendency to "swallow and keep quiet" will lead to eventually harboring resentment and eventual "blow ups." Reacting with a negative attitude of your own will likely promote

conflict and distance. The person displaying the attitude may not realize the message being conveyed, so a pattern can develop that can continue indefinitely. No one is in control, dysfunction grows, and emotional explosions are waiting to go off.

We are able to diffuse and manage resistant attitudes once we understand how they work. We begin to challenge attitudes by articulating their unspoken message, thus transferring their negative communication from the realm of unspoken body language to the realm of consciously mediated verbal expression. We help the person with the negative attitude to realize how their attitude offends. This is the subject of exercise 7 (see Figure 9).

Exercise 7: addressing attitudes. It takes gentleness to switch the conversation from the individual's stated content to how things are said. Processing attitudes is not limited to children, as any one of us can display attitude without realizing it and cause negativity in the family without realizing it. The goal is to help the individual to become open to questioning the attitude by asking questions and modeling positive intentions in the process.

The steps of the exercise are as follows:

Step 1: *Read your child's body language.* Observe the person with the negative attitude and ask yourself: what does the attitude say to me?

Step 2: Briefly put this message into words.

Step 3: Model a kind, positive attitude.

Step 4: *Change the topic* from the stated subject to the attitude, that is, to the way things are being said. Gently say: "I hear you, but why that tone?"

Step 5: *Admit the impact of the attitude.* Convey the words identified in Step 2 and declare the impact the attitude has on you. For example: "your way of talking says to me, 'you have to do whatever I say or else!' I think, 'never!' And I just want to say no."

Step 6: *Invite reflection* by questioning: "Is this how you want us to be? Think about it."

EXERCISE 7: ADDRESSING ATTITUDE		
What is an Attitude	How to Address It	Intervention Steps
Unspoken communication conveyed by body language and tone Independent of words	Put it into words Focus on body language to read it Interrupt conversation to address attitude	Role play child's attitude Read body language Translate into words
Stems from assumptions Outside of awareness	Question assumptions Model kindness and respect when exposing	Adopt positive attitude Change topic to attitude Articulate attitude
Has strong impact Goes unaddressed indefinitely	Give it high priority Nip it in the bud	Admit impact on you Invite reflection: "Is this how you want us to talk?"

Figure 9. Exercise 7: Addressing Attitude. This exercise defines attitude and shows how to manage it.

Handling personal attacks. Personal attacks represent a unique opportunity to model empowerment – one of the key life skills that come from self-discovery, according to the Positive Discipline research. The most important skill in parental empowerment involves remaining composed in the face of personal attacks.

The empowered parent. The empowered parent is positive, encouraging, and fully aware that: 1) the child is in an altered mental state; 2) this will pass; and 3) your child will transform and make intelligent decisions when emotions cool. This awareness reassures and strengthens you as you remove yourself from the situation. This is the time to model respect and self-discipline, offering encouragement, and a statement of faith (see Exercise 5).

Exercise 8: escaping personal attacks. It is essential for you to have a specific strategy to avoid the tit-for-tat interactions that can take place in the cycle of Negative Discipline. The ultimate

challenge you can pass to defeat Negative Discipline is to handle a tantrum or personal attack. Children overcome by anger may seek to spoil things for everyone else. They want to get under your skin. If they can't have an emotionally spoiling effect on the family atmosphere and pull for negative attention, their oppositional behavior will vanish, and they will adopt a loving and humbled attitude.

You will need to role-play the steps below until you are confident in your ability to apply this skill in the midst of a tantrum or personal attack. The objective of the intervention is to have your children clarify their intentions and tell you what they really want. You will respond to questions or comments (no matter how offensive) with questions. The exercise ends with a call for reflection. This exercise is only necessary if you have removed all sources of entertainment (see Exercise 4, Enforcing Reflection, and Exercise 6, Managing Dawdling) and your child won't let you simply walk away.

Below are the steps to escaping personal attacks (see Figure 10):

The first step is *venting*: confronted with an aggressive attitude, you will ask, "Is there something you want from me?" Or, "Is there anything more you want to say?" You respond to anything your child says with some variant of, "Anything else?" You end the interaction with the statement, "I'll think it over," or "I'll keep that in mind." At this point, you enter your reflection step and take a personal time out. Hopefully you leave the encounter with an understanding of what your child feels/wants, and the expectation that a transformation will take place to a calm, composed, respectful and friendly child.

The second step is *deflecting*: you respond to insults or innuendoes with the question, "What's your point?" Your child may seek to trigger you with, "You're a b--ch! I hate you!" Or, "This sucks!" You calmly but firmly respond with, "What's your point?" This forces your child to explain, and redirects the urge to retaliate. Should your child disclose the reason for the offensive remark, you return to Step 1 of Venting. You begin questioning to find out what your child wants. Once more you ask, "Anything else you want me to know?" You end the exchange by declaring reflection time and modeling the attitude of introspection you want your child to adopt. Say, "I'll think it over," or "I'll keep it in mind."

The third step is to *speculate*: you can speculate about your child's intentions when she refuses to answer questions. Your child makes a degrading comment: "You expect me to eat this c—p?!" You respond

with, “Why are you telling me this?” Or, “What's your point?” Your child refuses to answer. You look up to the ceiling (never at your upset child) and talk to yourself. You begin to speculate aloud. “Let's see, why would someone ask that? Perhaps you think I can help you more than I do, and I am not very smart in my food planning.” You can speculate for a while, try another angle, in effect giving your child a multiple choice. Again you close with your intention to reflect.

You can keep the speculation up for a while until your child begins to reveal his intentions or seems ready to drop the subject. She will often say something like, “Forget it!” This is intended to startle you into an attitude of helpfulness. The key is for you not to reveal any information about yourself and your feelings, and to offer no opinions, no advice. You must limit your participation to listening and speculating on your child's intentions. If no explanation comes after a while, you simply says to yourself, “I'll have to think that over some more,” and walk away for a personal time out.

Never engage in dialog in the steps described above. Never respond to demands, or answer a question unless your child's tone and body language reveal that the transformation to self-discipline has taken place, and honorable intentions prevail. Be clear that answering questions or responding to demands will render you vulnerable and invite personal attack. You will have enabled your child's unwanted choice to get under your skin.

The fourth step is *reflection*. Your “I'll-think-it-over” statement is an important benchmark and marks the end of this exercise, and the start of reflection. The goal of reflection is to invite self-discovery. This is personal development time. Once you announce that you'll think things over, you walk away, and the interaction is finished.

The fifth step is *expressing faith*. There is an underlying attitude that needs to be exposed in a child that directly offends a parent. We have established that an attitude is a statement repeatedly expressed through body language, and without use of words (see Exercise 7 above). It is a message concealed behind words on another subject. A person can be talking about milk and running errands with body language that says, “It is because I live with a fool like you that we have no milk!” On the other hand, body language can

say, “It is because I live with a generous person like you that I can get money for milk when I need it.” People reveal attitudes without being aware of it. They also respond to attitudes without realizing it.

You must expose and counter your child’s negative attitude by putting it into words while modeling a positive attitude yourself. Say your child is pressuring you to do something and refuses to let you think about it. You might expose the coercion attitude with: “So let me get this straight. You are telling me that because you want this, you have the right to force me to decide things right away without thinking. Like I have no rights and you own me. Is that correct?” Or, “You believe that if you get loud enough, I have to do what you want?” Then you model a calm positive attitude as you say, “Well, I’ll have to think about what to do with that as well.” You leave.

EXERCISE 8: ESCAPING PERSONAL ATTACKS

STEP	PARENT STATEMENT
1 – VENTING	“Is there something you want from me?” Or, “Is there anything more you want to say? ... “Anything else?” ... , “I’ll keep that in mind.”
2 – DEFLECTING INSULTS:	“What's your point?” ... “Anything else?”
3 – SPECULATE (put attitude into words)	look up to the ceiling (never at your upset child) and talk to yourself. ... “Let's see, why would someone say that?” Could it be ...?”
4 – REFLECTION:	“I’ll-think-it-over”
5 -- FAITH	“This will pass” ...

Figure 10. Exercise 8: escaping personal attacks. This exercise addresses personal attacks and shows how to manage them.

The following segments aim to portray various situations that involve the principles proposed in the above exercises. They are meant to model the interventions so you can guide your own practice of the various skills.

Putting it all Together

The exercises described above must be practiced through modeling and role-play if you are to execute them successfully. Intellectual understanding simply will not do. You can learn to execute the following steps: (1) Question your child's demands or requests in order to find out his intentions. Do not answer any questions or reveal any personal thoughts or feelings. (2) Respond to insults with some form of the question, "What's your point?" (3) Ask what else your child wants to say, or wants you to do. (4) Announce, "I'll think it over." This is a crucial step in establishing your right to think and to hold a conversation only with a person who respects you. It is the start of the reflection process. (5) Walk away and take a personal time out. (6) Expose your child's attitude if she refuses to let you take reflection time, of if your child is otherwise uncooperative. (7) Always close with a statement of faith. Make it authentic. (8) Return to your child with a proposal for how to earn what she wants, or the closest thing possible to that. This often involves a compromise. You should model a positive and composed attitude when engaging in the compromise process.

Positive discipline illustrations. The following examples serve to illustrate applications of Positive Discipline in action. They involve largely badgering situations; that is, where children want something and they rely on persistence to satisfy that need. The children may try to apply pressure by interrupting (or disrupting) your busy agenda to coerce you into giving in to their demands so you can get back to your Wheel of Life and making sure everything gets done properly. The last of three examples may represent a dawdling situation in that the child in question doesn't want to attend school; she also wants to spend a day with her mother and little brother. Either way, the stops include modeling self-discipline and composure; then exposing negative emotional tones and inducing a state of self-control to invite reflection; then guiding the children toward reaching a compromise. This is done with faith in the child's eventual good decision-making capacity. With this in mind, consider the following examples:

Johnny wants pizza. Johnny looks his mother in the eye and shouts, “Dinner sucks! Why can't you ever make anything good?””

She asks, “So what's your point?”

Johnny: “That you don't care about us. You're just too busy with your work, and you never get us what we want.”

Mother (modeling calm and positive): “Is there anything else you want to say?”

Johnny (more demanding): “So what are you going to do about it?”

Mother: “What do you want me to do?”

Johnny (now cheerful): “Order some pizza!”

Mother: Anything else you want?”

Johnny (pleadingly): No, will you please order pizza!

Mother (as she walks away): “I'll think it over.”

Johnny attempts to continue the argument by threatening not to eat, and to fail in school if the pizza is not forthcoming. But Mom never comments on the pizza. Her response to Johnny's threats is a variation of “What's your point?” She asks, “So why are you telling me this?” Johnny walks out in a huff and cries to get attention.

Had Johnny persisted beyond this point, his mother would have exposed his attitude and modeled respect by calmly saying something like, “I guess you think if you make enough threats I have to buy a pizza. Otherwise, you'll do poorly in life on purpose. I'll keep that in mind.” Had Johnny made an insulting remark, like “I hate you!” she would have asked, “What's your point?” Or, for variety's sake, “Is there something you're trying to tell me?”

Mother waits for Johnny to quiet, and finds him playing quietly in his room. This means he has been liberated from the urge and attained a state of self-discipline. Now dialog is possible. Mother hands Johnny a list of jobs he can do to earn a fun pizza night. They include picking up the house, taking out the trash, bathing after a single reminder, and doing his best with his homework. He does this for three days in a row, and it's pizza night. She explains that these are things he needs to do anyway. He earns the pizza by doing

them well and with a cheerful attitude. She asks that he think it over. Johnny calmly counters with two nights, and they finally agree after reflecting on mother's counteroffer of this week it will cost you two days, but next week three days. She posts a paper with his jobs to earn pizza night. Johnny invites his siblings to participate and earn pizza with movies. This becomes a weekly tradition for the family.

Jim wants to go to the mall...NOW! Jim approaches his father and asks sweetly, "Can I go to the mall, please?"

"Want to tell me more about it?" he asks.

"There's not that much to tell. Bob invited me to go with him, and all the kids are going to be there. Can I go, please?!"

"Is there anything you want me to do?" Father shows no reaction to the request so far. He's not even thinking about the decision.

"Well, I could use five dollars," Jimmy says. Jimmy assumes that Dad's questioning and calm demeanor means he is going to say yes. However, he is planning to ask for a time out to think after he finishes listening to Jimmy's explanations.

Father: Anything else?

Jimmy: Yeah, I need to call him back right away, because they're leaving in a little while.

Father: Anything else?

Jimmy: No. Can I, please?

Father: "You want to go to the mall, with Bob. You need five dollars from me, and you are in a hurry, which doesn't leave much time to plan things. Is that right?" (This is active listening, where you summarize what your child has said, ensuring that she feels heard/understood).

(Jimmy nods in agreement. He feels listened to).

Father: Well, OK, I'll think it over.

Father goes to a place where he can be alone and sort things out. He thinks about the trip and the responsibilities Jimmy may have trouble managing. Most of these would have consequences from sources outside the home. Infractions might include failure to complete homework, going to bed late, and missing

soccer practice. Father returns to his son with a brief summary of possible consequences, and asks if she will need to provide any special buffers if he is penalized for his irresponsibility.

Father also notes that Jimmy hasn't taken out the garbage or fed the dogs. Moreover, he needs to earn the five dollars somehow. These concerns have no outside consequences so they require enforcement from home. Johnny decides to take out the garbage and feed the dogs. He promises to rake leaves for an hour for five dollars. If he doesn't do it by Sunday at 4 P.M., he forfeits his private phone until the work is done, the debt settled. He and his father write this down. Jim wants a note to give to his coach explaining it was all right for him to have missed soccer practice. He leaves with Bob for the mall – happily.

Had Jim persisted in his entreaties without completing his tasks, his father would have pointed out that he was failing to meet his responsibilities, and walked away, leaving Jim with no decision made on his request, and nowhere to go.

Mary doesn't want to go to school: an illustration of compromise. Mary had an appointment and wanted a special day with mom and her little brother, rather than returning to school at the appointed time. Mary started by pleading and begging in body language that betrayed poor emotional control. Her mother respectfully asked her to gain her composure and speak as she was being spoken to. Her mother modeled a calm, even and reassuring tone and asked Mary to speak the same way if she wanted to be heard. Mary presented her request calmly, and rather than respond to the request, her mother responded with: "very good tone, I like how you said that. Now what do you want?" This constituted the first step, control over tone.

The mother then engaged in active listening, repeating what Mary wanted and Mary's rationale as expressed. The mother said: "you get very good grades and have been good and you want to have a special time with your mother." At this point, Mary started to cry softly. She said, "because I never had any special time with my mother and my little brother." The crying escalated and Mary's mother saw this as a loss of control. She went against her natural instincts and employed Positive Discipline. Whatever Mary said didn't count. Mother respectfully told Mary that she needed time to regain control because emotion distorts and

interferes with reflection. The mother took this opportunity to gather her thoughts on this matter. She realized that she had some legitimate reservations of her own.

The mother realized that she was concerned that Mary's cousin is always asking to be picked up early from school and this was setting a bad example. Mother was clear that she was against taking children out of school, and that the school had recently sent parents a letter warning that too many absences would lead them to file a report of possible neglect with the state. Mary was not currently at risk of this outcome but it was a concern for her mother. Once Mary regained composure, her mother calmly explained her concerns and asked Mary to repeat them. Mary said: "you think that I'll ask the same thing every time I have an appointment." Mary wanted to cry but fought to maintain emotional control, and she managed it. Mother asked Mary for time to reflect, and after a while offered the following compromise: "attend 4 appointments in a row without asking to miss school, and maintain excellent grades, in order to earn one special day with mom and little brother. Mary agreed that it wouldn't be this day, but she could work to have that special day she longed for. Mary's mother reported a lasting change in Mary's attitude. Mary, who was known for expressing needs in pressing emotional tones, switched in a lasting way to speaking in a composed manner and engaging in meaningful dialogs to arrive at compromises and earn things. Mary spoke calmly, she obeyed everything she was asked, and played without dominance. It seemed that she had found a better way.

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

The present study involved implementation of a pilot group parent education and support intervention from the program outlined in chapter 3 (pp. 26-67), and a mixed-methods investigation of parents' responses to the intervention, comparing Latino and non-Latino parents. The study sought to analyze the experience of participants using quantitative questionnaires to determine differences in the perceived usefulness of the process between Latino and non-Latino parents. The content delivered was derived from parenting programs that target child behavior problems and the quality of the parent-child relationship with education on specific skills.

The research questions were whether Latino parents would respond differently to parent education designed for the mainstream culture, and whether cultural factors would impact the way parent education would be received. It was hypothesized that Latinos would find support, discussion, collaboration and modeling opportunities of a group as most important and rate the specific skills taught as less relevant and useful than their non-Latino counterparts. It was predicted that Latino parents would give a lower rating to the likelihood of implementing the skills as presented, supporting the observations that Latinos derive motivation and confidence from bonding and collaborations with others in similar situations. Latinos were expected to find interventions designed for the mainstream culture as less relevant, but would utilize the interactions with other Latino parents to adjust the recommended skills to fit their specific situations.

It was also expected that Latino participants would report increased familiarity with the school adjustment counselors and would report an increased likelihood of active participation in school-sponsored events and in advocacy efforts on behalf of their children. This was considered a secondary hypothesis derived from the suggestion that Latino parents are more likely to leave education to the experts and stay out of the way; and that familiarity and collaboration would likely increase their motivation to participate.

It was hoped that the results of this study would further understanding for the field of social work of the feasibility of partnering with schools to provide cost-effective parent education and support to help Latino families avoid the pitfalls of childhood behavior problems, child abuse, domestic violence, and a host of other social ailments.

Sample

Participants in the study were parents of students who attended the middle school of Renaissance School. The Renaissance School is a public charter school in Springfield, Massachusetts that houses a middle school and high school. The majority of the student body is of Latino ethnicity. The mission of the Renaissance School is to prepare students for post high school education via use of firm structure, high standards and dedication to advanced education. The aspiration of providing a successful transition to college after high school has led to designation of teachers as team leaders assigned to monitor and mentor small groups of students.

The study accepted parents who agreed to attend two parent education and support sessions to participate in the learning and support process, and to provide feedback on their experience. The study excluded from participation individuals who were not parents or were unable to attend the expected number of meetings. The desired sample size was twelve participants from twelve different families, at least six of them Latinos.

Recruitment Process

Participants were recruited by referral from school staff. They were referred largely by teachers and adjustment counselors who extended personal invitations to participate in the study. Accommodations were made for the study to accept parents who spoke only Spanish. The presentation of the material was translated to Spanish, and the researcher made herself available to translate content to parents who spoke only Spanish, and to translate their contributions to the group in English.

Published studies in the field of cultural competence had suggested that Latino parents respond to recruitment efforts based on personalized contact over time, and were unlikely to respond to impersonal strategies like advertisement or flyers sent home, even if in their native language. The original recruitment

strategy was to offer participation in the study to members of an ongoing parent support group. The researcher, an intern adjustment counselor, was to attend a support group session as a guest and was to present an introduction to Positive Discipline, the purpose of the study, and the requirements for participation. The researcher planned to inquire about the level of interest in participation, screen interested participants, contact interested parents individually by phone and invite them to participate in private and without pressure. The unexpected disbanding of this group left the investigator to resort to recruitment methods associated with low chance of successful recruitment of Latino parents.

The majority of the recruiting efforts involved informing key school staff of the offering and asking them to refer parents they thought likely to benefit from participation and likely to accept invitation. The researcher coordinated and held a meeting with staff of the school guidance department to present an introduction to the skills to be taught, the purpose of the study and the requirements of participation (see Appendix A). The investigator asked staff who referred parents to contact the parents directly to discuss the offering with referred parents, and to prepare them for a follow up call from the investigator. The investigator also prepared invitation flyers in English and Spanish describing the study and its benefits (see Appendix B). The investigator worked with the school Parent Facilitator to distribute the flyers to the homes of all middle school students attending the school. The flyers were sent two weeks before the scheduled date of the offerings.

The researcher conducted the screening process with interested parents during the individualized phone contact as follows. The researcher introduced herself and informed the parent that she was following up on the referral by school staff. The researcher invited them to participate in the study after providing a very brief description of the study and its intended benefits. The researcher asked the parents' permission to read them three screening questions that addressed the inclusion criteria (Appendix C). If the parent met the requirements of all three items, they were asked if they would like to participate in the study.

Parents who qualified and agreed to participate in the study were asked to undergo the consent process and complete the informed consent form (Appendix D). They completed a brief demographic questionnaire (Appendix E) and attend two group sessions. Each of the group meetings was scheduled to

last 90 minutes. Parents who had expressed interest but decline to participate in the study were offered the opportunity to attend the two sessions, without involvement in the completion of the questionnaires.

The researcher asked teachers and staff of the guidance department to refer additional participants for the study when it became necessary to recruit more parents to reach the desired number of participants. The researcher arranged to conduct additional groups before the second group meetings (one in Spanish and one in English). The researcher contacted referred parents by phone, and arranged to meet individually with interested parents at the school on the night of the second group. Interested participants then completed the screening and consent process, and reviewed the material presented during the first group meeting.

Process & Methodological Decisions

An experienced school adjustment counselor and a second year social work intern placed in the role of school adjustment counselor were expected to deliver a brief course of parent education and support to an ongoing group of parents of students from the school that agreed to sponsor the study. However, the senior adjustment counselor was forced to precipitously take a leave of absence for health reasons. This made her unavailable to contribute to the study and also disbanded the ongoing group. Her loss required changes to the proposed design that will be detailed below. For each impacted area, the original design will be described, followed by the rationale for the change and the procedures as delivered.

The initial session involved demonstrations of skills and a comprehensive overview of basic principles derived from a leading parent education model called Positive Discipline (PD; Nelsen, 2006). The first portion of chapter three (page 26 – 41) of this thesis provides a detailed description of this overview as delivered.

In addition to the curriculum overview, the original proposal for session 1 included education on one specific skill derived from that curriculum through modeling and role-play. This portion of the study was intended to include the skill of Positive Punishment.

It was decided at the time of the first meeting to leave the skill training for session 2. The investigator could see that it was not realistic to expect parents to both grasp an overview of the entire curriculum and learn to apply a specific skill. Instead, the presenter modeled specific skills during the

comprehensive overview presentation to help the parents relate the content to their personal experiences as parents. This was expected to increase motivation to return for the second session. The proposed curriculum presented in chapter three (pp. 26-67) above provides a detailed description of the comprehensive overview as delivered in session one.

Parents who participated in the first meeting were asked to participate in a second meeting to follow up on the skills modeled at the first meeting. The researcher contacted participants in the 48-hour period preceding this meeting to remind them of the upcoming group meeting, and confirm their attendance.

The original design of the study included a focus group at the end of the training held in the second meeting. The focus group was to provide qualitative data for phenomenological analysis to document the experience, criticisms and suggestions of participants. Logistically, the plan involved combining the focus group with the support portion of the group by introducing the qualitative question of the second questionnaire into the discussion – namely, asking parents what recommendations they would make for improving the offering. The researcher was to record their responses. The researcher elected to omit the focus group after it was decided to abandon skill training in session 1. It did not make sense to hold a focus group on their experiences with a skill they had yet to acquire.

The content of the second session involved education and skill acquisition related to the first exercise of the curriculum presented in chapter 3 (pp. 41 - 47) above: Exercise 1, Modeling Self-Discipline. The presenter explained to participants that behavioral studies show that the fastest way to foster self-control in a child is to ignore the unwanted behavior. Parents were informed that the goal of the exercise was to teach the child to transition from being controlled by urges and emotions, to attaining control of these. Participants took turn adopting the roles of parent and child. The participant role-playing the child was instructed to start the role-play with a soft whiney or pleading tone, a bit like singing. The participant in the role of the parent was instructed to start the intervention as soon as they noticed the first emotional tone in the child. The exercise involved the three steps of Exercise 1 outlined in chapter 3, page 41.

The support component of the second meeting was limited to parents modeling required skills and providing feedback to other parents after their role-play of the prescribed skills. After each role-play, the

parent in the child position offered feedback on the performance of the one in the role of parent. Parents took informal opportunities to exchange information and suggestions, and presented these to the instructor as needed. .

Data Collection and Research Strategy

The study originally planned a mixed-methods investigation of parents' response to the intervention delivered in this study. The research strategy involved a comparison of the responses of Latino and non-Latino parents on quantitative and qualitative questionnaire items, as well as responses to open-ended focus group questions, to identify similarities and differences in the perceived usefulness of the material and format between Latino and non-Latino parents.

The employed data collection strategy was a quantitative-qualitative analysis of the responses of participants to two questionnaires, each addressing the content of the intervention delivered in each corresponding session. The research strategy involved a comparison of the responses of Latino and non-Latino parents to quantitative questionnaire items, and to a single qualitative question at the end of the session 2 questionnaire.

Measurement

The quantitative portion of the questionnaire included a Likert scale format to allow participants to rate specific components of the offering on a 1 to 5 scale, ranging from not at all useful/valuable/important, to extremely useful/valuable/important. Qualitative questions included: What did participants find most helpful? How did participation influence the way they view parenting? What suggestions would participants offer to improve the parent education and support group?

The study involved the creation of two survey questionnaires (Appendix F) to explore how cultural factors impacted the way parent education was received. Specific questions included: How important was the support component of the group? How important/useful were recommendations/input from other parents? How helpful was modeling of skills by the instructor? How helpful were the modeling of skills by other parents? What was the likelihood of changing the way they dealt with their children as a result of participation in this training? How were prescribed skills received? What is the likelihood of implementing

one or more skills specifically as taught? What was the likelihood of parents modifying the skills to suit their needs? What was the likelihood of not utilizing the skills at all? What difference, if any, did participation in the group make? What suggestions for improving the learning experience would they offer? How likely were they to increase their participation in school-sponsored events as a result of this group experience? How likely were parents to increase their participation in parent-teacher activities or advocate for their children as a result of this experience?

Each questionnaire addressed the items that pertained to the material presented in its corresponding session. Each contained subscales that facilitated the analysis of the results to address the research questions.

Ethics and Safeguards

The absence of the help of the senior adjustment counselor and the omission of the focus group rendered some of the safeguards irrelevant. It was not necessary to inform the participants of the involvement of the senior adjustment counselor, or address the issue of another person having access to the data. The omission of the focus group also rendered irrelevant the issue of access to support group content, or participant responses to focus group questions.

Informed consent was obtained after participants received an informative overview of the parent education program and before completion of the demographic questionnaire. Participants were guided through the informed consent form (Appendix D) before signing. Parents were offered a verbal description of the consent form for parents with literacy issues, and were given the informed consent form in their native language. Participants were asked to read through the text explaining the consent process, and accept all terms of participation by signing. Participants were given copies of the informed consent form for their records.

Participants were informed of the following limitations to confidentiality and offered the following safeguards to protect the privacy of their responses. All questionnaires were filled out in private, and participants were informed that only the researcher would have access to the completed questionnaires until identifying information had been removed. The researcher substituted the participants' name with a subject number before engaging in data analysis. Only the researcher was available to assist participants with literacy

issues who wanted to provide verbal responses to questionnaire items. Participants were informed that the data, informed consents, and questionnaires would be kept secure for three years, as required by Federal regulations, and after that time, they would be destroyed, or continue to be kept secure as long as they were needed. When no longer needed, data would be destroyed.

Participation in all aspects of this study was voluntary, and participants had the right to refuse to answer any question on any of the questionnaires. Participants were made aware at the time of consent of their right to refuse to participate in any part of the study, or answer any question in the demographic and quantitative-qualitative questionnaires. They were also informed of their right to exit the study at any time. Participants were given the choice to withdraw their responses anytime up until two weeks after the final session. After that point, data analysis had begun, and identifying information had been removed, making it impossible to identify and exclude a participant's responses. Any data collected on participants who later opted to withdraw from the study was immediately destroyed. It was made clear that participation (or decision to withdraw) would have no impact on the parents' relationship with the school/school faculty or their child's relationship with the school/school faculty.

The study sought to maintain the confidentiality of participants in this study to the extent possible. Participants were cautioned to keep the identities of other participants confidential, and were asked to identify themselves by first name only. They were asked to refrain from disclosing the names or other identifying information of family members when referring to them during the meetings. The researcher reminded participants of these safeguards as necessary throughout the entire process.

It was deemed that the present study posed a low risk to participants. However, it was anticipated that participants might experience some discomfort by virtue of being offered a different perspective on parenting. Participants who elected to try the skill taught in the study risked encountering unanticipated difficulties with their children or members of their immediate or extended family. Referrals to mental health services (Appendix G) were made available for participants who encountered unanticipated complications, or thought they would feel more comfortable having help for their issues before attempting to address

behavioral issues of their children. The study was approved by the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee (see Appendix H).

Data Analysis

The analysis of the session 1 questionnaire (Appendix F) arrived at a mean score for each participant and for each group (Latino and non-Latino), then divided the items into two subscales for separate analysis for each cultural group: 1) usefulness of content; and 2) usefulness of skills modeled. The first questionnaire included five items that fit usefulness of content. Examples included: “How useful was the Positive Discipline overview?” and “How likely are you to use Positive Discipline (calm tone with strong consequences)?” The first questionnaire also included four items that fit usefulness of modeling and role-play of skills. Examples included: “How helpful was the modeling of the Positive Punishment skill?” And “How helpful was role-play of the Positive Punishment skill?”

The analysis of the session 2 questionnaire (Appendix F) also divided the items into two subscales for separate analysis for each cultural group: 1) Value of elements of the overall experience, including support, skill practice, peer modeling and instructor modeling; and 2) impact of experience on participant, including likelihood of trying, implementing or changing parent behavior as a result of participation in study. The second questionnaire included four items that addressed value of experience. Examples included: “How helpful was modeling provided by the instructor?” And “How useful were recommendations/input from other parents?” The second questionnaire also included seven items that fit the impact of experience on participants. Examples included: “What is the likelihood that you will implement one or more of the suggestions you got from the instructors?” And “What difference, if any, did participation in this study make?” The analysis of questionnaire two arrived at a mean score for each participant and for each group (Latino and non-Latino). Questionnaire 2 also included three items related to a secondary hypothesis that Latino parents who attended a valued meeting at a school would rate themselves more likely to attend future school sponsored events and parent-teacher conferences. The lack of responses from participants to these items precluded data analysis.

The analysis as conducted was limited to simple comparisons of mean scores due to the low number of participants in the non-Latino group and in the study overall. Thus, the analysis of data for questionnaire one included mean scores for each of two subscales (usefulness of content and usefulness of teaching method) of questionnaire 1, and each of the two subscales of questionnaire 2 (usefulness of skill and likelihood/ease of implementation). It produced a mean score for each questionnaire for each group as a whole (Latino vs. non-Latino). The comparison of the mean scores served as an impression of the differences among Latino and non-Latino participants but admittedly failed to address the question of whether the two groups (Latino and non-Latino) differed significantly in terms of usefulness of the skills and teaching methods offered in the group.

The original analysis planned to apply parametric statistical tests. The analysis was to include a mean score for each group and a standard deviation. It was to employ t-tests to compare the responses of the two groups (Latino vs. non-Latino) for the two separate subtypes of items (value of experience and impact on participant), and for the overall mean scores. The t-tests were expected to help address the question of whether the two groups (Latino and non-Latino) differed significantly in terms of usefulness of the skills and teaching methods offered in the group. It was not possible to conduct the t-tests as originally planned due to the sample size.

Demographic questionnaire. The study collected demographic data (Appendix E) to describe the sample and assist in the generalization of the findings. Once collected, the demographic data was coded assigning separate numbers to categories within each variable. Personal variables included age of parents, age and grade of students, gender, and ethnicity. This questionnaire also documented marital status and family composition, including single parent family, two-parent family, foster or adoptive family, and other compositions (including grandparents or extended family).

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and summarize the demographic information to provide a description of the samples of Latino and non-Latino participants. Comparisons were made on relevant variables (such as age, gender, family constitution, income and number of children) to highlight similarities and differences between the two cultural groups that may have warranted consideration. Some demographic

variables besides ethnicity were added to data analysis to explore whether these variables could have influenced mean scores differences between Latinos and non-Latinos. The results of the data analysis are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Findings

The present study sought to further the field of social work's understanding of the feasibility of partnering with schools to provide cost-effective parent education to help Latino families avoid costly social problems related childhood behavior problems. The study sought to measure the perceived usefulness to and likelihood of implementation by Latino parents of a leading, evidence based parent education group to target undesired behavior in children designed for the mainstream culture.

It was expected that non-Latino parents would rate the value of the overall program and interventions offered higher, as the program was designed for the mainstream culture. This expectation would apply to a greater extent if non-Latino participants identified themselves as members of the mainstream culture (e.g., White), which they all did. It was expected that Latino parents would respond to recruitment efforts from school staff in positions of influence, but would respond less favorably to less personalized recruitment efforts, such as flyers sent to the home, or fist contact from an investigator referred by a school staff member. It was expected as a secondary hypothesis that a positive experience of participation in one school sponsored activity would increase the chances of parent participation in future events.

This chapter divides the study's findings into demographics, feasibility and conclusions. The chapter starts with a description of the participants' demographics. The section on feasibility that follows includes analysis of the outcomes of the pilot study and the outcomes of the implementation effort. The section on the feasibility of the model analyzes the parents' responses to the intervention curriculum, and the specific skill set taught. The description of implementation feasibility analyzes the viability of the school-based parent group format. The final section draws conclusions and seeks to address the question of whether Latino and non-Latino parents differed in their response to parent education principles designed for the mainstream culture. Due to small sample size, the statistical analysis of the outcome data collected was limited to mean, median, mode and range scores for participant responses on each scale and subscale that pertain to the

research questions. The analysis compares the scores of the two cultural groups, but does not determine statistical significance.

Demographics

The demographics below are intended to describe the specific sample included in this study. They include the marital status, number of children, household income, and family composition of the Latino and non-Latino subjects surveyed in this study.

Overall, Latino participants were younger and 100% female, whereas their non-Latino counterparts were older and 33% female (see Tables 1 and 2). The family composition of Latinos included more legally recognized and protected unions (marriage and civil union) than non-Latinos, who were either single or in domestic partnerships. Latinos households had a greater number of children but were in lower household income brackets. As in all statistical analyses presented in this chapter, these comparisons merely serve a descriptive purpose and do not constitute significant differences due to the limited sample sizes.

Table 1. Age Demographics for Latinos vs. Non-Latinos

	Latino	Non-Latino
	n=9	n=3
Mean	36.78	54.33
Median	34	57
Mode	34	N/A
Range	27 to 55	45 to 61

Table 2. Gender Demographics for Latinos vs. Non-Latinos

	Latino	Non-Latino
	n=9	n=3
Percentage of females	100%	33%

Latino participants reported an average of 3 children per household, versus two for non-Latinos. The mean, median and modal ages of Latino children were 12.55, 13 and 8, respectively, with a range between the ages of 7 and 18 (see Table 3). Non-Latino household reported an average of two children, with mean and median ages of 14. The analysis failed to produce a modal age, as there were not two children of the same age in the sample. The analysis arrived at a range age for non-Latinos of 4 to 15 years.

Table 3. Number and Average Age of Children for Latino vs. Non-Latino

Number and age of children	Latinos	Non-Latinos
	n=9	n=3
Mean number of children	3	2
Mean age	12.55	14
Median age	13	14
Mode age	8	None
Range	7 to 18	4 to 15

The analysis also revealed notable differences in family composition (see Table 4). The Latino parents described their family composition as two-parent families in 8 out of 9 families (89%). Two of the 3 non-Latino parents described themselves as single parents (67%), though only one of them reported being single (33%). This finding suggests that these families keep childrearing separate from their primary relationships. In other words, the parent carries the full parenting load, and their partner may handle the domestic responsibilities of a housemate, but refrains from involvement in direct childrearing tasks and decisions. The third non-Latino reported a family composition of extended family while being in a domestic partnership; the extent of involvement in parenting by this participant's domestic partner was unclear. Be that as it may, the data suggest that Latino families in this sample tended to gravitate toward two-parent family compositions in legally recognized unions, versus non-Latinos who tended toward single parenting in informal domestic partnerships.

Table 4. Family Composition of Latino vs. Non-Latinos

Composition	Number of Latino Families n=9	Number of Non-Latino Families n=3
Single Parent	1 (11%)	2 (67%)
Two Parent	8 (89%)	0 (0%)
Extended Family	0 (0%)	1 (33%)

The marital status of the Latino and non-Latino participants included two-parent families in all but one case for each group (see Table 5). Latino family compositions included four married couples, three living in partnership, and one in civil union. Civil unions provide legal recognition of a partnership, similar to marriage, and were established to provide legal recognition of relationships formed by unmarried same-sex couples, and to afford them rights, benefits, and responsibilities similar to those of legally married couples. The U.S. also opens civil unions to opposite-sex couples. The non-Latino participants reported one single parent and two in domestic partnership; none of the non-Latino subjects were in a legally recognized union.

Table 5. Marital Status of Latino vs. Non-Latino

Marital Status	Latinos n=9	Non-Latinos n=3
Single	11% n=1	33% n=1
Married	44% n=4	0% n=0
Civil Union	11% n=1	0% n=0
Partnership	33% n=3	67% n=2

Latinos reported somewhat lower income levels than non-Latinos (see Table 6). Five of the nine Latino participants (56%) reported household income of under \$15,000, three (33%) reported incomes of \$15-\$30,000, and one (11%) reported an income over \$60,000. Two non-Latino participants (67%) reported income in the \$15-\$30,000 range, and one (33%) non-Latino participant reported household income at over \$60,000. Mean reported Latino income fell in the \$15-\$30,000 range, and mean non-Latino income in the

\$30-\$45,000 range. These averages may overstate the difference, however, as one non-Latino reported an income that may have artificially inflated the average due to the small sample size (N=3).

Table 6. Average Income of Latino vs. Non-Latino

Household	Latinos	Non-Latinos
	n=9	n=3
Mean Income Bracket	\$15 to \$30K	\$30 to \$45K
Median Income Bracket	< \$15K	\$15 to \$30K
Modal Income Bracket	< \$15K	\$15 to \$30K
Income Bracket Range	<\$15 to >\$60K	\$15K to >\$60K

The demographic data suggest that Latino families tended to have more children, and enter into legally recognized unions that involve two adults sharing parenting responsibilities. Latino participants were younger on average than non-Latinos. The non-Latinos in this sample tended to have fewer children, although they were older on average; maintain domestic partnerships with minimal privileges and responsibilities; and were more likely to raise their children as single parents, keeping their primary relationships, if any, separate from the children.

These demographics portray a picture of some culturally specific characteristics and two distinct differences that call for special consideration in the following analysis and discussion. The demographic analysis identified age (see Table 1) and gender (see Table 2) as variables of that differentiated the Latino and non-Latino groups to a greater extent. The average age of the Latino parents was 36.78, versus 54.33 for non-Latinos. The Latino group included 100% female participants and the non-Latino group included 33% female participants (see Table 2). The analysis of participant response in the next section will reveal a notable difference in the ratings of male versus female participants.

Feasibility of the Model

This section addresses the feasibility of the model proposed in this study, including the perceived value of the evidence-based parent education to Latino parents and the efficacy of the implementation model

of partnering with public schools to disseminate evidence-based parent education. The first part of this section summarizes the responses of participants to two questionnaires. The questionnaires covered the perceived value and relevance of the overall program (the interventions themselves), the teaching methods and the experience of acquiring one of the introductory skills offered. The questionnaires also explored related factors, like the likelihood of utilization and anticipated difficulty of implementation of interventions displayed. The session 2 questionnaire included three items related to a secondary hypothesis that Latino parents who attended a valued meeting at a school would rate themselves more likely to attend future school sponsored events and parent-teacher conferences. The second part of this section reports on the effectiveness of the efforts to implement the model in a school setting, including recruitment of sufficient participants. We begin this section with participant responses to survey questionnaires.

Outcomes of the pilot study (participants' responses). The table below provides an overview of the combined mean, median, mode and range scores for both questionnaires for the entire sample, as well as the two groups of participants (see Table 7). The combined group ratings produced a mean score of 4.34, a median score of 4.75 and a mode score of 5. The Latino group produced a mean score of 4.56, a median score of 5 and a mode score of 5. The non-Latino group produced a mean score of 3.82 and a median score of 4. The calculation failed to produce a mode score for non-Latinos because this group produced three scores of 3, 4 and 5.

Table 7. Overview of Scores on Both Questionnaires for All Groups

	Latinos n=9	Non-Latinos n=3	Combined n=12
Mean	4.56	3.82	4.37
Median	5	4	4.75
Mode	5	N/A	5
Range	2 to 5	2 to 5	2 to 5

The combined responses of all subjects (Latino and non-Latino) for Questionnaire 1 provide a reference for the ratings of the total scores and the two subscales for perceived value of the content presented and the teaching methods offered: illustrations, role play and modeling opportunities (see Table 8). Twelve subjects completed Questionnaire 1. The mean scores were 4.42 overall, 4.36 for Subscale 1, and 4.5 for Subscale 2. Ratings between 4 and 5 translate to the range between highly and extremely useful/valuable/helpful and the same for likelihood of utilizing. Median and mode scores were fives.

Table 8. Week 1: Questionnaire Responses for Latinos and Non-Latinos

	Overall	Subscale 1	Subscale 2
	N=12	n=9	n=3
Mean	4.38	4.33	4.46
Median	4.5	4.75	4.5
Mode	5	5	5
Range	2 to 5	2 to 5	2 to 5

The combined responses of all subjects (Latino and non-Latino) for Questionnaire 2 provide a reference for the ratings of the total scores and the two subscales for the perceived value and likelihood of implementation of the specific skills taught, as well as the training methods utilized (see Table 9). Seven subjects completed Questionnaire 2. The mean scores were 4.36 overall, 4.42 for Subscale 1, and 4.5 for Subscale 2. The overall parent education ratings fell in the highly to extremely positive range, with median and mode scores of five.

Table 9. Week 2 Questionnaire Responses for Latinos and Non-Latinos

n=7	Overall	Subscale 1	Subscale 2
Mean	4.46	4.43	4.5
Median	5	5	5
Mode	5	5	5
Range	3 to 5	3 to 5	3 to 5

The responses of Latino subjects for Questionnaire 1 describe their ratings for the entire questionnaire and the two subscales for perceived value of the content presented and the teaching methods offered: illustrations, role play and modeling opportunities (see Table 10). Nine of the twelve (75%) parents who participated in the study were Latinos. Mean scores for the questionnaire as a whole, and both subscales were 4.56, with median and mode scores of 5. The range scores were 2 to 5 for overall and Subscale 1, and 3 to 5 for subscale 2.

Table 10. Week 1 Questionnaire 1 Responses for Latino Subjects

n=9	Overall	Subscale 1	Subscale 2
Mean	4.56	4.56	4.56
Median	5	5	4.5
Mode	5	5	5
Range	3 to 5	3 to 5	4 to 5

The responses of Latino subjects for Questionnaire 2 describe their ratings for the entire questionnaire and the two subscales for the perceived value and likelihood of implementation of the specific skills taught, as well as the training methods utilized (see Table 11). Five of the seven parents who participated in week two of the study were Latinos (71.4%). Latino respondents to Questionnaire 2 produced a mean score of 4.8 and a median score of 5. The analysis failed to produce a mode because all values differed. Their scores ranged from 3 to 5. Latino respondents to Questionnaire 2 produced subscale 1 scores of 4.6 for a mean and 4.6 for a median, with a range of 3 to 5. The analysis failed to produce a mode score for the same reason. Latino respondents to questionnaire 2 produced subscale 2 scores of 4.6 for a mean, 5 for a median and 5 for a mode. Subscale 2 produced a range of scores from 4 to 5.

Table 11. Week 2 Questionnaire 2 Responses for Latino Subjects

n=5	Overall	Subscale 1	Subscale 2
Mean	4.8	4.6	4.6
Median	5	4.6	5
Mode	N/A	N/A	5
Range	3 to 5	3 to 5	4 to 5

The responses of non-Latino subjects for Questionnaire 1 describe their ratings for the entire questionnaire and the two subscales for perceived value of the content presented and the teaching methods offered: illustrations, role play and modeling opportunities (see Table 12). The ratings were slightly lower than those of Latino parents – the opposite of what was predicted. Three of the twelve parents who participated in the study were non-Latinos (25%). All identified themselves as White. This group produced a combined scale mean score of 3.84 and a mode score of 4. They produced a subscale 1 mean score of 3.67, a median score of 4 and a mode score of 4. They produced a subscale 2 mean score of 4.56 and a median score of 4. The analysis failed to produce a mode score for subscale 2 because all values differed. The range scores were 2 to 5 for overall, 2 to 5 for Subscale 1, and 3 to 5 for subscale 2.

Table 12. Week 1 Questionnaire 1 Responses for Non-Latinos

n=3	Overall	Subscale 1	Subscale 2
Mean	3.84	3.67	4.56
Median	4	4	4
Mode	N/A	4	N/A
Range	2 to 5	2 to 5	3 to 5

The responses of non-Latino subjects for Questionnaire 2 describe their ratings for the entire questionnaire and the two subscales for the perceived value and likelihood of implementation of the specific skills taught, as well as the training methods utilized (see Table 13). Two of the seven parents who

participated in week two of the study were non-Latinos (28.5%). Non-Latino respondents to Questionnaire 2 produced a mean score of 4.05 and a median score of 4. The analysis failed to produce a mode because all values differed. Their scores ranged from 2 to 5. Non-Latino respondents to Questionnaire 2 produced subscale 1 scores of 4 for a mean and 4 for a median, with a range of 3 to 5. The analysis failed to produce a mode score for the same reason. Non-Latino respondents to Questionnaire 2 produced subscale 2 scores of 4.75 for a mean and 4.75 for a median, again with no mode score. Subscale 2 produced a range of scores from 4 to 5.

Table 13. Week 2 Questionnaire 2 Responses for Non-Latinos

n=2	Overall	Subscale 1	Subscale 2
Mean	4.05	4	4.75
Median	4	4	4.75
Mode	N/A	N/A	N/A
Range	2 to 5	3 to 5	4 to 5

Three items at the end of questionnaire 2 addressed the secondary hypothesis that parents would be more likely to attend unrelated school sponsored events as a result of a positive experience at this event. The mean rating for these three items in Questionnaire 2 was 3.86, with median and mode scores of 3 (see Table 14). This translates to between somewhat and highly likely to increase participation in school events and parent-teacher conferences. This was somewhat consistent with the prediction that a positive experience at a school-sponsored event would produce increased motivation to involve themselves in other events, or parent-teacher conferences. The high mean scores on the value of what was learned suggested a positive experience. Note that the mean scores for likelihood of increased participation were lower than all the others. The responses of Latino versus non-Latino participants were not compared for the three items of Questionnaire 2 that pertained to the secondary hypothesis (likelihood of increasing participation in school sponsored events as a result of participation in this study), because the non-Latino group did not produce responses to these questions.

Table 14. Questionnaire 2 Responses on Increased Participation in School

	Overall
	n=7
Mean	3.86
Median	3
Mode	3
Range	3 to 5

The demographic report in the section above noted two major differences likely to help clarify the unexpected results that non-Latino participants in this sample produced lower ratings than their Latino counterparts. The two variables were age and gender. The mean age of the Latino parents was 36.78, with a median age of 34, a mode age of 34 and a range of 27 to 55. The mean age of non-Latino parents was 54.33, with a median age of 57, and a range of 45 to 61. The mode calculation failed to produce a value as the three age values (61, 45 and 57) differed.

The gender analysis revealed that Latino participants were 100% female, whereas their non-Latino counterparts were 33% female (see Table 2). An analysis of the responses of the only two male participants in the study suggests that gender may have contributed to the lower scores among the non-Latino parents (see Table 15 and Table 16). The two tables below summarize the scores to both questionnaires for male participants. The mean scores for questionnaire 1 were 3.38 overall, 3.5 for Subscale 1 and 3.8 for Subscale 2. Median and mode scores were 4 in all areas, and the ranges were 2 to 5 for the first overall and Subscale 1, and 3 to 5 for Subscale 2. The mean scores for questionnaire 2 were 3.33 overall, 3.2 for Subscale 1 and 3.5 for Subscale 2. Median scores were 3 overall, 3 for subscale 1 and 3.5 for subscale 2. Mode scores were 3 overall, 3 for subscale 1 and 4 for subscale 2. The male ranges scores were 3 to 4 for overall and subscale 1, 3 to 5 for subscale 2.

Table 15. Responses to Questionnaires 1 of Male vs. Female Subjects

	Overall	Overall	Subscale 1	Subscale 1	Subscale 2	Subscale 2
	male	female	male	female	male	female
	n=2	n=10	n=2	n=10	n=2	n=10
Mean	3.8	4.65	3.575	4.56	3.67	4.625
Median	3.5	5	3.5	5	3.5	4.75
Mode	N/A	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	5
Range	2 to 4	2 to 5	3 to 5	2 to 5	3 to 4	4 to 5

Table 16. Responses to Questionnaires 2 of Males vs. Females

	Overall	Overall	Subscale 1	Subscale 1	Subscale 2	Subscale 2
	male	female	male	female	male	female
	n=2	n=5	n=2	n=5	n=2	n=5
Mean	3.33	4.65	3.2	4.63	3.5	4.67
Median	3	5	3	5	3.5	5
Mode	3	5	3	5	4	5
Range	3 to 4	3 to 5	3 to 4	3 to 5	3 to 5	4 to 5

Implementation outcomes. The proposed study proved difficult to implement, but this may have been due to factors unrelated to the research questions. The initial implementation plan relied heavily on the efforts and influence of the senior adjustment counselor, and her loss adversely impacted central aspects of the recruitment and delivery of the service. The investigator was left with dwindling resources and limited influence to elicit the collaboration of other school personnel.

All participants that attended were referred. There were no responses to flyers sent to the homes of middle school students. Four Latino participants completed the demographic and session one questionnaires at the first session held in Spanish. Two English speaking Latino parents and two non-Latino parents

attended the second section of the first session, which was offered in English. They completed the demographic and session one questionnaires. Two non-Latino parents attended the first session offered in English. Week one produced a total of 8 demographic questionnaires, 6 from Latinos and 2 from non-Latinos.

A teacher was present for the English section of the first session and she felt the intervention would prove very useful for parents she knew. She said she expected some parents who failed to attend week one to attend for week two. A time was arranged before the second sessions to meet with parents who attended for the first time on week two. The investigator offered the presentation from week one to parents who decided to attend for the first time on week two. They met an hour before the scheduled time for session two, underwent the recruitment process, signed the consent and completed the demographic questionnaire. They participated in the overview and skill modeling of session 1 and completed the session 1 questionnaires. They then participated in session two along with returning parents. Those who attended for the first time on week two were able to provide complete data sets in one night (demographic, session 1 and session 2 questionnaires), as the week one presentation took around 30 minutes, and the completion of the demographic and session1 questionnaires took less than ten minutes.

Seven parents attended week two sessions. Five were Latinos and two non-Latinos. Two of the six Latino parents that attended session 1 on week 1 returned for the regularly scheduled session of week two. The two that returned were the English speaking parents from the second section of the first session. The non-Latino parent that participated in week one did not return for week two. Three new Latinos and two new non-Latinos attended the session 1 presentation of week two. Thus, five Latino and two non-Latino parents attended session two. The four Latino parents who did not return for the second session informed the investigator that logistics had made it impossible to return for the follow up. Some asked if there would be another opportunity to participate in the future.

The study produced more than twice as many Latino participants as non-Latinos. Thus, the assertion that Latinos are less likely to engage in school-sponsored activities due to the preference to “leave education to the professionals” was not supported. Several factors can help explain the greater recruitment success with

Latinos. Latinos constitute the majority of the school population. The investigator recruited a number of participants from her caseload as an intern adjustment counselor, which was composed mostly of Latinos. It was a Latino teacher that became actively involved in recruitment and attended the second week 1 session. Three other adjustment counselor interns recruited participants. All of these recruiters worked predominantly with students from Latino households.

One is left to speculate on the feasibility of the implementation model had the investigator benefitted from the participation of the senior adjustment counselor familiar with many of the parents. Perhaps a recruitment strategy that involved someone parents knew and trusted would have produced better attendance. It seemed that referral by staff that parents did not have an ongoing rapport with proved less effective. The investigator coordinated with one administrator and approximately fifteen teachers. These staff members agreed to discuss the flyers with the students in their respective teams and invite those parents they felt could benefit to participate. The staff seemed receptive and expressed enthusiasm for the project. They uniformly agreed to provide feedback on how many parents would attend. However, only one teacher provided feedback on parents that would attend.

The assertion from the cultural competence literature that Latinos are unlikely to respond to impersonal invitations may have been supported by the lack of responses produced by a school-wide distribution of flyers. However, the flyer failed to produce responses from the non-Latino population as well. The following chapter will present the conclusions drawn from attempts to validate the parent education and implementation models.

Conclusion

In summary, the recruitment effort conducted for this study was forced to deviate from the original research design and failed to validate the implementation model. The efforts the investigator resorted to seemed consistent with the assertions of the cultural competence literature that recruitment efforts with numerous contacts over time from trusted, familiar sources will likely mobilize Latinos to attend. Flyers and less personal referral strategies will likely fail to produce attendance. However, this literature does not explain the even worse response from non-Latino parents.

It is impossible to apply any of the findings presented in this chapter to populations outside this immediate sample. The recruitment effort did not produce sufficient subjects to conduct inferential statistics and limited the data analysis to the use of descriptive statistics. The unanticipated disbanding of an ongoing parent group and loss of a staff member in a position to drive recruitment left the investigator to rely on admittedly less effective recruitment strategies. The effort produced close to the desired number of Latino participants to conduct the planned statistical analysis, but failed to produce the required number of non-Latino participants.

The results of this attempt at implementation of the model cast doubts on the feasibility of partnering with schools to reach parents of the students they serve when offering parent education. The original strategy remained untested, but one can argue that it proved inadequate nonetheless. The effort relied largely on a single staff member to drive an entire recruitment effort. If nothing else, the present study serves to demonstrate that it is not prudent to place the fate of an entire study or intervention on a single individual. The findings call for multiple efforts, consistent strategies and safeguards likely to produce the desired results, despite unanticipated difficulties impacting any single strategy or individual.

The central research questions were whether Latino parents would respond differently to parent education designed for the mainstream culture, and how cultural factors would impact the way parent education would be received. It was hypothesized that Latinos would find support, discussion, collaboration and modeling opportunities of a group as most important (as measured on Questionnaire 1, Subscale 2 and Questionnaire 2, Subscale 1) and rate the specific skills taught (as measured on Questionnaire 1, Subscale 1 and Questionnaire 2, Subscale 2) as less relevant and useful than their non-Latino counterparts. It was predicted that Latino parents would give a lower rating to the likelihood of implementing the skills as presented (as measured on Questionnaire 2, Subscale 2), supporting the observations that Latinos derive more benefit from bonding and collaborations with others in similar situations rather than from program content. In summary, Latinos were expected to find interventions designed for the mainstream culture as less relevant, but would utilize the interactions with other Latino parents to adjust the recommended skills to fit their specific situations.

The data failed to support any of the above hypotheses. The data displayed in the tables above reflect higher rating by Latino parent than non-Latino parents in all areas. Latinos rated support, discussion, collaboration and modeling opportunities (Questionnaire 1, Subscale 2 and Questionnaire 2, Subscale 1) highly as predicted, but also rated the specific skills taught (Questionnaire 1, Subscale 1 and Questionnaire 2, Subscale 2) equally highly. Latino parents also rated highly the likelihood of implementing the skills as presented (Questionnaire 2, Subscale 2), again contradicting the prediction that Latinos derive more benefit from bonding and collaborations with others in similar situations. If anything, Latino parents produced higher ratings in areas where they were hypothesized to score lower. In summary, Latinos gave high ratings to the interventions designed for the mainstream culture, as well as to the ones they were predicted to score highly in.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion

This chapter will discuss the feasibility of an implementation model that involved partnering with a school to deliver critical social work services to families of the local community who stood to benefit from said services. The chapter will discuss the implementation strategy and the results of the intervention delivered. It will discuss the original recruitment strategy, the obstacles that arose, the outcome of the effort, and lessons learned. The conclusions and future directions section will address implications of the findings, issues of generalization, and questions posed by the results. This latter section will relate the findings to the predictions of the research questions and offer plausible explanations and possible next steps in the development of a workable parent education intervention and implementation model. We start with a summary of the original recruitment strategy.

Original Recruitment Strategy

The original recruitment strategy for this study was derived from published studies in the field of cultural competence indicating that Latino parents would respond better to recruitment efforts based on personalized contact over time; and predicting that Latinos are unlikely to respond to impersonal strategies like advertisement or flyers sent home, even if in their native language. This was clearly the case in this study. The original strategy called for the researcher to offer participation in the study to members of an ongoing parent support group led by the senior school adjustment counselor. This would have been consistent with the recommendations from the cultural competence literature that recruitment be personalized, from a familiar source over time. The existing support group's participants maintained an ongoing contact with the designated co-facilitator and would have been primed to participate in the study by this group experience.

Challenges and Adjustments

Unexpected health problems experienced by the senior adjustment counselor led to an abrupt disbanding of the parent group she was conducting, as well as the loss of her strong potential contribution to recruitment. This senior adjustment counselor was trusted by group participants and by many other parents,

both Latino and non-Latino. Without her collaboration in the recruitment process, the study was left to rely on a combination of less effective recruitment strategies.

The resulting recruitment strategy involved a combination of options informed by cultural competence literature, and options thought to produce poor results with Latino parents. The evidence-informed strategies involved recruiting school staff known to have influential relationships with students to contact parents to extend personal invitations. The strategies associated with poorer results in the literature were impersonal, and involved sending flyers in the native languages of families to the homes of all students registered in the middle school. The results proved poor for both strategies.

Results of Implementation Strategy

Latino parents responded surprisingly better to the recruitment efforts, when compared to non-Latinos. This produced an outcome opposite of what was predicted. The cultural competence literature would have predicted that non-Latino parents would have responded better to flyers sent to the home, and been more open to participation in school sponsored events. However, the number of participants among non-Latino parents was markedly lower than for Latinos. Several factors can help account for this finding.

The school population included a significant proportion of Latinos. Demographic analysis of the school showed that Latinos constitute approximately 39% of the middle and high school population (see Table 16), with African Americans approximately 25%, and Whites around 26%. This is a summary of the entire 6 to 12 grade population. Search for separate middle school demographics proved fruitless and the numbers may vary significantly between the middle and high schools. Nonetheless, the demographics for the entire school show that there are more African Americans and Whites at 51%, than Latinos at 39%. The response of non-Latino parents seemed surprisingly poor in light of these demographics. The implementation findings suggest that it was the referral and recruitment efforts of Latino adjustment counselors and a Latino teacher that accounted for the better response of Latino parents.

Table 17. Student Demographics for The Springfield Renaissance School

Race	Population (N and %) (grades 6 to 12)
Asian	2 (0%)
Black	171 (25.83%)
Hispanic	260 (39.27%)
Multiple Race	51 (7.70%)
Native American	1 (0.15%)
Pacific Islander	1 (0.15%)
White	176 (26.59%)

Adapted from *Movoto Real Estate*, n.d. Retrieved May 31, 2013, from <http://www.movoto.com/public-schools/ma/springfield/other/251113002137-the-springfield-renaissance-school/1170-carew-st.htm>

Results of Participant Responses

The participant response to the intervention delivered proved just as surprising as the results of the recruitment strategy. The present study uniformly failed to support the hypotheses related to the research questions on cultural differences in response to parent education. The research questions addressed the perceived value of a parent education curriculum developed for the mainstream culture. The study predicted that Latino participants would rate content and specific skills as less useful than their non-Latino counterparts. The limited data collected reflected the opposite of the predicted trend: Latino parents rated the content, the skills modeled and the skills taught more favorably than non-Latino participants. One cannot determine the statistical significance of these results due to the small sample size. However, a sample of nine Latino parents rated the overview of the entire curriculum between highly and extremely useful. This included a presentation of the theoretical underpinnings of the model, and demonstrations (modeling) by the instructor of all of the components skills.

The five Latino participants that completed the second half of the training also rated between highly and extremely useful the acquisition process for one specific skill derived from the curriculum. This intervention involved a demonstration and role-play of Exercise 1 of the curriculum presented in Chapter 3 (see Figure 9). Parents practiced detecting emotional tones early, before emotions run high. They then ignored the content of children's communications and set the condition of a controlled tone (self-discipline) as a pre-requisite to discussing the issues. The exercise breaks the process down into several key steps to attaining said objectives.

The study correctly predicted that Latinos would highly value support and affiliation components of the group, including modeling, role-play, support and feedback from other parents. However, the predicted trend of Latinos valuing these elements more than non-Latinos proved small. The items related to support and affiliation were included in Questionnaire 1, subscale 2, and Questionnaire 2, subscale 1. Latinos produced ratings for these two subscales of 4.56 and 4.6 for means, 4.5 and 4.6 for medians, and 5 for mode on questionnaire 1, subscale 2. Questionnaire 2, subscale 1 did not produce a mode score. By comparison, non-Latinos produced ratings for the two key subscales of 4.56 and 4 for means, 4 and 4 for medians. Non-Latinos did not produce mode scores either of the two key subscales. Before drawing any conclusions on group comparisons, one has to consider the high percentage of male participants in the non-Latino group, compared to an all-female Latino group. It is unclear whether the differences between groups were influenced more by ethnicity or gender. A larger sample with comparison groups matched for gender would allow for more accurate within- and between-group comparisons.

It became logistically difficult to conduct a focus group to address some of the key unanswered questions raised by this study. The study relied on one facilitator, who did all she could to present the material, guide the modeling, structuring the role-plays, provide feedback and explaining the assignments. There was barely enough time to hand out questionnaires and ensure their completion. A co-facilitator could have taken responsibility for setting up the equipment, arranging for the recording, and supporting parents in their responses to questionnaires. Future studies should consider having two co-facilitators to conduct the presentation, address individual questions, conduct the focus group and administer questionnaires, all in a

reasonable amount of time. Studies could offer more sessions to have one investigator execute the entire agenda, but that brings us back to the issue of getting parents to attend.

Analysis and Future Directions

This study developed and tested the idea of partnering with a school to offer parent education to Latino parents in need. It reviewed the literature on leading, evidence based parent education models and developed a curriculum based on an influential model. The study tested the feasibility of recruiting parents of school children who teachers and staff suggested stood to benefit from parent education. The study struggled to recruit a sufficient number of participants to conduct a meaningful statistical analysis. However, it provided a glimpse of the positive potential parent education designed for the mainstream culture holds for Latino families.

This section will analyze the above-cited results and offer direction for future studies in areas of recruitment and curriculum development. The section considers some plausible explanations for the unexpectedly positive attendance and responses to questionnaires of Latino participants. It also and offers suggestions for future studies.

Recruitment. The original recruitment strategy for this study sought to explore the value of interfacing with a school via a senior school adjustment counselor, an individual designated by the school to facilitate the positive adaptation of students to academic and social life. It was expected that cultural differences would exert strong influence in child-rearing practices, and had the potential to interfere with or facilitate willingness to participate in a school related parent group. The study expected that recruitment of Latino parents to a school sponsored event would pose a unique challenge, because the literature on Latino culture has identified a mindset that separates school from home, and leaves education to the experts. However, the study did not anticipate or prepare for the poor response to recruitment of non-Latinos.

One can only speculate on the reasons for the limited response of school staff and parents to the recruitment strategy deployed. The observed response to recruitment suggests a need for further review of the literature on increasing parent involvement in school-sponsored events. Future efforts should exercise

caution in estimating the effort necessary for successful recruitment before attempting to deliver services via partnerships with schools.

Motivational factors might help explain the limited response to the recruitment efforts employed. The logistics of leaving family responsibilities to attend a school event by 6:30 PM may have proven burdensome to many families. Parents at the school included in the current study may also have felt satisfied with their current parenting style, and may have seen little benefit in participating. It was difficult to convey to parents the high value that participation could have offered in a simple flyer or five minute recruitment presentation.

It appeared that three factors combined to create a formidable barrier to effective recruitment: 1) the non-clinical population and related lack of urgent need for parent education in the average parent; 2) the inconvenient time and burden of attendance; and 3) the difficulty in communicating the value of participation to the average parent. The routine of daily life created a level of inertia that seemed to outweigh whatever motivation phone calls and flyers could create. Thus the recruitment effort employed in this study failed to produce sufficient participants. The study underestimated what it would take to mobilize parents to attend a school-sponsored event. The following section considers various strategies for future studies to reduce or overcome inertia and increase attendance.

Future recruitment strategies. Logic would dictate that future studies could employ variants of three possible strategies to mobilize parents to a sufficient extent: 1) increase incentives to overcome inertia to attend school sponsored events; 2) reduce inertia of daily routines by targeting families already mobilized and engaged in community activities; and 3) use technology to create a “virtual parent education group” and bypass the barrier of the daily routine.

Strategy 1: increase incentives for school events. This project explored the desirability of social workers partnering with schools to offer valuable services to local communities. It was felt that the quality of the relationship between the home and school offered the potential to exert a strong influence in the life of a child. Thus, a school based parent education group could help bolster the relationship between parents and educators for the betterment of the children. It was thought that many schools could be in good

positions to sponsor parent groups, as they could provide the physical space, teaching aids, supplies and other resources to support the various functions of such a group. It was expected that a school-based parent support group could grow to become a vehicle for parent-educator communication. The school, the children and the families could all stand to benefit. Increased incentives offer one avenue to overcome inertia to events held in the evenings at schools.

Studies could offer financial compensation to motivate parents to attend school-sponsored events. Compensation to cover the cost of childcare, transportation, and take-out food (to free the parent from food preparation efforts) could have mitigated logistical barriers to participation. This level of support may have made the offering seem more inviting, if properly presented. The flyer sent home to the parents could have helped the parents view the offering differently.

The flyer and recruitment phone calls of future efforts could invite parents to view the invitation as “taking a break from the daily parenting grind,” and “treating themselves to a night off for an enjoyable activity.” The message could have said: “Let us give you a night off. We’ll buy food for your children, cover your childcare and transportation costs, and offer you free food and admission to a stimulating presentation of how leading minds of today inspire their children.” Contrast this message to the way many parents may have viewed participation in the current study: prepare dinner ahead of time or have pizza delivered, hire a baby sitter and go to the school to participate in a study. A positive message that could be crafted with the backing of monetary compensation for participation might motivate teachers to invite parents with increased enthusiasm, and might have motivated parents that verbally committed but did not participate to take the extra step of attending.

Future efforts could use branding strategies to easily convey to parents the high value of school offerings with a specific brand name. One obstacle to recruitment noted in this study involved the difficulty of conveying the value of the offering. This was evidenced by the gap between the poor response to recruitment and the enthusiastic response of parents who attended. Branding is a marketing strategy that overcomes this inertia because it conveys value with a name and a logo. Corporations invest large resources over many years to establish a brand. People know that Disney events offer certain levels of creativity,

wholesome fun and family friendly accommodations that let parents know the activity is worth the effort. A single word, Disney, instantly conveys all of that.

The field of social work could create a brand for desirable school based events by developing a highly desirable offering and brokering a partnership between the school system and an organization that offers the goodwill of a brand recognized by parents for its value. The development of the model would start on a small scale with a pilot study similar to this one to develop and prove the model. The next steps would entail recruitment of participating organizations, then gradually scaling the offering to increasingly larger areas.

The pilot study to develop a branded model might start with a grant to test a recruitment strategy backed by financial compensation. The potential benefit of mobilizing high need/high risk families to participate in a cost-effective social work intervention using school facilities after hours of operation would easily justify a recruitment cost of \$100 per participating family. Parents who participate in the initial sessions and realize the value of the offering may also be more likely to attend further group training without need for compensation. Grant money would serve to offer the initial compensation and provide food and childcare services at the school for subsequent offerings. A recognized organization could offer its brand to a series of events known to be high quality, fun, well-funded. Word would get around and draw good attendance for most of their offerings.

Strategy 2: recruit mobilized families. The strategy of recruiting parents already attending community functions could bypass much of the inertia that the formation of a parent education group would need to overcome. Parents who attend community centers, churches, and school events may be more likely to attend parent education at times they regularly attend their existing community events. The experience of this study suggests that such strategies should: 1) recruit families with very high need; 2) recruit in places where parents and families already attend activities; and 3) involve influential individuals in selected facilities to support recruitment. Recruitment efforts in places like mental health clinics or counseling centers could identify parents motivated to attend parent education meetings by their children's needs. Churches and community centers that parents already frequent for spiritual and social reasons may draw participation from parents who already expect to visit such places, and to support the activities they sponsor.

Such places often have respected leaders who hold social capital with parents and could influence openness to the intervention. This study affirmed the suggestion from the cultural competence literature that familiarity with a trusted source increases Latino attendance. Social workers could seek to engage and partner with these leaders to bolster recruitment.

Strategy 3: virtual parent education. Technology offers a promising option for overcoming the motivational obstacle to parent education. Web-based options for e-book content, video presentations, video conferencing, and support among parents abound for very little cost these days, and the trend suggests that such offerings will continue to improve in quality and price. Web-based social media like Facebook could facilitate the two key components of recruitment and support. A parent education curriculum such as the one presented in Chapter 3 of this study could be shared among parents without geographic limitations, at minimal cost, and with high convenience levels.

Online universities use the term asynchronous education to refer to the convenience of students logging in at whatever time they choose to complete class requirements, rather than having to adhere to a pre-set schedule. Students log in to listen to a recorded class lecture, present questions to the instructor, allow discussion among students, take tests, or submit assigned papers.

A study could partner with a university, utilizing its online education infrastructure to provide a cost effective parent education offering on a large scale. It is also possible to produce such an offering independently with a modest investment in resources. Such technology is now available for very little cost via popular sites such as YouTube for video demonstrations, Facebook to allow support and to extend membership, and high quality blog formats like SquareSpace for posting e-book materials and assignments, as well as exchange of information. Participating parents could even record their own attempts to implement a recommended strategy and upload videos on YouTube for the instructor and other participants to view, analyze and exchange feedback.

The limiting factor in using technology is that many parents will lack the resources or technological sophistication to access the offering. This is especially the case today for uneducated and very low-income families who represent a population of critical concern to the field of social work. Nonetheless, technology

may be a promising venue for reaching even low income, uneducated Latinos in the future. Programs like Facebook and YouTube increase their reach to younger generations by the day. Today's smart phones replace older model cellular phones and provide access to these popular programs. The combination of these programs and devices promises to dramatically increase their reach to the young low-income parent and to bypass language, literacy and financial barriers. Efforts to develop virtual parent education that are started today will likely take years to develop. By the time these efforts reach maturity, they will converge with the current technology explosion that increases its reach toward the populations that most need parent education and support.

The next section seeks to explain the unexpected positive responses of Latinos to the value and relevance of the specific skills offered in the study from the curriculum presented in chapter 3 of this project.

Response to intervention. The current study produced some promising findings and raised questions worth investigating, even though it failed to recruit sufficient participants and failed to confirm most of its predictions. The small sample size precluded inferential analyses to test for differences between Latino and non-Latino populations. Nonetheless, the findings indicated promise in the possibility of applying parent education designed for the mainstream culture to Latino parents in the United States. The study referenced the cultural competence literature to hypothesize that Latinos would produce higher ratings for opportunities for support, collaboration and affiliation, yet lower ratings for the value and relevance of specific skills developed for the mainstream culture. However, Latinos ascribed higher ratings to the specific skills than non-Latinos. The following discussion seeks to account for this unexpected finding.

Some Latino participants made comments suggesting that the prohibitions against corporal punishment in the mainstream culture limit their options to "establish respect." The Latino cultures in many countries rely on physical punishment to demand submission from children. The fear of abuse charges and the involvement of State child welfare departments leaves many parents to adopt more permissive roles, inadvertently rewarding and fostering their children's undesirable attitudes and behaviors. Thus, Latino parents in the United States find themselves in dire need of a positive alternative to elicit their children's collaboration.

Latino parents may have proven highly receptive to the material presented because it offers an alternative to corporal punishment they could trust. Latinos with very traditional family values need to navigate a foreign culture. The promise of favorable long-term results published in the literature on Positive Discipline may have seemed appealing to Latino participants who were interested in finding alternatives to their tradition corporal punishment. Latino parents seemed to value the prospect of teaching self-discipline by modeling respect, inviting reflection and offering expressions of faith. The presentation contrasted this positive approach to teaching self-discipline with the common cycle of Negative Discipline that relies on anger and coercion to force compliance on unwilling children, and in the process, expresses doubt in children's ability to make wise choices. Latino parents seemed moved by this contrast and favorably disposed to investing in alternatives accepted by the mainstream culture that support enforcement of their values and traditions.

Other considerations. The study raised questions about the extent of the influence of gender on response to parent education. The possibility that males rated parent education lower than females raised the question of differences in how genders parent. This observation could have far reaching implications. Study of gender differences may yield insight into conflicting assumptions and beliefs responsible for disagreements among couples sharing parenting responsibilities. Clearer understanding of any differences between the genders may help develop strategies to reduce relationship problems related to childrearing challenges. It may also shed light on the ways children interact with the differing gender perspectives, and how these differences might foster or maintain undesired behavior in children. It may shed light on how to bolster gender cooperation to curb unwanted behaviors and foster desirable behaviors.

A focus group could have helped shed light on gender differences in childrearing viewpoints, as well as other questions raised by this study. Future studies should hold focus groups shortly after participation and several weeks thereafter, once participants have tried to implement learned skills in their homes. Focus group questions could help shed light on the participants' experiences, from the logistical challenges they faced, to their experience with recruitment efforts, their opinions on the intervention, and suggestions to

improve the curriculum, or improve its cultural relevance. Focus groups could address preferences for continuing parent education beyond the brief course offered in this study.

Focus groups could shed light on the numerous questions left unanswered in this study, including: Why was the response to recruitment efforts so limited? What would it take to get parents to assist with parent education? What would be the best setting to offer parent education? Why did Latinos respond more favorably to the presented curriculum? Why did males rate the proposed curriculum more poorly than females? Focus groups stand to offer critical contributions to all aspects of the development of a culturally sensitive recruitment strategy and parent education curriculum.

Conclusions

The goal of this project was to advance understanding of the experience of Latino parents who participate in parent skills training. The project reviewed the literature to learn that parent education has worked for the mainstream culture to impart skills that effectively address parent-child behavior patterns associated with family conflict, negative peer affiliations and problems at school. The project involved the development of a curriculum for a culturally sensitive parent group that combines parent support and skill education, and the pilot testing of an intervention derived from that curriculum. The curriculum borrowed its various components from available evidence based parent education programs and included elements tailored to address common obstacles to parenting skills acquisition.

The study conducted an analysis of the perceived relevance and usefulness of parent education with emphasis on relevance of a curriculum for intervention with the Latino culture. The quantitative study involved the participants' response to an anonymous questionnaire with items measuring the perceived value, usefulness and expected ease of implementation of the overall program and the single intervention delivered. It was hoped that the project could serve as a first step toward the development of a culturally sensitive parent group that combined parent support, skill development education, and sensitivity to cultural needs of Latino families. The study seemed effective in this regard. The results helped justify further research to develop effective recruitment strategies and test the effectiveness of a full parent education curriculum with Latino families. The gap between the poor response to recruitment and enthusiastic response to the

intervention left the impression of strong potential for parent education for Latinos, but cast doubt on the advisability of partnering with schools to deliver the service.

The present study produced positive Latino ratings for the curriculum offered, but only measured the initial impressions of Latino parents to an overview of a Positive Discipline curriculum, and training in a single exercise. Studies of implementation of full curriculums need to be conducted to evaluate the true value of mainstream parent education to Latino families. However, the challenge of reaching Latino parents and mobilizing them to participate in parent education precedes the challenge of developing a culturally sensitive curriculum.

It was hoped that this effort would prove relevant to the field of social work by adding to our understanding of the relevance and value of parent education to Latino parents. The effort proved helpful in this regard. The study elicited positive ratings from Latino parents exposed to a set of skills proven effective with parents from the prevailing culture. In so doing, the study lent credence to the legitimacy of applying parent education designed for the mainstream culture to Latino parents in the United States. The findings suggest that Latino parents stand to benefit from access to the years of research and development available from the published literature on parent education.

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Appendix A

Requirements of Participation

I am recruiting parents of Junior High School students at Renaissance School for participation in a culturally sensitive parent education and support group that will invite discussion on the usefulness of evidence-based parent skills to the Latino culture. Please consider participating or referring a suitable candidate. What follows is a brief overview of the purpose, scope and requirements of participation in the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to advance our understanding of how culture affects parent education. The study will compare how Latino and non-Latino parents rate a leading parent education program and the usefulness of a specific skill taken from that program. I hope to learn from participants how these programs could be improved and applied to different cultures. I also hope that the study will teach us about the value of offering parent education through schools.

Scope of Participation

Participation in this study will offer parents the opportunity to learn about a highly successful parenting program and a specific skill from that program. Researchers have developed a set of skills to improve the parent-child relationships and promote healthy development in children and families. Studies have found that these skills can help children to gain confidence, improve relationships, and grow up to be more successful. They can help parents be more effective and be better role models for their children. They can lessen unwanted behaviors.

Parents who choose to participate will have an opportunity to learn about a parenting model known as Positive Discipline (PD). They will have an opportunity to continue to learn about this program and combine the skill they learn in the study with other PD skills to help their children learn self discipline, and to function better at home and in school.

Requirements of Participation:

Requirement of participation in session one will include: 1) attending an introduction and overview of Positive Discipline; 2) participating in the screening process based on inclusion and exclusion criteria; 3) participating in the informed consent process and signing the informed consent form; 4) participation in modeling and role-playing of a skill derived from Positive Discipline; 5) participating in a focus group discussion on the experience with the PD model and the skill learned; and 6) completing a brief questionnaire asking for participants' opinions on the overview of Positive Parenting and the specific skill learned

Requirement of participation for session two will include: 1) participation in support session with opportunities to share experiences, exchange perspectives with other parents and further practice of skills; 2) participate in group discussion and response to questions for the group on Positive Discipline and the skill taught in the first meeting; and 3) completing a quantitative-questionnaire asking for participants' opinions and suggestions on the usefulness and relevance of the content and learning process of offered. Each of the two group meetings will take approximately ninety minutes. The meetings will be held at the Renaissance School.

Note to Parent:

Please know that your decision to participate or withdraw from the study at any time will have no impact on your relationship with the school, with school faculty or with your child's relationship with the school or school faculty.

Appendix B

Flyer

**The Renaissance School Invites Our Middle School Parents to
Parenting-skills Training Program:**

POSITIVE PARENTING:

An Introduction

To Discipline, Motivation & Cooperation

Spanish class: 2 meetings on Tuesdays April 2 & 9 / 2013

English class: 2 meetings on Thursdays April 4 & 11/ 2013

Time: 6:30 -7:30 PM

You will learn:

- Why Positive Parenting Works to:
 - Improve parent-child relationship
 - Build self-discipline in children
 - Increase motivation to succeed
 - Induce positive attitude in family
- Why children like Positive Parenting
- How to use two specific skills from the program

FREE Program! Light Dinner will be offered!

If you have any questions, please contact our Parent facilitator - Mrs. Gabriela Bustamante at

_____@_____, tel. XXX-XXX-XXXX **Guidance Dept.**

Si, se puede!

La escuela Renaissance Invita a los Padres de Escuela Media a un

Programa de Crianza para Padres:

“DISCIPLINA POSITIVA:”

Una Introduccion

Para Dominio Propio, Motivacion & Cooperacion

Clases en Espanol: 2 reuniones los Martes April 2 & 9 / 2013

Clases en Ingles: 2 reuniones los Jueves April 4 & 11/ 2013

Time: 6:30 -7:30 PM

Aprenderan:

- Porque la Disciplina Positiva logra:
 - Mejoria en relaciones entre padres e hijos
 - Desarroyo en dominio propio de jovenes
 - Aumenta motivacion hacia el exito
 - Induce atitud positiva en familias
- Porque a los jovenes les gusta la Disciplina Positiva
- Como usar 2 intervenciones del programa

Las clases son gratis y comida Tambien!

Si tienen alguna pregunta, llama a Parent facilitator Mrs. Gabriela Bustamante at _____@_____, tel.

XXX-XXX-XXXX Guidance Dept.

Appendix C

Screening Questions

Instructions:

I am going to read you a list of requirements for participating in this study on parent education and support. Then I will ask if you meet them all. If you do, I will tell you about the study and ask if you wish to participate.

Questions:

Are you the parent of a Renaissance Middle School Student?

Are you able to attend two 90-minute evening meetings held at the Renaissance School?

Are you willing to participate in a parenting education and support experience and provide us with feedback on your experience?

Is your answer to all three questions yes?

If so, Would you like to participate in the study?

Now that I have described the study to you and you have heard the requirements of participation, I want to remind you that you have the right to decline to participate in the study. Either way, thank you for your interest.

Appendix D
Informed Consent

Dear Parent,

My name is Gabriela S. Bustamante, and I am a student at Smith College School for Social Work. I am doing research on the value of parent education recommended by experts to different cultures. I specifically want to learn how parent education helps families of different cultures. I may share what I learn with other professionals who work with parents and children.

You will be asked three questions to see if you qualify for the study. The questions will ask if you are a parent of a middle school student at The Renaissance School; if you are able to attend two evening meetings at the school; and if you want to be part of a group to learn parent skills and tell us what you thought of what you learned. If you says yes to all three questions, I will invite you to get involved.

If you decide to get involved, you will join a group of parents to learn about ways to deal with children that often work well even in difficult situations or with challenging children. You will learn a specific skill. This meeting will take about an hour. You will answer a few questions in writing about yourself and about what you learned. This will take about ten minutes. You will then be in a second group meeting that will take about ninety minutes. Here you will support each other and share what you know and learn. You will answer a few questions in writing at the end of this meeting to tell me what you thought of what you learned. A school counselor and I will be available to help you answer the questions, and I can help you to write your answers if you prefer. I will record a part of the second meeting where I will ask parents what they thought of what they learned.

A school adjustment counselor and I will be present when we record group opinions on the value of what was learned and suggestions for how to improve it. The school adjustment counselor will also be there to assist you in answering questions in writing if you ask for help. But you will answer written questions in private and we will keep an eye on things to prevent people from talking to each other or looking at what

others are writing. No one from the school will be able to look at the answers you wrote at any time, not even the school counselor.

There is very little risk from being this study but you could feel uncomfortable during some activities. Some children that do very well with this parenting get negative at first. You may find using the skill you learn a little difficult at first. You may decide to talk about your children or family in the group time in a way that makes you uncomfortable. I will give you some names of places that can help you if you have any problems along the way. You might learn ways of handling your child that will make you a better parent, a better role model and help your child be more successful. You might help us learn something about how to parent that we can share with people who need help. You can also help parenting programs work better with people from your own culture.

We will keep all information about you as private as possible. You will be with other parents and this makes it impossible to keep your presence totally private. We will remind you of ways to protect your privacy. We will ask you to use only your first name and avoid using the names of your family members. We will remind you to say my son, daughter, husband, etc. You will answer the written questions in private and I will not ask for any information that lets others know who you are. We will remind you to avoid entering personal information in any questions. We will tell all participants to keep information regarding other group participants confidential (private). I will delete any information that identifies you before anyone else sees your answers. Only two teachers from Smith College myself will see your answers. We will not share any of the information with anyone else. The paper that you give us with the answers will have a number instead of your name. I will keep all information locked up safely for as long as I need it, and will destroy it when I don't need it anymore. I will keep the information locked up for at least three years, as required by the Federal government. I will present to others only a summary of the combined answers of everyone in the group, whenever I share what I learn, either telling people about it or writing it up for books or articles. If I want to share something specific that someone said, I will change it so no one can guess who said it.

You don't have to be part of this study if you don't want to, and you can stop being part of it at any time up until two weeks of the final session. You can quit by saying that you want to stop. You don't have

to answer any question ever. I will destroy all information you provide if you decide to quit. If you quit after I recorded the answers of the group at the end of our second meeting, I will not be able to delete the things you said. This is because it will be impossible to know who said what. Please know that your decision to be part of this study or not, or to quit at any time, will have no impact on your relationship with the school, with teachers or with your child's relationship with the school or teachers. You can contact me by calling the Renaissance School (XXX-XXX-XXXX) and asking for Gabriela Bustamante at the Guidance Department. You may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee at XXX-XXX-XXXX, if you have any questions or concerns about your rights or about any part of this study.

YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY. You should keep the copy provided to you of this form for your records. Thank you very much for your participation.

Participant_____ Signature_____ Date_____

Investigator Gabriela Bustamante Signature_____ Date_____

Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

Instructions: please respond to the following questions on personal information about you, your cultural affiliation and family constitution. Please know all responses will remain confidential.

Age: _____

Gender (check one): male _____; female _____; Other: _____

Marital Status (check one):

Single _____; Married _____; Civil Union _____; Separated/Divorced _____; Widowed _____;

Partnership/Unmarried Long-Term Relationship _____

Number of children in your household: _____

Ages of children in the household _____

Approximate Household Income (Circle one of the following)

1-under \$15,000; 2-\$15 to \$30,000; 3-\$30,000 to \$45,000; 4-\$45,000 to \$60,000; 5-over \$60,000

Ethnicity (circle one of the following)

1-White; 2-African-American; 3-Latino; 4-Asian; 5-Other (specify) _____

Are you an immigrant yes _____; no _____

Family Composition (circle one):

1-single parent family; 2-two parent family; 3-single parent foster/adoptive family; 4-two parent foster/adoptive family; 5-other, e.g., grandparents or extended family).

Note to Parent:

Please know that your decision to participate or withdraw from the study at any time will have no impact on your relationship with the school, with school faculty or with your child's relationship with the school or school faculty.

Appendix F

Survey Questionnaires

Session One Questionnaire:

Instructions: please rate the following questions from 1 to 5 to reflect your experience during your participation in this study. One would represent the least benefit/relevance/usefulness for that question and 5 would represent the most.

1. How useful was the Positive Discipline overview?
1-not at all 2-a little 3-somewhat useful 4-highly useful 5-extremely useful
2. How likely are you to use Positive Discipline (calm tone with strong consequences)?
1-not at all 2-a little 3-somewhat 4-highly likely 5-extremely likely
3. How useful was the Positive Punishment skill exercise?
1-not at all 2-a little 3-somewhat useful 4-highly useful 5-extremely useful
4. How likely are you to try the Positive Punishment exercise?
1-not at all 2-a little likely 3-somewhat likely 4-highly likely 5-extremely likely
5. How helpful was modeling of Positive Discipline (calm tone with strong consequences) by the instructor?
1-not at all 2-a little helpful 3-somewhat helpful 4-highly helpful 5-extremely helpful
6. How helpful was the modeling of Positive Discipline (calm tone with strong consequences) by other parents?
1-not at all 2-a little helpful 3-somewhat helpful 4-highly helpful 5-extremely helpful
7. How helpful was the modeling of the Positive Punishment skill?
1-not at all 2-a little helpful 3-somewhat helpful 4-highly helpful 5-extremely helpful
8. How helpful was role-play of the Positive Punishment skill?
1-not at all 2-a little helpful 3-somewhat helpful 4-highly helpful 5-extremely helpful
9. How hard do you think it would be to use Positive Discipline in your own home?
1-very hard 2-somewhat hard 3- neutral 4-somewhat easy 5- extremely easy

Session Two Questionnaire:

Instructions: please rate the following questions from 1 to 5 to reflect your experience during your participation in this study. One would represent the least benefit/relevance/usefulness for that question and 5 would represent the most.

1. How important was the support component of the group?
1-not at all 2-a little 3-somewhat important 4-highly important 5-extremely important
2. How useful were recommendations/input from other parents?
1-not at all 2-a little helpful 3-somewhat helpful 4-highly helpful 5-extremely helpful
3. How helpful was modeling provided by the instructor?
1-not at all 2-a little helpful 3-somewhat helpful 4-highly helpful 5-extremely helpful
4. How helpful was the modeling provided by other parents?
1-not at all 2-a little helpful 3-somewhat helpful 4-highly helpful 5-extremely helpful
5. What is the likelihood of you changing the way you deal with your children as a result of participation in this study?
1-not at all 2-a little likely 3-somewhat likely 4-highly likely 5-extremely likely
6. What is the likelihood of you trying to learn more about Positive Discipline?
1-not at all 2-a little likely 3-somewhat likely 4-highly likely 5-extremely likely
7. What is the likelihood that you will implement one or more of the suggestions you from other parents?
1-not at all 2-a little likely 3-somewhat likely 4-highly likely 5-extremely likely
8. What is the likelihood that you will implement one or more of the suggestions you got from the instructors?
1-not at all 2-a little likely 3-somewhat likely 4-highly likely 5-extremely likely
9. What difference, if any, did participation in this study make?
1-not at all 2-little difference 3-some difference 4-strong difference 5-major difference
10. How likely are you to increase your participation in school-sponsored events as a result of this experience?
1-not at all 2-a little likely 3-somewhat likely 4-highly likely 5-extremely likely
11. How likely are you to increase your participation in parent-teacher activities or advocacy for your child?

1-not at all 2-a little likely 3-somewhat likely 4-highly likely 5-extremely likely

12. What suggestions can you offer to improve parent education offerings?

Appendix G
Referral Resources

Renaissance School (413) 750-2929

Local agencies:

MSPCC

235 Chestnut Street

Springfield, MA 01109

(413) 734-4978

Springfield Parent Academy

PO Box 6397

Springfield, MA 01101

(413) 787-7908

Dumbar Community Center, Inc.

Springfield, MA 01109

(413) 788-6143

Parent Education Department (Mercy Med Center)

(413) 748-7295

Specialized Community Service Agency

120 Maple Street

Springfield, MA 01113

(413) 846-0447

Family Counseling Centers:

National Alliance on Mental Illness

324A Springfield Street

Agawam, MA 011001

Institute for Dynamic Living

342 BIrview Avenue

Springfield, MA 01107

Child Guidance Clinic

110 Maple Street

Springfield, MA 01105

Advocacy Services:

Springfield/Westfield Area Service

604 Cottage Street

Springfield, MA 01104

(413) 737-5376

Appendix H

Human Subjects Review Approval



School for Social Work
 Smith College
 Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
 T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

March 6, 2013

Gabriela Bustamante

Dear Gabriela,

Thank you for making all the requested changes to your Human Subjects Review application. Your project is now approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Good luck with your project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Marsha Kline Pruett /dkw'.

Marsha Kline Pruett, M.S., Ph.D., M.S.L.
 Acting Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Natalie Hill, Research Advisor