

La voz y presencia de padres Latinos: Understanding family engagement practices that support
the language education of K-12 Latino emergent bilinguals

By

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents, Rosa and Roberto Mancilla, and to my husband, Fili Rodriguez.

Mom and Dad, I was able to write this because of who you are, how you raised me, and what you taught me about life. You have worked hard all your lives and have sacrificed so much to provide for your children and grandchildren. I am who I am because of you. You are, and will always be, my greatest source of strength and motivation.

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Abstract

With the growing number of K-12 Latino emergent bilinguals in U.S. schools, and the role language learning plays in academic achievement, it is critical to understand family engagement practices that support emergent bilinguals' language education. This qualitative study explored the beliefs, perspectives, and experiences of Latino parents in regard to supporting their children's language education at home and/or at school. Through a combination of semi-structured interviews and the analysis of artifacts from federal, state, and district websites, the study reveals that the voice and presence of Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals is not acknowledged within institutionalized family engagement discourse, and thus, such discourse has the power to perpetuate school-based family engagement practices that are not inclusive of, nor responsive to, the ways Latino parents of emergent bilinguals support their children's language education. The data show that (1) Latino parent voice is silenced in the policies that constitute institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education; (2) the silencing of Latino parent voice results in challenges for parents as their children navigate K-12 language education programs; and (3) a key form of Latino parent presence in support of children's language education is to engage in *pedagogía casera*.

Chapter 1: Introduction

With the growing number of Latino¹ emergent bilinguals² in U.S. schools, it becomes imperative to better understand family engagement³ practices that support Latinos' language education. Language learning at school, or language education, plays a critical role in the academic achievement of emergent bilinguals because students are developing language proficiency in a target language (e.g., English and/or Spanish) while learning academic grade-level content (Bailey, 2007; Collier & Thomas, 2009; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008; Gee, 2007; Gibbons, 2009; Gottlieb, Katz, & Ernst-Slavit, 2009; Mohan, 1986; Zwiers, 2008). Thus, to fully understand how emergent bilinguals are progressing in school, one must take into account their academic achievement *and* language development. This broader understanding of emergent bilinguals' progress or learning has direct implications to family engagement practices.

This qualitative study explored the beliefs, perspectives, and experiences of Latino parents in regard to supporting their children's language education at home and/or at school. Through a combination of semi-structured interviews and the analysis of artifacts from federal, state, and district websites, the study reveals that the voice and presence of Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals is not acknowledged within institutionalized family engagement

¹ The terms *Latino* and *Latina* are used in this paper to refer to individuals of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American, or South American descent.

² I draw from the work of Ofelia García (2009; 2015) and use the term *emergent bilingual* to refer to students who are moving along a bilingual continuum toward developing bilingualism and/or biliteracy. Furthermore, *emergent bilinguals* promotes a more asset-based view of students who are learning language while also learning academic content at school. Throughout this dissertation, *emergent bilingual* is at times used interchangeably with *English language learner (ELL)*, or *English learner (EL)*, two terms more commonly used in policy and practice but that place an emphasis on English acquisition rather than bilingual development.

³ *Family engagement* is used to describe the active, ongoing, two-way relationship between families and schools which is established on trust, respect, and the desire to support student learning and achievement (Mapp, 2012; Olivos et al., 2011; Weiss et al., 2011). As such, family engagement cannot be bound within a classroom or a school, or occur in a certain way. It must be flexible enough to meet the needs of students, families, and schools.

discourse, and thus, such discourse has the power to perpetuate school-based family engagement practices that are not inclusive of, nor responsive to, the ways Latino parents of emergent bilinguals support their children's language education. The data show that (1) Latino parent voice is silenced in the policies that constitute institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education (see Chapter 4); (2) the silencing of Latino parent voice results in challenges for parents as their children navigate K-12 language education programs (see Chapter 5); and (3) a key form of Latino parent presence in support of children's language education is to engage in *pedagogía casera* (see Chapter 6).

Lastly, the Spanish language plays a key role in this study. For example, this work aims to privilege the voice of Latino parents of emergent bilinguals, Spanish was used during the interviews, and it is used to discuss the findings. Hence, Spanish is represented throughout the text and in most cases it is represented without the use of italics. Italics are only used in cases where a Spanish word or phrase merit additional emphasis.

Overview of Programs and Policies in Language Education

Emergent bilinguals have been referred to as a national resource due to their diverse linguistic and cultural resources that are considered assets within a global economy (Duncan & Gil, 2014; Hakuta, 2011). Some argue that emergent bilinguals possess the linguistic competencies considered to be essential in the 21st century (Flores & García, 2015). There are a variety of K-12 language education program models designed to cultivate the linguistic and cultural resources of emergent bilinguals while other program models promote English attainment. For example, program models such as transitional bilingual education (TBE), English as a second language (ESL), or sheltered English instruction (SEI), focus on English language acquisition (Christian, 2006). On the other hand, dual language program models provide literacy and content instruction through two languages and promote bilingualism and biliteracy, grade-

level academic achievement, and multicultural competence for all students (Christian, 2006; Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary, & Rogers, 2007; Parkes & Ruth, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition [OELA], 2015). There are two common models of dual language: developmental bilingual and two-way immersion (TWI). Developmental bilingual programs are intended for native speakers of the target language (e.g., Spanish), while TWI programs serve both native speakers of the target language and native speakers of English (Christian, 2006; Howard et al., 2007). The amount of time spent in the target language during the school day, and which subject areas will be taught in the target language, are local policy decisions and hence vary greatly across the country (Howard et al., 2007; OELA, 2015; Parkes & Ruth, 2011).

Emergent bilinguals are, therefore, a unique student population because they are learning academic content while developing a second language at school. Since emergent bilinguals are learning both content and language, this requires a broader definition of student achievement (Epstein, 2001; Hakuta, 2011; Howard et al., 2007; Parkes & Ruth, 2011; Valdés, Kibler, & Walqui, 2014). Student achievement is often based on students' scores on standardized assessments, which are often in English, in core academic subject areas such as English language arts and mathematics (Bunch, 2013; Hakuta, 2011; No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002; TESOL International Association [TESOL], 2013; Valdés et al., 2014). Measuring the achievement of emergent bilinguals under such a narrow definition only paints half the picture of their growth and progress. For emergent bilinguals identified as English language learners (ELLs), or English learners (ELs), definitions of achievement in school should also include their growth in English language proficiency which is measured annually due to federal mandates (NCLB, 2002). For emergent bilinguals enrolled in language education programs that promote

bilingualism and biliteracy, definitions of achievement in school should include how emergent bilinguals are progressing in their second language development, including progress toward bilingualism and biliteracy. Thus, more robust definitions of student achievement are needed when the students in question are emergent bilinguals and/or ELs.

In terms of language assessments, federal policy under Title III of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates that states adopt English language proficiency standards and an aligned assessment in order to annually assess the English language proficiency of emergent bilinguals identified as ELLs in grades K-12 (Hakuta, 2011; NCLB, 2002). This means that under NCLB, ELLs are assessed twice annually for accountability purposes, more than any other student group, and they must show gains in both content knowledge and English language proficiency (Hakuta, 2011; Staehr Fenner, 2014; Valdés et al., 2014). On the other hand, there exists no federal accountability requirement for assessing the Spanish language proficiency of emergent bilinguals in U.S. schools enrolled in bilingual programs focused on Spanish language development. Assessing where students are in their Spanish language development, and which assessments will be used, is a programmatic decision made at the local level (Howard et al., 2007; OELA, 2015; Parkes & Ruth, 2011).

To summarize, emergent bilinguals are learning academic content while developing proficiency in a second language, and therefore, require definitions of student achievement that encompass both their content and language learning. While all emergent bilinguals are subject to federal accountability policies for academic achievement, only those identified as ELLs, or ELs, are subject to federal accountability policies for gains toward English language attainment. Because of these unique schooling experiences and learning needs, families of emergent bilinguals have the right to know and understand how their children are progressing

academically, as well as how their children are progressing in their language development. Similarly, educators seeking to implement school-based family engagement practices that target emergent bilinguals should know and understand how families of emergent bilinguals engage in language education. This presents a challenge to traditional notions and models of family engagement that focus solely on supporting students' academic achievement. If emergent bilinguals' language development and language education is not recognized or included within models of family engagement, then a disservice is being done to families of emergent bilinguals who are invested in their children's academic achievement *and* language education.

Problem Statement

Research shows that family engagement has positive effects on student achievement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). However, definitions of student learning and achievement used in family engagement research are often narrow and focused heavily on academic achievement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002), hence excluding emergent bilinguals' language education. Similarly, commonly used typologies of parent involvement or engagement (Epstein, 2001; Johnson, 2012) also exclude students' language learning and the ways in which families engage in their children's language education. Such narrow definitions and typologies within the field of family engagement are problematic for the growing population of Latino emergent bilinguals.

The Latino population in the United States has experienced tremendous growth since 2000 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Latinos represent about 24% of school-aged children and are projected to continue growing at rapid rates (*Excelencia* in Education, 2015; Gándara & Contreras, 2009). In addition, current estimates show that roughly 70% of the nation's emergent bilinguals speak Spanish (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). These demographics, coupled with the growth in English/Spanish bilingual education programs (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2005; Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006; OELA, 2015; Ramos,

2007) and the growing number of states adopting the Seal of Biliteracy (www.sealofbiliteracy.org), make it critical to understand family engagement practices focused on the language education of Latino emergent bilinguals.

Research has made it clear that Latino families hold high aspirations for their children's education (Olivos, 2006; Olmedo, 2003; Suizzo, 2015; Yosso, 2006) and that they engage in their children's education in a variety of ways (Delgado Bernal, 2001; López, 2001; Machado-Casas, 2009; Valdés, 1996). However, despite what we know about the benefits of family engagement and how Latino families engage in their children's education, we know little about family engagement practices focused on K-12 Latino emergent bilinguals' language education. Thus, research centered on Latino parents' perceptions of how they engage in their children's language education can make significant contributions to the fields of Latino education, bilingual education, and family engagement.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to learn how Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals engage in their children's language education. More specifically, this research investigates the perspectives, beliefs, and experiences of Latino parents of emergent bilinguals. Furthermore, the research also examines how parent-reported perspectives, beliefs, and experiences are reflected within institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education. The focus on Latino parents of emergent bilinguals is due to the fact that this unique population of parents, with their distinct needs and experiences, is increasingly growing in U.S. schools and yet schools have historically marginalized this population of parents. The focus on K-12 language education programs is due to the fact that federal policy (NCLB, 2002) mandates the establishment of language education programs or services, and it also mandates practices for parental involvement within such programs or services. In addition, a focus on K-12 also affords this study a rich

literature base focused on Latino students and families, language education, and family engagement. This qualitative study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What do Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals believe their roles and responsibilities are in supporting their children's language education? According to parents, how do they enact these roles and responsibilities? In what ways, if any, do parents feel schools support their efforts in enacting these roles and responsibilities?
2. In what ways do institutionalized discourses on family engagement correspond to, and diverge from, Latino parents' perspectives on how they support their children's language education?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, this chapter presents the theoretical framework that guides this research. In this discussion, I introduce core concepts that serve as a critical lens to understand Latino parents' perspectives and experiences in supporting their children's language education. Secondly, this chapter presents a review of empirical and theoretical literature where I discuss key issues relevant to the subject of my research. The review of literature also serves to ground this work within the fields of Latino education, K-12 language education, and family engagement.

Theoretical Framework: Parent Voice, Parent Presence, and Family Engagement

This research uses a contemporary parent engagement model, developed by McKenna and Millen (2013), as a framework to better understand Latino family engagement practices that support emergent bilinguals' language education. Using a grounded theory approach, McKenna and Millen (2013) conceptualized a child-centered model of parent engagement which respects and acknowledges the voice and "parenting practices of lower income and minority parents that are, at times, misunderstood and undervalued by school staff and administrators" (p. 43). Thus, to challenge deficit perspectives about minority families, and to advocate for more culturally responsive models of parent engagement in the educational process, McKenna and Millen grounded their model within critical race theory (Bell, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), sociocultural theory (Lareau, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978), and educational care (Noddings, 1984).

Such a model is critically needed for school communities serving Latino families. According to Villenas and Deyhle (1999), "The voices of Latino parents reveal how, despite the school rhetoric of parent involvement, parents are really "kept out" of schools by the negative ways in which they are treated, by insensitive bureaucratic requirements, and by the ways in which school-conceived parent involvement programs disregard Latino knowledge and cultural

bases” (p. 415). This still rings true more than fifteen years later. Auerbach, (2011), for instance, argues that school communities serving Latino families must learn to nurture parent voice in their efforts to establish home-school partnerships and to recognize the *invisible strategies* Latino parents use to engage in their children’s education. Similarly, in their work with Latino immigrant parents, Pérez Carreón, Drake, and Calabrese Barton (2005) call for schools to create spaces for parent voice to emerge and for diverse forms of parent presence to be recognized. Furthermore, Baquedano-López, Alexander, and Hernandez (2013) elaborate on the marginalization of non-dominant parents, including Latinos, by stating, “The important forms of education, socialization, and advocacy that non-dominant parents do engage in are often not only disregarded but sometimes met with hostility by school leaders who interpret them as threatening or too critical. Families’ lives are deeply shaped by racial, class, and migrant inequality but schools often fail to acknowledge or understand this...embracing deficit perspectives instead” (p. 172). Hence, the model put forth by McKenna and Millen (2013) can counter the negative treatment and deficit perspectives of Latino parents by privileging their voice and presence in their children’s education.

Parent voice and *parent presence*, two central components of the parent engagement model conceptualized by McKenna and Millen (2013), serve as a lens for this research. Parent voice is defined as:

“the right and opportunity for parents and caregivers to express their thinking and understandings about their children’s and families’ everyday lives and educational experiences in and out of school. Ideally, these understandings have weight within educational settings and ultimately have a positive influence on the educational experiences of children. Parent voice may consist of parents’ desires, dreams, goals, and hopes for their children, information traditionally lacking acknowledgement in educational circles. Parent voice may also come in the form of frustration, concern, or anger over isolation, exclusion, or disrespect within the educational process” (McKenna & Millen, 2013, p. 12).

Parent presence is defined by McKenna and Millen (2013) as the actions and involvement of a parent or caregiver in a child's education which can occur in formal school contexts and through traditional activities, or in informal spaces created by parents and through unconventional, or nontraditional, activities. Parent voice and parent presence, especially as it relates to non-dominant families, are critical components of parent engagement because neither seem to be fully understood or recognized by educators (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013; McKenna & Millen, 2013; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). For example, scholars conducting research with Latino parents of children in special education have found that parent voice is often silenced or ignored by educators as Latino parents try to navigate the special education process (Salas, 2004; Tejero Hughes, Martinez Valle-Riestra, & Arguelles, 2008).

According to McKenna and Millen (2013), "Understanding parent participation in children's lives as a fluid and culturally sensitive combination of parent voice and parent presence, in both the home and school contexts, could foster a much needed, modern, and comprehensive model of parent engagement that all educational stakeholders might use and which should prove especially helpful to classroom teachers" (p. 12). Thus, this model privileges what parents have to say about their children's overall development and lived experiences, including schooling experiences. In addition, the model also privileges the diverse ways in which parents support their children's education at home and in school. Figure 1 depicts a graphic representation of the parent engagement model conceptualized by McKenna and Millen which centers parent voice and parent presence, but also includes four conditions which participants in their exploratory study identified as essential to family engagement. According to the participants in their study, family engagement must "develop over time and be active and

deliberate, culturally sensitive, and both communally and personally based” (McKenna & Millen, 2013, p. 38).

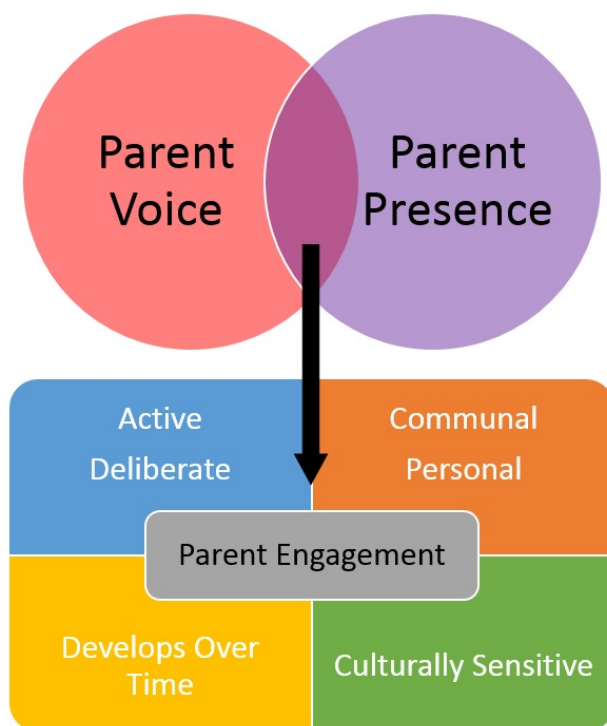


Figure 1: McKenna & Millen (2013) Parent Engagement Model

Like all models conceptualized within research, this parent engagement model warrants further investigation, and in particular, with Latino parents and parents of emergent bilinguals. The exploratory study through which this model was developed included a small, theoretically derived sample of mothers who were African American and White (McKenna & Millen, 2013). During a brief conversation I had with Maria McKenna at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), I learned that the model had not been applied yet with parents of emergent bilinguals, and that the research team recognized the importance of research with this population of parents given the rapid growth of this student population (personal communication, April 2015). Thus, there are two major benefits to the field in utilizing this parent engagement model as a theoretical framework to guide this research. First,

it presents an opportunity to apply this model to research with Latino parents of emergent bilinguals, a rapidly growing population. Secondly, it allows the model to be applied to research that focuses family engagement on language education and language learning. Such applications could illuminate aspects of parent voice and parent presence that are distinct to Latino parents of emergent bilinguals.

The Discourse on Family Engagement

Family engagement is a concept which has been labeled, defined, and discussed by scholars, policymakers, and educators in a variety of ways. Terms such as *parent involvement* (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Epstein, 1986; Epstein & Becker, 1982; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Gordon & Nocon, 2008; López, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2004), *home-school relations* (Graue, 2005; Graue & Oen, 2009; Graue & Sherfinski, 2011), *home-school-community partnerships* (Epstein, 1987, 2001), and *family engagement* (Mapp, 2012; Olivos, Ochoa, & Jiménez-Castellanos, 2011; Weiss, Lopez, & Rosenberg, 2011), among others, have been used to label and describe the critical relationship between families, communities, and schools. These ways of talking about how parents should interact with schools are often rooted in policy and constitute a family engagement⁴ discourse (Nakagawa, 2000).

Scholars have noted, however, that family engagement discourse is much more than the simple act of *talking* about how parents should interact with schools. For instance, Nakagawa (2002) states, “The parent involvement discourse has created particular definitions and understandings of legitimate parent involvement, as well as commonsensical notions...of a good parent. This discourse structures how educators and parents approach family-school relationships prior to any interactions at the school level” (p. 445). Likewise, Kainz and Aikens (2007) ask,

⁴ Nakagawa (2000) uses the term *parent involvement*, a term often used within federal and state policy.

“How is it that ideas published in scholarly and popular presses are converted each year into millions of volunteer hours served, rolls of wrapping paper sold, science fair projects completed, conferences attended, homework edited, essays typed, and cupcakes baked?” (p. 301) Kainz and Aikens (2007) argue that the dominant discourse around home-school relations has the power to produce action or behaviors, and to establish legitimating checkpoints that serve to maintain the dominant discourse.

Nakagawa (2002) also argues that family engagement discourse can be problematic for families from marginalized communities because it has the power to structure home-school relations in ways that such families cannot meet. This is due to the fact that traditional notions of family engagement, or family engagement practices considered by educators to be valid and acceptable forms of engagement, are often based on white, Christian, middle class, English-speaking families (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). Thus, family engagement discourse, which is rooted in policy, are ways of talking about home-school relations that have the power to drive practice and reproduce inequalities (Kainz & Aikens, 2007; Nakagawa, 2002). Such discourse and its effects on practice, if left unchallenged, can be detrimental to home-school relationships with Latino parents.

Decades of research show that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to family engagement (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007; Mapp & Kuttner, 2014; Olivos et al., 2011). For example, Ishimaru (2014) conceptualized an emergent model for collaboration that is grounded within civic capacity and community organizing theories. In her exploratory case study, she worked with a community undergoing demographic changes that called for a new approach to family and community engagement. Ishimaru (2014) argues that as communities become more diverse, we

must rewrite the rules of family engagement in order to respond to the needs of families, communities, and schools. Simpson Baird (2015), in her research with linguistically diverse parents, calls into question the “greatest hits” of parent involvement practices that are commonly used in schools but may not be effective for diverse families. Too often, however, schools have tried to *fit* families from diverse walks of life into family engagement models that were not designed for them or their children. For example, family literacy programs are commonly implemented in schools serving diverse communities. However, scholars argue that family literacy programs that target non-dominant group families, such as Latinos, are often implemented through a deficit-based, top-down approach that aims to “train”, “fix”, or change parents and families (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Hernandez, 2013; Torres & Hurtado-Vivas, 2011). Such top-down efforts often result in educators feeling frustrated and labeling parents as “parents that don’t care” because they do not respond as expected to the family engagement practices imposed upon them (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; de Carvalho, 2001; Graue & Oen, 2009; Hong, 2011; Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund [MALDEF] and National Education Association [NEA], 2010; Olivos, 2004; Rodríguez-Brown, 2010; Valdés, 1996; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999).

More recently, due to the current climate of college-and-career readiness standards and preparing students for the 21st century, policymakers and scholars have argued for more integrated and systemic models of family engagement in order to better support students as they work toward mastery of the rigorous learning demands outlined in standards such as the Common Core State Standards (Caspe, Lopez, Chu, & Weiss, 2011; Johnson, 2012; Mapp, 2012; MALDEF and NEA, 2010; TESOL, 2013; Weiss et al., 2011). Ideally, families and schools share responsibility for student learning and should work together as partners. This relationship,

or partnership, should be an ongoing and long-term commitment centered on student learning (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Mapp & Kuttner, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2004; Weiss et al., 2011). In addition, recognized experts in the field of family engagement call for the federal government to invest in rigorous evaluations of family engagement initiatives to help build the knowledge base on family engagement practices, and specifically, those that align to major educational reform initiatives, such as college-and-career readiness standards (The National Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group, 2010).

In terms of federal policy, NCLB⁵ defines *parental involvement* as a partnership between families and schools that is focused on student learning and where parents are seen as informed decision-makers in their children's education (Mapp, 2012; National PTA, 2009, NCLB, 2002). NCLB also outlines parents' rights to obtain information from schools on their child's education in ways that are comprehensible to them (MALDEF and NEA, 2010; National PTA, 2009; NCLB, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2011) so that parents can engage as informed decision-makers. For instance, under Title III of NCLB it states that parents of ELLs should be notified of their child's identification as an ELL, how their child was identified, their child's English language proficiency scores, the type of language program the district can offer, and parents' rights to accept or refuse language support services (NCLB, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Parental notification under Title I includes providing information to parents on curriculum, standards, and assessments, among other information (National PTA, 2009; NCLB, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

⁵ NCLB (2002) was the federal policy in place at the time the research was conducted. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) had not been reauthorized yet, so the focus on federal policy in this chapter is NCLB. However, it is important to note that while ESSA introduces changes to federal policy impacting ELs and parent involvement, much of what was required under NCLB for will continue to apply (e.g., requirements for language standards and language assessments, parental notification of EL identification, opportunities for parent input).

Thus, parental involvement has been described as the *centerpiece* of NCLB (Gordon & Nocon, 2008; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Mapp, 2012; NCLB, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The reporting provisions for families under NCLB were designed to ensure “that parents have the information they need to make well-informed choices for their children, more effectively share responsibility with their children’s schools, and help those schools develop effective and successful academic programs” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 1). Although the Spanish language development of emergent bilinguals is not explicitly addressed in the reporting provisions or parental notification mandates under Title III, the parental notification requirements under Title I could apply to them. Moreover, the *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education*, a resource often used by school districts to establish dual language programs, encourages districts to keep families informed on how students are progressing toward the program’s goals of bilingualism, biliteracy, and multicultural competence (Howard et al., 2007).

To summarize, current family engagement discourse found within research and policy, and prevalent within schools, paints families and educators as partners in relationships built on trust and respect where parents are informed about their children’s progress in school and are invited to participate in decision-making processes related to their children’s education. Such discourse implies equality in terms of power, knowledge, skills, and access to information and resources. Additionally, the discourse around partnerships implies that educators and families are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and time necessary to actually engage with one another in meaningful ways. In short, there are many implicit messages embedded within the discourse of home-school partnerships that advocates for Latino parents must critically examine.

What was discussed thus far are the common family engagement discourses, or ways of talking about how families and schools should interact, in regard to students' academic learning. How, then, do these discourses apply to the language education of emergent bilinguals and the relationships between their families and their teachers? How do these discourses correspond to what parents of emergent bilinguals think about family engagement practices that support language learning? How do these discourses account for the power relations and issues of equity that surround home-school relationships within Latino communities? These are questions that remain to be answered.

Meaningful Communication Between Families and Educators Focused on Language

A common theme in family engagement literature is the need for frequent meaningful communication about student learning between families and schools (Hong, 2011; Johnson, 2011; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; MALDEF and NEA, 2010; Mapp, 2003; Olivos, 2006). Within the literature reviewed focused on families of emergent bilinguals, a common theme was the need for families and schools to communicate about issues and topics focused on language and students' language learning experiences (Brown & Souto-Manning, 2008; Cuéllar & Garcia, 2012; Farrugio, 2010; García, 2000; García & Frede, 2010; Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006; Michael-Luna, 2013; Parkes & Ruth, 2011; Rodríguez, 2015; Smith, 2001).

Olivos (2006) argues for opportunities which allow families and educators to engage in authentic dialogue about student learning. He challenges common practices of one-way communication between schools and families. Hong (2011) states that, "communication between home and school can be distant at best, and this can hurt children, who need consistency between home and school to support their social-emotional and academic development" (p. 91). Johnson (2011) identifies effective two-way communication as one of the seven components in her model

for empowering and engaging families of color. In order to advocate for their children, families must have the skills needed to communicate with educators (Johnson, 2011).

Establishing a trusting relationship is critical to fostering opportunities for meaningful communication between families and schools (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Mapp, 2003; MALDEF and NEA, 2010). For instance, Mapp (2003) found that trusting relationships between teachers and families enhanced parents' desire to engage with the schools and participate in their child's education. However, establishing trusting relationships is not an easy task. Often language barriers and modes of communication hinder this process (MALDEF and NEA, 2010; Mapp & Kuttner, 2014). Policy recommendations to help address linguistic diversity within school communities include ensuring that schools have adequate translation and interpretation services (MALDEF and NEA, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Orellana (2009) would challenge the idea that students are adequately trained to serve as interpreters. While her research highlights the complexity of being a language broker, it also highlights the many challenges students and families face in this process (Orellana, 2009). Lastly, Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) argues that the reality of parent-teacher conferences, the most common interaction between families and teachers, is one of conflict and tension, and therefore may not be an opportunity for meaningful communication.

Communication with families of emergent bilinguals places a bigger emphasis on the message being communicated, rather than the actual act of communicating. As discussed previously, the goals of programs serving emergent bilinguals may either be English language acquisition or bilingualism, biliteracy, and multiculturalism. Thus, families of emergent bilinguals should have opportunities to communicate with educators about second language acquisition and setting realistic expectations of language proficiency; differences between

language programs; the use of language standards and assessments; the criteria for reclassification; and most importantly, students' progress in language development (García, 2000; MALDEF and NEA, 2010; Parkes & Ruth, 2011).

Parkes and Ruth (2011) studied parents' level of satisfaction with dual language programs in the Southwest. Their data show that it is important for families and schools to communicate about realistic expectations for what children should know and be able to do at a given point in their dual language education. This is important because unrealistic expectations can impact parents' level of satisfaction with their child's progress and/or the overall program effectiveness (Parkes & Ruth, 2011). Giacchino-Baker and Piller (2006) found high levels of parental satisfaction with two-way immersion programs; however, parents in this study explicitly noted their desire for more detailed and frequent information on their child's progress in the program. Howard et al. (2007) identify families and communities as critical stakeholders and advocates of dual language programs, which are often programs of choice, therefore, parental satisfaction is important. If parents do not have the information they need to set realistic expectations for their child's language development it could negatively impact parents' commitment to the program (Howard et al., 2007).

Sharing timely information and communicating with families of emergent bilinguals must be done without bias on the part of the school and district personnel in order to protect the educational rights of students (García, 2000). In his study, García (2000) examined factors that motivated Latino families in California to sign waivers requesting bilingual education for their ELL children rather than a sheltered English instruction program. Results from the study showed that "...the best informed parents in an atmosphere of complete disclosure were those who chose a waiver and bilingual education" (García, 2000, p. 57). Farrugio (2010) argues that bilingual

educators must engage in extensive community outreach to ensure that families of emergent bilinguals understand the benefits of additive bilingual programs such as the preservation of the heritage language. In regard to the use of the home language, regardless of political beliefs, educators should inform families of emergent bilinguals about the benefits of having a strong foundation in the home language, and how parents can support student learning at home in the home language (García, 2000; García & Frede, 2010).

Families are also in a position to share important information with educators about students' use of language at home. In her study with families of children in a dual language preschool, Michael-Luna (2013) set out to highlight the valuable knowledge families have about children's language use and language development. Results from her study indicate that parents can supply information to educators on language support at home which can be used to inform formative classroom language assessments (Michael-Luna, 2013). Scholars working with Latino families of emergent bilinguals in preschool contexts have also found that families have a wealth of knowledge about their children's language use at home. For instance, in their research with Mexican-descent mothers, Cuéllar and Garcia (2012) found that the mothers engaged with their children at home in interactions that reinforced Spanish-speaking skills and Mexican culture and identity. Rodríguez (2015) examined the strategies employed by Latino families to raise their preschool children bilingually, and the subsequent challenges they faced. One such challenge was the use of English by older siblings which made younger children in the family more inclined to use English rather than Spanish (Rodríguez, 2015). Similarly, Kennedy and Romo (2013) also identify challenges families may experience in raising their children bilingually due to the status and dominance of English. Lastly, Smith (2001) argues that schools offering dual

language programs can learn a lot of valuable information from families and community members about how the minority language (e.g., Spanish) is used within the community.

One very important issue that educators should ensure families of emergent bilinguals understand is language loss. This is especially important for Latino families. According to Brown and Souto-Manning (2008), “Many parents...remain unaware of the fact that their children are losing their first language, the implications of such a loss, and the value of bilingualism” (p. 39). Farrugio (2010) found that language maintenance is important to parents because of preservation of family ties. According to Farrugio (2010), “Parents associate the loss of Spanish among their U.S.-schooled children with a potential diminution of parental authority and a disruption of cultural values” (p. 7). As emergent bilinguals identified as ELLs acquire more English than their parents or family members, it impacts power dynamics within the home and positions students as language brokers (Orellana, 2009), but it also has the potential to create spaces for bidirectional learning of language (Reyes & Moll, 2008) between students and families. Tse (2001) found that home language maintenance and biliteracy development can be challenging due to the negative stigmas applied to certain home languages, and the lack of literacy resources and experiences in the native language. Educators of emergent bilinguals should be prepared to address the issue of language loss, and how it might be avoided, in meaningful ways with families.

Lastly, no discussion about Spanish language development within the United States would be complete without addressing Spanish language varieties and perceptions of U.S. Spanish (Anzaldúa, 1987; García, 2014; Macías, 2014). This issue is especially relevant for educators working with Latino families of emergent bilinguals enrolled in bilingual programs. One reason for this is because the teaching of language is not a neutral or apolitical act (Motha,

2014). Educators working with emergent bilinguals must challenge their notions of what constitutes “correct” forms of language and learn to recognize, value, and respect the language varieties present within their school community (Bartolomé, 2015; Campos, Delgado, & Soto Huerta, 2011). Even when the educators are themselves Latino and Spanish-speaking, differences in linguistic perspectives could cause barriers between educators and Latino parents (Mercuri, 2016). The Latino population is incredibly diverse, so even though a common ethnicity is shared, it does not necessarily mean that Latinos share a common view on language.

Ofelia García (2014) describes the unique language practices of U.S. bilingual Latinos as “discourse with practices that some may identify as “English” or “Spanish” but, seen from their perspective as bilingual speakers, are simply different features of their linguistic repertoire...” (p. 73). Similarly, Moll (2014) states that the power of biliteracy lies in its flexibility and the ability to code-switch. According to Moll, “This form of code-switching—reading in one language, writing or talking about it in another—is expansive in the sense that it helps students garner and combine valuable funds of knowledge from two language environments for personal and academic use” (2014, p. 83). Furthermore, scholars argue that in the 21st century, the best way to educate bilingual children is to recognize bilinguals’ translanguaging,⁶ a dynamic way of using ones full linguistic repertoire, as a valid language practice for communication and meaning-making (Beres, 2015; Flores, 2015; García 2014, 2015).

However, research with Latino parents has found that they too hold strong perceptions of Spanish and Spanish varieties. For example, Spanish-speaking parents in the study conducted by Farrugio (2010) described the Spanish taught and used in the schools as *Spanglish* and they were

⁶ According to García (2014), translanguaging “differs from code-switching in that it refers not simply to a shift between two languages but to the use of complex discursive practices that cannot be assigned to one or another code and that gives voice to oppressed and minoritized language practices...” (p. 74).

concerned that the prevalent use of Spanglish “would diminish their children's cultural pride in Spanish as a language of prestige and intellectualism” (p. 17). In other words, parents in this study had negative perceptions of U.S. Spanish and did not see it as a valid variety of the Spanish language. Parents’ perceptions of Spanish are critical to understand because scholars have found that Latino parents believe Spanish is critical in their children’s formation of an ethnic identity (Cuéllar & Garcia, 2012). With such a high number of diverse Spanish speakers in the nation (Macías, 2014), it becomes critical for Spanish language educators to listen to parent voice and understand parents’ perceptions and beliefs about language so that educators can then address issues and concerns about Spanish varieties with families and students.

Despite what we know about the importance of meaningful communication between families and educators, scholars advocate that language must be included in discussions with families of emergent bilinguals. The studies discussed in this section clearly show that there is a need for meaningful communication between families of emergent bilinguals and educators focused on language. Families need access to comprehensible information on language learning, language varieties, language loss, and gains in language acquisition in order to support their children’s language education.

Families as Advocates for Language

Families advocate for their children (Delgado Gaitan, 1991, 2001, 2014; Johnson, 2011, 2012; Olivos, 2006; Staehr Fenner, 2014; Weiss et al. 2010), and in the case of families of emergent bilinguals, research has shown that families advocate for their children’s right to preserve their home language and for access to high quality language programs and services (Cline & Necochea, 2001; García, 2000; Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006; Parkes & Ruth, 2011; Ramos, 2007). Advocacy can be loosely defined as taking action on behalf of others (Staehr

Fenner, 2014). Henderson et al. (2007) put forth a definition of advocate which directly links to families, and as such, is more applicable to the present discussion:

“An advocate must be in the child's life over the long haul—a person who knows the child well, talks to her/him often, and sees him/her every day; a person who believes in the child, wants him or her to soar, and can step in if he or she is falling behind. Who is this person, if not the child's parents, a guardian, or a close friend or family member?” (p. 153).

Like family engagement itself, advocacy can take on many shapes and forms—there is no *one way* to advocate for students (Delgado Gaitan, 2014; Johnson, 2011, 2012; Staehr Fenner, 2014; Weiss et al., 2010). Scholars have noted that families of color and immigrant families often lack the social and cultural capital needed to navigate the U.S. school system (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Delgado Gaitan, 1991, 2001, 2014; Hong, 2011; Lareau, 1987; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). This lack of capital often presents barriers to families trying to advocate for their children’s educational rights. To help families overcome such barriers, Olivos (2015) argues that parents need allies from within the school system that can be trusted to share honest and unfiltered information with parents. Delgado Gaitan (2014) states that knowing how to navigate the school system is a certain form of literacy parents must know. According to Delgado Gaitan (2014), “Learning the language of the school is an empowering process for families; when this occurs, schools also win because they are in a position to build and maintain a strong communication system with families...” (p. 340).

Similarly, Johnson (2012) argues that knowing the language of education is critical for engaging with schools and holding the school system accountable. An example of the language of education, is knowing how to interpret and discuss school performance data, which under NCLB should be shared with families (Johnson, 2012; Weiss et al., 2010). Being a capable advocate, according to Henderson et al. (2007), also requires knowing how to be persistent and how to *hold your ground*. However, for some families this is often easier said than done. For

instance, some families—especially those from non-dominant groups—choose not to be vocal with their questions, opinions, and concerns out of fear of retaliation against themselves and/or their children (MALDEF and NEA, 2010). These barriers to advocacy for families from non-dominant groups are amplified by issues of power and status (Delgado Gaitan, 1991, 2001, 2014; Olivos, 2006).

Scholars, family advocates, and policymakers have argued for programs which help families from non-dominant groups build and develop the knowledge and skills they need to help their children navigate the school system while also fostering opportunities to develop leadership and advocacy skills (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Delgado Gaitan, 2001, 2014; Johnson, 2011; MALDEF and NEA, 2010; Olivos et al., 2011). However, despite the research base and calls for equipping families with the knowledge and skills they need to advocate for their children, funding through Title I—the section of NCLB with the heaviest focus on parental involvement—is often used by states and districts to perpetuate deficit-based approaches to parental involvement that seek to improve the “parenting skills” of families rather than build parent advocacy and leadership skills (MALDEF and NEA, 2010).

Henderson et al. (2007) note that perhaps what prevents schools from encouraging parents to be advocates is the fear of “pushy parents”. Families from non-dominant groups who advocate for their children often come across as more than just “pushy” (Cline & Necochea, 2001). Scholars refer to this as the “paradox of minority parent involvement,” meaning it is a no-win situation for families because they are criticized for not being involved and then criticized when they are because their actions are interpreted as being “pushy” or “demanding” (Olivos et al., 2011; Shannon, 1996). When families from non-dominant groups begin to see the inequities that exist in schools, and develop critical perspectives of how schools function, they need

opportunities to voice their concerns to those in power and they have the right to be heard (Olivos, 2006).

Research on families of emergent bilinguals shows that families support and advocate for programs which help their children develop bilingualism and biliteracy (Cline & Necochea, 2001; García, 2000; Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006; Parkes & Ruth, 2011; Ramos, 2007). Bilingual programs such as dual language two-way immersion programs are noted for promoting high academic and language development standards (Howard et al., 2007). In his study, Ramos (2007) describes how families of emergent bilinguals in a two-way immersion program believe the program expands students' cultural and linguistic horizons. Because of the high value parents placed on having high academic and linguistic quality in the program, Ramos (2007) states that two-way immersion programs should hold high standards for academics and language as pillars in their program design. In their study on parent perspectives of two-way immersion programs, Giacchino-Baker and Piller (2006) noted that in comparison to non-Spanish-speaking parents with children in the program, Spanish-speaking parents placed a higher value on the development of biliteracy and were more likely to indicate that bilingualism would help their children find better jobs in the future.

For Spanish-speaking families, their children's ability to speak Spanish is also an important factor in maintaining their child's ethnic identity. For instance, in her study with Mexican mothers and Puerto Rican grandmothers, Olmedo (2003) found that the women all viewed Spanish as a symbol of their ethnic identity and thus felt it was important for their children to maintain their ability to speak Spanish. As previously discussed, Cuéllar and Garcia (2012) also found that Mexican mothers strongly associate the ability to speak Spanish with a Mexican identity.

As noted by Olivos (2006), once parents' eyes begin to open and they see the inequalities in schools, they will seek ways to voice their concerns. For instance, Cline and Necochea (2001) examined the factors that fueled the political activism of a group of Latino parents in California. In this study, parents advocated for high quality bilingual and ELL programs, highly qualified teachers, and bilingual Latino administrators at the school level. In essence, parents perceived that social and institutional racism within the district was essentially violating the civil rights of Latino and ELL students (Cline & Necochea, 2001). Thus, parents' political activism was in response to their awareness of the inequitable educational achievement among students identified as ELLs.

The literature reviewed shows that Latino families of emergent bilinguals not only support effective programs for bilingualism and biliteracy, they will organize and advocate to protect their children's rights to such programs. Latino families of emergent bilinguals want their children to have access to high quality programs for second language development and academic achievement.

Issues of Equity in Family Engagement

The issue of equity commonly appears in family engagement literature (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Delgado Gaitan, 1991; Hong, 2011; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Ochoa, Olivos, & Jiménez-Castellanos, 2011; Olivos, 2006). Power relations are critical in discussions about equity in home-school relationships, and when it comes to families from non-dominant groups (e.g., Latinos), such families are often powerless in their relationships with educators (Fine, 1993; Valdés, Menken, & Castro, 2015). Furthermore, within the literature focused on families of emergent bilinguals, concerns over issues of equity were specifically raised in regard to two-way immersion programs (Shannon, 2011; Valdés, 1997).

The field of family engagement has strong roots in deficit thinking about families from non-dominant groups which includes Latino families. These roots continue to impact families today. For instance, Hong (2011) states that families from communities of color often experience subordination when dealing with schools which may be exacerbated by the “long history of alienation, racism, and inequality that has plagued home-and-school relations in low-income communities of color” (p. 178). Similarly, Olivos (2006) states that families from non-dominant groups are often subjected to paternalistic treatment by schools because they are not viewed as equals by educators, while White, middle-class families are. To address such conditions, Ochoa et al. (2011) propose an action-oriented model of engagement which seeks to transform inequitable conditions. Moreover, Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003), when speaking about the dynamic of parent-teacher conferences, states, “when there is an asymmetry between parents and teachers, it is difficult for the conversation to be productive and the relationship to grow” (p. 49). This is due in large part to the power differential between educators and parents. Power relations can be very problematic in relationships between educators and parents from non-dominant groups.

Furthermore, in regard to deficit thinking, Baquedano-López et al. (2013) discuss in their review of literature how most family engagement programs that emerged during the 1960s stemmed from cultural deficit theory and essentially sought to teach low-income parents of color how to parent like White, middle-class families. This history of deficit-based thinking about families from non-dominant groups has led to a steady stream of family engagement programs designed to “educate” or “fix” certain families rather than value the diverse ways in which families support student learning (de Carvalho, 2001). To challenge deficit perspectives that could be hindering home-school relationships with parents of emergent bilinguals, Hernandez (2015) calls for teachers and administrators of emergent bilinguals to ask themselves how

parents are perceived or represented in policy and practice, whether or not parents are just expected to comply with school expectations, and if there are spaces for parent voice to emerge. Hence, a critical step in challenging deficit thinking toward families from non-dominant groups involves reflecting on one's own beliefs and practice.

When it comes to participation in school sanctioned forms of “involvement”, families from non-dominant groups are often labeled as not-caring or uncaring because they do not participate as much, as often, or in the same ways as families from dominant groups. For example, Auerbach (2007) challenges the myth of the uncaring parent and states, “Because teachers place a high premium on school-based involvement and lower SES African American and Latino parents are less likely to come to the school than middle-class White parents...teachers often assume that the former groups do not care about their children's schooling. Such assumptions, rooted in deficit thinking and the discourse on ‘at risk’-ness, perpetuate the myth of uninvolved minority parents...” (p. 252). Delgado Gaitan (1991) argues that families should not be blamed for what is considered “low participation” because the problem is structural—families need to have equitable opportunities to participate in their child's education. “Schools facilitate the exclusion of students and parents by (consciously or unconsciously) establishing activities that require specific majority culturally-based knowledge and behaviors about the school as an institution” (Delgado Gaitan, 1991, p. 21). This can essentially shut the door on many families.

One way families from non-dominant groups are given access to knowledge of how the school system works is through cultural brokers. While much has been written about the value of cultural brokers (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hong, 2011), Martinez-Cosio and Martinez Iannacone (2007) found that the role of cultural broker or parent liaison can

be “tenuous at best, as conflict arises from competing responsibilities: as school agents and tacit reproducers of inequality, and as partners with parents in exposing structural injustice and advocating for change” (p. 351). Thus, as members of a non-dominant group, Latinos need equitable access to participate in these school-sanctioned forms of “involvement”.

Delgado Gaitan (1991), among others (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Hong, 2011; Johnson, 2012; Olivos et al., 2011), delineates between what she calls *conventional* forms of family engagement (e.g., attending parent-teacher conferences, volunteering in the schools) and *non-conventional* forms, such as those programs that seek to rectify power imbalances between families and schools. Hong (2011) puts forth the following argument for needing programs that go beyond what has been considered as *traditional*, or *conventional*, models of family engagement:

“Parents come to school engagement from a variety of experiences and backgrounds. Some parents may be newly involved, and some may be looking for more meaningful opportunities to exercise leadership. While some adults may be available during school hours, others are only available after school hours, or for shorter- or longer-term commitments. To develop parent engagement approaches that draw the widest net of parent participation, schools must offer a variety of programs and invitations that meet various parent needs and experiences” (p. 27).

In regard to Latino families, it is crucial to note that “Mexican American and Latino families may not demonstrate parental involvement in normative ways, but there is ample evidence that these families place education and educación at the forefront of their values...” (Espino, 2016, p. 75). For example, in her research with Mexican Americans, Espino (2016) found that one powerful way Mexican parents engage in their children’s education is through sharing parental/familial messages about educational aspirations with their children. Through a *traditional* parent involvement lens, these narratives would not be considered a valid form of involvement or engagement, but yet the adult research participants in Espino’s study identified these parental messages as a powerful support and motivating force that they carried with them

on their journey toward doctoral degrees (Espino, 2016). Likewise, in his research with Chicana high school seniors, Ceja (2004) also found that parent messages helped the students develop their educational goals and aspirations. Thus, there is value to the distinct ways that Latino families engage in their children's education. Not everything has to be on-site or follow a traditional form of engagement.

In regard to families of emergent bilinguals, what stood out within the literature reviewed were discussions about power and equity among parents of students in two-way immersion programs. It is important to remember that these are often programs of choice, and are considered to be *enrichment* programs for students from dominant groups, while they are considered essential for the survival and success of ELLs enrolled in the program (Christian, 2006; Howard et al., 2007; Parkes & Ruth, 2011). Thus, the families of students in two-way immersion programs come with diverse backgrounds, motivations, beliefs, and needs in regard to language (Parkes & Ruth, 2011). More importantly, however, they come with different levels of power and status.

Guadalupe Valdés (1997) was the first to raise questions and concerns about the wide acceptance and rapid implementation of two-way immersion programs in the United States during the early 1990s. In her article, Valdés (1997) cautions educators and policymakers to carefully examine issues of language and power, and intergroup relations present in two-way immersion programs. Valdés states that bilingualism “can be both an advantage and a disadvantage, depending on the student's position in the hierarchy of power” (1997, p. 420). In other words, English speakers enrolled in such a program are often seen as privileged and praised for learning a second language, while the same consideration is not given to Latino ELLs because they are *expected* to learn English (Valdés, 1997). Given that one of the goals of dual

language programs is to promote multicultural competence (Howard et al., 2007), Valdés (1997) urges educators and policymakers to be aware and sensitive to the realities of intergroup relations and to the fact that the students live in very different worlds and have different histories, experiences, and needs.

Valdés (1997) goes on to argue that language planning, or language allocation as it is commonly called, is *not* a neutral process and that the needs of two distinct student populations cannot be met with one language policy. She elaborates on this point as follows:

“I am especially concerned about the fact that, while Spanish is being used in dual-immersion programs, instructional strategies are also being used that must take into consideration the needs of the mainstream children. What this means, in practice, is that the language in which both majority and minority children receive instruction, especially in the early grades, is a language that must be modified somewhat in order to respond to the needs of those children who are in the early stages of acquisition...What the research has not told us is how using language in an even slightly distorted fashion influences the language development of children who are native speakers of that language. This is a serious question, especially if language is the primary focus in such programs. **Were the situation reversed, mainstream parents would vigorously protest having their children in classrooms in which the instructional needs of language-minority children required that English be used in ways that did not provide their children with the fullest possible exposure to school language**” (p. 415, emphasis in bold added).

What the section in bold implies is a sense of power and privilege of one group over the other. It also implies that Spanish-speaking parents do not *vigorously protest* having their children subjected to modified language used in instruction. If this is true, it could be argued that perhaps they are unaware of the implications of modified language to their children’s language development. Nonetheless, Valdés (1997) paints a vivid picture of a power imbalance. Shannon (2011) would argue that this imbalance is due to differences in status among dual language families—some are *high status* families (dominant group families) while others are *low status* families (non-dominant group families).

In her study of how parents within a two-way immersion dual language program engage and interact with each other, Shannon (2011) raised the following questions: Whose interests are

served within dual language programs? Do parents in dual language programs serve as models for what the programs promote (e.g., multicultural competence) and expect of the children? Through a critical race theory lens, Shannon (2011) found that interest convergence can be seen in how dual language programs cater to White families, and how White families interact and respond to the program. Her findings, reported more than a decade later, support the concerns raised by Valdés in 1997. More recently, Shannon (2015) stated, “Particularly in dual language schools, parents and families need to be aware of the social experiment they are participating in. Those with power need to be shown how to share it and those who are vulnerable need to be shown how they can accept it” (p. 84). Thus, there are clear power imbalances within programs designed to promote bilingualism, biliteracy, and multicultural competence that could impact relationships among parents, not just among parents and educators.

In summary, what educators working with diverse families need to know and keep in mind is that *all* families—regardless of their racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds—can participate in their child’s education and should have equal and equitable opportunities to do so. Educators need to recognize and value the cultural and linguistic resources and experiences families bring to the table (Graue & Sherfinski, 2011; Graue & Oen, 2009; Pacheco, 2012), as well as be willing to address issues of inequity head on. Issues of equity, if not addressed, will hinder family engagement and home-school relationships.

In the case of Latino families, the population at the heart of this research, scholars have documented the wealth of knowledge and resources that Latino families contribute to their children’s education. For example, Latino families possess funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) that could contribute to children’s learning both at home and at school. Latino families also possess linguistic funds of knowledge (Smith, 2001) that can help children’s

language development. In the case of emergent bilinguals, Latino parents' linguistic funds of knowledge are an extremely valuable resource for educators; however, as Smith (2001) found, they are often an untapped resource. Scholars have also noted that Latino families possess various forms of capital that they utilize to support their children. Yosso (2005, 2006) refers to these distinct forms of capital as *community cultural wealth* that include aspirational, linguistic, navigational, social, familial, and resistant capital.

But, when it comes to Latino families, Pat Mora said it best, "Family ties are so strong that not even death can sever them" (p. 77). Moreover, a core cultural concept for Latinos is *familia* (Caldera, Velez-Gomez, & Lindsey, 2015; Rodríguez-Brown, 2010). Despite all of this, however, the literature on Latino family engagement shows that Latino families continue to face challenges and barriers in their relationships with schools and educators. One such challenge is that little is known on how Latino families engage specifically in their children's language education at home and/or at school. With the growing number of Latino emergent bilinguals in our schools, can we afford not to understand the family engagement practices Latino parents employ to support their children's language education? Can we afford to continue to perpetuate family engagement practices that turn a blind eye to the language education of Latino emergent bilinguals and the needs of their families?

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

My research was designed and conducted to illuminate the voice and presence of Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals in an effort to understand their beliefs and roles in supporting their children's language education. This chapter provides an overall description of the research and how it was conducted. I begin with my research goals and epistemological stance. Next, I discuss the methodology I selected for my research. I then discuss the methods I used along with a description of the setting and participants. I conclude this chapter with a discussion on bias, validity, and my researcher positionality.

Research Goals and Epistemological Stance

My research was motivated by the following personal, practical, and intellectual goals (Maxwell, 2013). The personal goal driving this study is rooted in my own identity and experience. As a Latina, I hope to advocate for Latino families through this work and make up for my own shortcomings as a former teacher of emergent bilinguals. In hindsight, there was so much more I could have done as a teacher to engage with families of emergent bilinguals around students' language development. As Dr. Carl Grant once said to me, "Don't feel guilty...do something about it" (personal communication, June 2011). This study allows me the opportunity *to do something about it* and learn from parents. The practical goal driving this study is to influence practice. It is my hope that the findings of this study can help inform family engagement practices that are more respectful, responsive, and inclusive of the language education experiences of Latino emergent bilinguals and their families. Finally, my intellectual goals for this research are twofold. First, I seek to build on the literature base that views Latino families and their contributions to their children's education through an asset-based lens (Delgado Gaitan, 2001; López, 2001; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Olmedo, 2003; Pacheco, 2012; Reyes & Moll, 2008; Valdés, 1996). Secondly, as there is a dearth of empirical

work within the field of family engagement focused specifically on how families engage in the K-12 language education of their children, it is my hope that this work will make a contribution to the field. These goals kept me motivated throughout the research⁷ and fuel my passion for this work in general.

Given the goals driving this study, I approached this research from a constructivist and critical epistemological stance (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Through a constructivist lens, I seek to understand and interpret the complexity of Latino parents' subjective perspectives and realities to construct knowledge with parents around family engagement practices that support students' language education. This lens supports my personal and intellectual goals. A critical epistemological lens supports my practical goal because I seek to privilege the voice and presence of Latino parents, a historically disempowered population within the U.S. school system, in an effort to change practice.

Methodology

This research uses a basic qualitative research approach (Merriam, 2009). According to Merriam, basic qualitative research allows researchers to examine “(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (2009, p. 23). This approach afforded me the opportunity to use semi-structured interviews to privilege Latino parent voice in order to understand their beliefs, perspectives, and experiences in regard to supporting their children's language education. Furthermore, Merriam (2009) also states that document analysis is a common method of data collection within this approach, thus this approach afforded me the opportunity to collect publicly available artifacts from federal, state, and district websites to include in my analysis.

⁷ See Appendix 1 for the schedule of research activities.

Brinkman and Kvale (2015) state that interviews attempt “to understand the world from the subjects’ points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanation” (p. 3). Moreover, Merriam (2009) states that interviews are necessary when we are seeking to understand what cannot be observed. In addition, interviews afford researchers the opportunity to construct knowledge with participants through the interaction during the interview (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). I used a combination of structured and semi-structured interviews in this research.⁸ A structured format of questioning was used to collect demographic data from all participants (see Table 1). I felt that this line of questioning was necessary because of the diversity that lies beneath the pan-ethnic label *Latino* (Pew Hispanic Center, 2012). As Hidalgo (1998) states, “Latinos...are not one but rather many nationalities, cultures, and social statuses...Their experiences in the United States have been both unique and complex” (p. 104). Thus, it became imperative to collect demographic data that could help shatter any misconceived notions of homogeneity within the sample of Latino parents. The questions in the semi-structured interview protocol served to guide the discussion. I followed the lead of the participants and selected follow-up questions based on what was shared.

Demographic Data Collected	
• Age • Sex • Marital status • Educational background • U.S.-born or Foreign-born • Years in the United States (if foreign-born) • Heritage (if U.S.-born) • Years living in Illinois	• Total number of children • Number of children in K-12 language education program • Grade level of children in program • Type of language education program children are enrolled in (in participants’ own words)

Table 1: Demographic data collected during interviews

In addition to the interviews, I collected publicly available data from federal, state, and district websites. I consider these artifacts to be secondary sources of data that helped me gain a

⁸ See Appendices 2 and 3 for the interview protocols in English and Spanish.

better understanding of the political context, as well as local expectations and/or messages around family engagement within language education. In short, the secondary sources of data served to further contextualize the parent interview data. Artifacts I collected include: (a) federal and state legislation; (b) federal and state resources or guidance related to policy; (c) district policies or programmatic information on language education; and (d) district information or resources related to family engagement within language education programs.

Methods

Research Site: The Land of Lincoln

Data was collected in Illinois because of the strong Latino presence in the state and the state's support for bilingual education and family engagement. This section discusses at length Illinois Latino demographics and policies relevant to this research.

Latinos roughly represent 16% of the population in Illinois and are currently the second largest racial and ethnic group in the state (Latino Policy Forum, 2011). At 79%, individuals of Mexican descent represent the largest Latino group in the state, followed by those of Puerto Rican descent at 9% (Latino Policy Forum, 2011). While Chicago has historically served as a gateway community for immigrants (Ross, 2015), it is important to note that 79% of the Latino growth in Illinois between 2000 and 2010 is from U.S.-born Latinos (Latino Policy Forum, 2011). In terms of mobility, over 60% of Latinos in Illinois live outside of Chicago (Latino Policy Forum, 2011). This is significant because it means that communities across the state are experiencing demographic shifts, and these changes are impacting social institutions, including Illinois public schools.

In Illinois, Latinos make up 25% of the K-12 student population (Latino Policy Forum, 2011) and 26% of children under the age of five (Vonderlack-Navarro, in press). From 2003-2013, the Latino student population in the state grew by 42% (Vonderlack-Navarro, in press).

Many of the state's Latino students are identified as ELs.⁹ Overall, roughly 10% of the state's total K-12 population are identified as ELs (Kena, Aud, Johnson, Wang, Zhang, Rathbun, Wilkinson-Flicker, & Kristapovich, 2014; Vonderlack-Navarro, in press), of which about 80% report Spanish as their home language (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). ELs in Illinois are heavily concentrated in PreK through third grade, and only 34% are in Chicago while 66% are in neighboring suburbs and other communities across the state (Vonderlack-Navarro, in press). The population of EL students in communities outside of Chicago grew by 61% from 2004-2012 (Vonderlack-Navarro, in press). Illinois joined the WIDA Consortium in 2005, therefore, ELs in grades K-12 in Illinois are assessed annually for accountability purposes with the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs English language proficiency assessment.

In terms of language education programs, Illinois state law mandates two program options for PreK-12 ELs—transitional bilingual education (TBE) or a locally determined transitional program of instruction (TPI) which provides content instruction in a language other than English to the extent necessary to ensure ELs can achieve success and transition into the regular school curriculum (105 ILCS 5/14C-3; Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE], 2014b). TPI can be implemented through programs such as ESL, Sheltered Instruction, Newcomer Programs, or Two-Way Immersion/Dual Language. School districts must establish TBE programs when there are 20 or more ELs of the same language group enrolled in grades PreK-12 in a given attendance center (105 ILCS 5/14C-3; ISBE, 2014b). Furthermore, Illinois' EL policies for PreK, which were adopted within the last few years, are among the most comprehensive in the country for EL PreK programs (Wixom, 2015).

⁹ Within the state of Illinois, the term *English learner (EL)* is used in state policy rather than English language learner (ELL) or emergent bilingual.

In 2014, Illinois was the third state to adopt a Seal of Biliteracy (ISBE, 2014a). At the time of this writing, a total of twenty-three states plus Washington, D.C., have adopted the Seal of Biliteracy and twelve states are considering adopting the Seal or in the early stages of the process (www.sealofbiliteracy.org). The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes high school seniors who have mastered proficiency in two or more languages, thus promoting bi- and multilingualism (ISBE, 2014a). Students who achieve this honor are recognized by having a seal placed on their academic transcript and diploma (ISBE, 2014a). School districts in Illinois now have the option to implement the Seal of Biliteracy. Emergent bilinguals in Illinois schools would be prime candidates for the seal, as they are acquiring language while learning academic content.

Lastly, Illinois promotes and supports family engagement at the state level in a variety of ways. In 2013, the draft of the Illinois Family Engagement Framework (ISBE, 2013) was made publicly available. The purpose of this document is to help districts and school communities examine their family engagement practices to ensure they are effectively engaging with families. The Framework was written to be inclusive of all Illinois families and includes a wealth of research and references to federal and state policy. Since its release, information on the Family Engagement Framework has been shared with educators and district leaders through various state conferences, including the Annual Illinois Statewide Bilingual Parent Summit. In addition, ISBE recently published a Fact Sheet on family engagement (ISBE, 2015) to help disseminate information on the framework to educators across the state and they also offer a variety of professional learning opportunities for in-service educators.¹⁰

Another way family engagement is supported by the state is through the Bilingual Parent Advisory Councils (BPACs) which, per state law, must be established in districts offering TBE

¹⁰ See <http://isbe.net/family-engagement/html/resources.htm> for information on professional learning.

programs (105 ILCS 5/14C-10). The purpose of the district-level BPAC is to ensure that parents of ELs have a say in the decisions impacting the implementation of the TBE program.

Membership in the BPAC can consist of parents, educators, and community leaders; however, a majority of the members must be parents of students enrolled in the TBE program (105 ILCS 5/14C-10). School districts are responsible, per state law, for providing any necessary training to BPAC members on information related to bilingual education, curriculum, instruction, assessment, policy, and/or parents' rights (105 ILCS 5/14C-10). To further support BPACs and families of ELs, the ISBE Division of English Language Learning embarked on a collaborative project with WIDA in 2014 to develop online resources for families that explain the WIDA English language standards and assessments for grades K-12. This was the first time that resources for families of ELs focused on language standards and assessments were offered statewide.

There is a rich Latino heritage and presence throughout the state of Illinois. Latinos are no longer concentrated within the Chicago city limits. Suburban and rural communities are now home for many Latino families. At the state level, Illinois supports bilingual education and family engagement. In addition, the state recently published a new resource for districts that addresses issues of equity in the education of ELs and further highlights the critical role of family engagement (ISBE, 2016b). Hence, Illinois is an ideal site for conducting research seeking to understand Latino family engagement practices focused on emergent bilinguals' language education. It may be the land of Lincoln, but in Illinois se habla español.

Participant Selection and Recruitment

Purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) was used for participant selection. Merriam (2009) states, "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be

learned” (p. 77). For this reason, to begin the sampling process I employed the strategy of snowball, or network, sampling (Merriam, 2009). This afforded me the opportunity to utilize the networks and contacts I have established in Illinois through my professional work with WIDA.¹¹ For instance, when I present to families of emergent bilinguals at state conferences or district events, or facilitate family engagement workshops, I use a contact form to collect information from parent participants. At the time of this writing, I have collected contact information for roughly 100 Latino parents of emergent bilinguals in Illinois.¹² However, I have established relationships with several of the parents I have met at presentations or workshops. Snowball sampling, therefore, allowed me to use my existing contacts and relationships to identify key participants that met the selection criteria¹³ outlined in Table 2. In addition, snowball sampling allows me to request referrals for potential participants.

Participant Selection Criteria	Rationale
Participants must be Latinos of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American, or South American descent.	A majority of Latinos in Illinois are of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent (Latino Policy Forum, 2011); however, in certain communities across the state it is likely to encounter Latinos of Cuban, Central American, or South American descent.
Participants must be the parent or primary caregiver of an emergent bilingual enrolled in grades K-12.	To honor what <i>familia</i> means to Latinos (Rodríguez-Brown, 2010; Yosso, 2005), I recognize that nuclear and extended family members, close family friends, <i>compadres</i> or <i>padrinos</i> (godparents) may be the primary caregivers of a child and could therefore participate in the study.
Participants must have some level of awareness that their children is/are enrolled in an English and/or Spanish language education program.	The broad purpose of the study is to understand how Latino parents engage in their children’s language education, therefore it is important that participants have some level of awareness that their child is enrolled in a program where he/she is developing English and/or Spanish.

Table 2: Participant Selection Criteria

¹¹ See the Researcher Positionality section for more information about this.

¹² Appendix 4 provides a copy of the contact form I created and use for my family-focused work at WIDA.

¹³ It is important to note, that in regard to participant selection, there were no participation restrictions based on gender, race, language, socioeconomic status, or citizenship status.

To help me identify a starting point with my list of contacts, I cross referenced the districts in my contact list with the list of districts published by ISBE in the biliteracy seal press release (ISBE, 2014a). This press release lists the twenty-five districts in the state with the highest number of emergent bilinguals broken down by the percent of students that are Spanish-speaking versus non-Spanish speaking (see Appendix 5). Since my research focuses on Latino emergent bilinguals, students who are working toward bilingualism and biliteracy, I found the list of districts to be helpful since these are districts with English/Spanish bilingual programs, due to the size of their Spanish-speaking EL populations. However, to further narrow down the list of possibilities and identify a starting point for the sampling process, I also drew from my insider knowledge of the programs offered at the districts listed in Appendix 5 and targeted districts that offered a variety of bilingual language education program models. I gained this insider knowledge through my experiences as a former Illinois educator, a current Illinois resident, and through my professional work at WIDA with districts and educators in Illinois. Five of the eleven participants have children enrolled in the districts that appear on the list.

Sampling was not limited, however, to these twenty-five districts. Since I employed snowball sampling, participant referrals ultimately led me to parents with children enrolled in districts not on the list but still within the metropolitan Chicagoland area. Moreover, I also reached out to parents I have relationships with that have children enrolled in districts that have smaller populations of emergent bilinguals, but that still offer bilingual programs. Six of the participants have children enrolled in such districts. Sampling was ongoing until a point of saturation was reached (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Once identified, participants were formally recruited through the use of an oral consent script in English or in Spanish (see Appendix 6 and 7). My reasons for the use of an oral consent

script are twofold. First, I could not guarantee that a formal written consent form would be meaningful to participants even if it was translated to Spanish. This is due to the fact that I had no way of assessing or knowing participants' literacy levels in English and/or Spanish. In addition, from my previous experience as a bilingual educator, I know that some parents struggle making sense of the translated information that we would send home from the school. A translation does not guarantee comprehension. Hence, an oral consent script afforded me the opportunity to engage in a discussion with participants, in English or Spanish, which helped ensure that the information discussed about the research and their role as a participant was comprehensible to them. Secondly, an oral consent script helped ensure that participant identities remained secure and confidential. This research presented minimal risk to participants and the use of a written consent form would have resulted in a document that could tie participants to the research. Thus, employing an oral consent process helped to ensure participants understood the purpose of the research and their role in the research process, and it helped to protect participants' identities.

The Participants: Latino Parents of Emergent Bilinguals in Illinois

Eleven Latino parents participated in this research. As a group, the participants reflect the rich diversity present within Latino communities. Their ages range from 35 to 49. In regard to marital status, eight are married, one is divorced, one is single, and one is separated. Three of the women are married to non-Latino men who speak little to no Spanish. The experiences reported by these three women were very distinct from the other participants who are married to Spanish-speaking Latinos. For example, the three mothers often spoke about issues of identity since their children are biracial, bilingual, and bicultural. In addition, when it came to the use of Spanish at

home, these three mothers reported that they were the primary source of support for their children since their spouses were not proficient in Spanish.

Leonardo¹⁴ is the only father in the sample. He was recruited through a referral from another participant. In my recruitment efforts, when I would speak to Latino fathers about the research, I found it interesting how often they would say something like, “Oh, here. Talk to my wife.” Or they would ask their wife to schedule an interview with me. Over and over, Latino fathers would say to me that their wife would be a better participant than them. I found this to be an interesting pattern, but I never probed into the reasons why they felt that way; I simply respected their response. It is beyond the scope of this work to explore the gender dynamics in my recruitment process and sample, but it is interesting to note. Thus, my participant sample consists of ten Latina mothers and one father.

Only three of the participants were born in the United States, and the others were born in Mexico (N = 6), Guatemala (N=1), and Colombia (N=1). Of those that are foreign-born, the number of years living in the United States range from 11 to 33. The three U.S.-born participants are all of Mexican descent with one of them being of Mexican-Irish descent. For the most part, Illinois has been the home state for all eleven participants here in the United States. Table 3 summarizes this information.

¹⁴ Pseudonyms are used throughout this work to protect the identities of participants and their children, including their districts and school communities.

Participant	Country of Birth	Years in US (Foreign-born)	Years in IL
Angelica	Mexico	18	18
Claudia	Guatemala	33	33
Diana	Mexico	11	11
Elena	U.S.	NA	42
Isabel	Mexico	13	13
Leonardo	Colombia	16	16
Lila	U.S.	NA	41
Maria A	Mexico	13	13
Maria B	Mexico	14	14
Maria C	U.S.	NA	26
Olivia	Mexico	22	22

Table 3: Participants' country of origin and years in U.S.

In terms of their educational background, this varied greatly as well. Five of the participants, which were all born in Mexico, completed some level of education in Mexico before coming to this country. The remaining six participants, U.S.-born and foreign-born, have advanced degrees which they completed in the United States. Another point to highlight is that six of the participants are certified educators in Illinois within the field of bilingual/ESL education. These six participants have experience working in K-12 TBE and dual language programs in various capacities. Table 4 presents a summary of this information.

Participant	Educational Background	TBE/Dual Educator
Angelica	College (Mexico)	
Claudia	Masters	X
Diana	Masters	X
Elena	Masters	X
Isabel	High School (Mexico)	
Leonardo	Masters	X
Lila	Bachelors	X
Maria A	3rd grade (Mexico)	
Maria B	High School (Mexico)	
Maria C	Masters	X
Olivia	College (Mexico)	

Table 4: Participants' educational background

As a group, the participants represent one urban school district and five different suburban school districts. All but two of the participants live in suburban communities. At the time the interviews were conducted, six of the participants reported that they had only one child who was enrolled in a K-12 language education program. The remaining five participants reported that they had 2 or 3 children in a program. The children's programs include TBE, dual language, and ESL. Only one participant reported that her child had an individualized education plan (IEP). The children's grade levels, at the time of the interviews, ranged from 1st grade through 12th grade. Table 5 presents a summary of this, and Table 6 presents additional demographic information on the districts in terms of their enrollment and Hispanic population.

Participant	# of Children	# of Children in K-12 Program	Grades	Suburban	Urban	TBE	Dual	ESL	IEP
Angelica	3	1	2 nd	X		X			
Claudia	3	2	1 st , 5 th	X			X		
Diana	2	1	7 th , 12 th	X			X		
Elena	3	2	1 st		X		X		
Isabel	2	1	3 rd , 7 th	X		X			
Leonardo	3	3	1 st , 3 rd , 5 th	X			X		
Lila	5	3	2 nd , 5 th		X		X		
Maria A	4	2	1 st , 3 rd	X				X	
Maria B	4	1	4 th	X		X			
Maria C	2	1	1 st	X			X		
Olivia	4	1	2 nd	X				X	X

Table 5: Demographic information on the children and their programs

		State Total Enrollment 2014-2015	State % Hispanic 2014-2015	State % English Learners 2014-2015
		2,054,556	25%	10%
Participant	District	District Total Enrollment 2014-2015	% Hispanic 2014-2015	% English Learners 2014-2015
Angelica	District B	2,778	79%	35%
Claudia	District A	7,655	19%	12%
Diana	District C	14,268	25%	22%
Elena	District E	397,833	46%	18%
Isabel	District B	2,778	79%	35%
Leonardo	District F	20,862	36%	14%
Lila	District E	397,833	46%	18%
Maria A	District D	16,917	10%	5%
Maria B	District B	2,778	79%	35%
Maria C	District F	20,862	36%	14%
Olivia	District B	2,778	79%	35%

Table 6: District enrollment data

Lastly, in regard to parents' own use of Spanish or their bilingualism, this also varied greatly. Parents spoke about their own use of Spanish in one of three ways which I describe using phrases from the interview data. First, there is the group that I describe as *speak to me en mi idioma*. These parents are bilingual but they prefer to use Spanish. For three of the parents in this group, Spanish is their native language and they learned English as adults. Maria C, the fourth parent in this group (see Table 7), grew up speaking Spanish and English, but Spanish was used in her home as a child. As a parent, she is the primary source of Spanish at home for her daughters because her husband speaks very little Spanish. The next group I describe as *es un esfuerzo*. The parents in this group are bilingual but find it challenging at times, due to a variety of reasons, to use Spanish at home with their children or to "stay in Spanish mode" as one parent put it. Of the parents in this group, three of them are U.S.-born and grew up with both languages. Leonardo is the only parent in this group that is foreign-born and learned English as an adult.

However, Leonardo feels that his children are more inclined to use English than Spanish, and despite his efforts to have them speak Spanish at home, it can be challenging at times. The third group I describe as *no hablamos inglés*. This group of parents are monolingual Spanish-speakers or parents who know a little English but for a variety of reasons simply prefer to speak in Spanish. Despite the differences in how parents spoke about their own use of Spanish or their bilingualism, all of the parents consider themselves to be Spanish-speakers. Furthermore, in regard to Spanish, all of the participants value Spanish and want their children to maintain the language and be bilingual.

Speak to me en mi idioma	Es un esfuerzo	No hablamos inglés
Diana	Claudia	Angelica
Olivia	Elena	Isabel
Maria A	Leonardo	Maria B
Maria C	Lila	

Table 7: Participant descriptions of their use of Spanish

Data Collection

Data for this research consisted primarily of parent interview data and the collection of publicly available artifacts from federal, state, and district websites. Other sources of data include my researcher notes and reflections which I took throughout the study. Table 8 below summarizes the data collected for this research.

Data Collected	Description
Interview audio recordings	A digital recorder was used to audio record each semi-structured interview. <i>Total hours of interview data: 14.80</i>
Transcripts	Interviews were transcribed using Transana and saved as Word files. <i>Total # of transcript pages: 224</i>
Researcher notes & reflections	Personal notes taken during the interviews; post-interview reflections on the process and information captured
Publicly available data from federal, state, and district websites	Policy and/or programmatic information on language education and/or family engagement was collected to help contextualize parent interview data. <i>Total number of artifacts collected: 86</i>

Table 8: Sources of data collected

Interview data was collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted from November 2015 through March 2016¹⁵ and ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. I worked with the participants to identify a location that was convenient for them and conducive for an interview (e.g., participants' home, quiet coffee shop). In regard to the language used during the interviews, it varied from English, Spanish, to a combination of both languages. As a bilingual researcher, I followed the lead of the participants and used the language they were most comfortable with. Only three interviews were conducted in English with minimal Spanish used (Claudia, Diana, and Elena). Five interviews were conducted entirely in Spanish (Angelica, Isabel, Maria A, Maria B, Olivia). The remaining three interviews started in English, but ended bilingually because participants opted to answer certain questions in Spanish or use Spanish to help express the meaning of their experiences and beliefs (Maria C, Leonardo, Lila).

Interviews were audio recorded with a digital recorder and later transcribed in the language of the interview using Transana, a transcription program developed at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Brinkmann & Kvale (2015) highly recommend having a plan in place to begin analyzing interview data to avoid feeling overwhelmed with a large number of transcripts to analyze. Therefore, once I started to schedule interviews, I set aside time for the transcribing process. From my previous experience with Transana, I knew it took me about five hours to transcribe one hour of English audio. As an English-dominant bilingual, I was cognizant of the fact that transcribing Spanish interviews would take much longer than those in English. I was right. In total, it took me 86.5 hours to transcribe all of the interview data.

¹⁵ See Appendix 1 for the schedule of research activities.

Once transcription was complete, the files were exported from Transana as Word documents for editing. I read through the transcripts in Word and changed all names of people, schools, and communities to pseudonyms in order to protect participants' identities. To edit the Transcripts with Spanish, I set the language feature in Word to "Spanish (Mexico)" and then proceeded to edit any errors in spelling, grammar (e.g., verb tenses), and/or conventions (e.g., accent marks). I intentionally chose this language setting in Word because a majority of the participants who used Spanish in their interviews are of Mexican descent. I must also mention that during the transcription of Spanish interviews and the editing of Spanish transcripts, I had to use resources such as Spanish dictionaries or online translators to help me with the spelling of certain words or phrases.

In addition, I also took handwritten notes during the interviews to further ensure I was capturing what was shared by participants. My notes were mainly in English, but I would occasionally use Spanish to capture significant words or phrases shared by participants in Spanish. In addition, immediately following the interview I recorded a personal reflection and later transcribed those as well. My personal reflections further helped me process the interview and interpret what was shared in relation to the questions guiding my research. My reflections also served to help me improve my interviewing skills because I often commented on how I felt as an interviewer and my thoughts on the mechanics of interviewing. Interviewing is a craft (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015), and I believe my skills as an interviewer improved by the last interview due to taking the time to reflect on the process. All data collected during the interviews, including audio files, transcripts, notes, and reflections, were securely stored.

I also collected artifacts from federal, state, and district websites to help contextualize the interview data.¹⁶ At the federal level, I collected legislation in place at the time this research was conducted. At the state level, I collected legislation, demographic data, district report cards, and any additional artifacts relevant to family engagement within language education programs. Similarly, from the six different school districts represented, I collected any artifacts relevant to family engagement within language education programs. I only collected artifacts at the school level for one school, and this was mainly due to the fact that it is the only school in the district that offers dual language; therefore, all of the information about the program was on the school site versus the district site. Because each district site is organized differently, I began each search by looking for the department of language education home page or language education program descriptions. I downloaded relevant web pages and downloadable resources (e.g., pdf documents) for my analysis.

In completing my search of the district websites, I realized that I approached the task as an English-proficient bilingual Latina that possesses the knowledge and skills in website navigation and a background in education that enables me to comprehend educator jargon. Of my eleven participants, only six of them could, in my opinion, approach searching their district website as I did. These six participants also happen to be bilingual educators. Thus, I realized that I had to put myself in the shoes of the remaining five participants who do not describe themselves as proficient in English, do not work in the field of language education, and possibly do not possess the knowledge and skills to navigate a website. If I was a monolingual Spanish-speaking parent of an emergent bilingual, or a Spanish-speaking parent with little to no English literacy skills, what would my experience searching a district website be like? Would I be able

¹⁶ Appendix 8 lists all of the artifacts collected as well as which artifacts were available in Spanish.

to navigate my child's district site and find parent-friendly information in Spanish? Such questions guided my reflection on the data collection process of district website artifacts.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began during data collection. For starters, the participant demographic data collected during the interviews was compiled in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet following each interview. This allowed me to review the data as needed and to create tables to represent participant profiles. In addition, as previously mentioned, at the conclusion of each interview, I recorded an oral reflection which was later transcribed. In my reflections, I commented on the mechanics of the interview, but I also commented on what struck me from what was shared, what questions were raised, and any connections I could make to other participants or themes in the literature. Thus, data analysis was initiated with my reflections.

As I transcribed the interviews, I also analyzed the data. Transcription is considered to be an analytic process (Bird, 2005), and I used a variety of strategies to make note of information I found to be relevant to my research questions. For instance, I used timestamps and descriptive headers in Transana. In addition, I used descriptive coding (Gibbs, 2007) to manually note themes found during transcription. Once transcription was complete, I attempted to answer my research questions based on the themes identified during transcription. This analytic step was suggested by one of my committee members, and it proved to be most helpful. To complete this step I took my manually written notes on the themes identified, sorted them, and drafted an initial response to my research questions.

An inductive approach was used to analyze interview data (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015) in order to identify forms of parent voice and parent present relevant to my research questions along with other dominant themes. Using NVivo, I conducted three separate rounds of coding on the interview data. In the first and second round of coding, I used a priori codes based on the

theoretical framework guiding this study. Descriptive coding (Gibbs, 2007) and open coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 2009) were used throughout the process to generate new codes and identify emerging themes. I opted for descriptive coding because of the fact that I was coding sources of data in English or Spanish, and in a few cases, both languages. I used Spanish to create some of my codes and categories. I feel this is important because it presents a more authentic representation of participants' voices and the data.

In the first round of coding, two a priori codes were used, "Parent Voice" and "Parent Presence." In the second round of coding, I used the five arenas identified under Parent Voice by McKenna and Millen (2013): teacher, self, program, family, and child. However, I identified a sixth arena for Parent Voice through the analytic process which I ultimately coded as "Language Varieties and Practices." In addition, I used two a priori codes, "Home" and "Program," for Parent Presence. McKenna and Millen (2013) identify "Home" and "School" as the arenas for Parent Presence; however, due to the focus of this research, I opted to use the word "Program" to refer to the language education program. The figures below represent the adapted models for Parent Voice and Parent Presence based on my data.

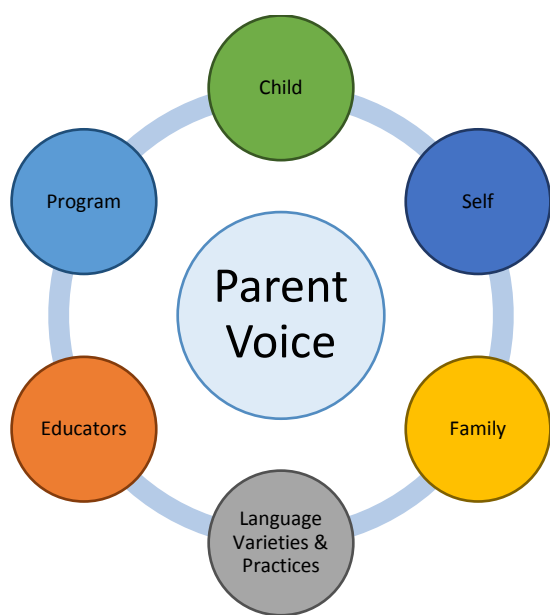


Figure 2: Adapted McKenna & Millen (2013) Parent Voice Model

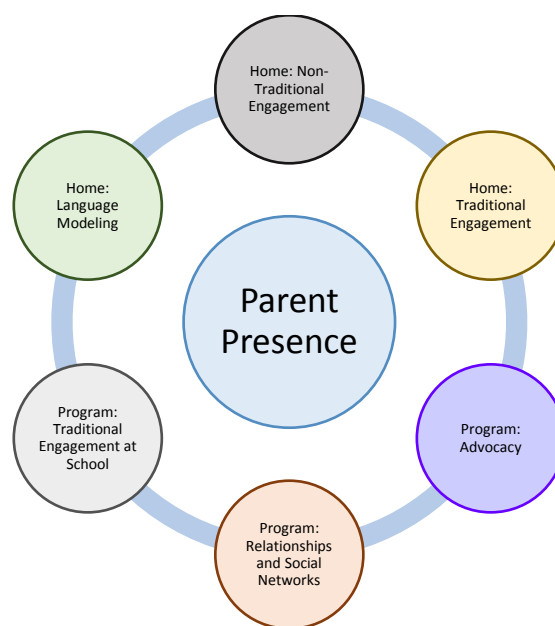


Figure 3: Adapted McKenna & Millen (2013) Parent Presence Model

Once the arenas for Parent Voice and Parent Presence were established, with each subsequent round of coding (i.e., 2nd and 3rd rounds), I used axial-coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998), or analytical coding (Merriam, 2009), to further refine, combine, and reorganize the codes I generated during the process. After three rounds of coding, I felt the analytical process on the interview data was complete. I generated a Node report in NVivo to visually depict all of my codes and sub-codes. The process used to analyze the interview data resulted in two primary themes coded as “Parents’ Linguistic Funds of Knowledge” and “Moviendo cielo y tierra.”¹⁷ These themes are discussed at length in the subsequent data chapters.

Once the interview coding was complete, I then began coding the website artifacts I collected. NVivo was also used for this process. I analyzed each artifact and again used descriptive coding (Gibbs, 2007) and open coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 2009). During my analysis of pieces of legislation, I specifically searched for the sections of text that

¹⁷ Moving heaven and earth.

discussed *parental involvement* or *parent involvement*, the terms most often used in both federal and Illinois policy. More recent publications by the Illinois State Board of Education use the term “family engagement” so that was used to search those documents. I also narrowed my search by looking for text that focused on “Limited English proficient students” or “English learners.” This helped me to locate policy specifically related to “parent involvement” within language education programs.

Artifacts were coded to reflect ways families were referenced, how family engagement was discussed, what information was available in Spanish, and examples of educator jargon within resources intended for parent audiences. I paid attention to the language used in such artifacts because meaningful communication with parents is a key expectation within policy (see Chapter 4). Hence, in my analysis of the artifacts collected from district websites that were intended for a parent audience, I paid close attention to the accessibility of the language used, and whether or not translations were available. If translations were available, I read through them to also check the accessibility of the language used in Spanish. For instance, some educational terms or concepts, such as *English language proficiency*, are not easily translated. Once I completed coding the website artifacts, I reviewed my findings and compared them to my interview data findings.

Furthermore, I took several steps throughout the NVivo coding and analysis process to capture my reflections, reactions, and initial findings. For instance, during the first round of coding, I created two distinct codes, *Parking Lot* and *Quotes*, which were subsequently used in all three rounds of NVivo coding. Parking Lot was used to code data that I was initially unsure about. For instance, an excerpt from the interview could have three codes associated to it, plus Parking Lot. When I completed each round of coding, I would review the data coded under

Parking Lot and make any necessary changes to the codes associated with the data. Quotes was used to capture participant quotes that I considered to be highly significant or very moving. I used this code to ensure that I would capture these quotes in my final report. Furthermore, I created a memo in NVivo for each source of data coded where I documented my reflections on the coding process and initial insights. In addition, I added annotations as necessary to each source of data in NVivo to capture comments or questions during the coding process. I revisited the annotations periodically during the three rounds of coding and deleted them or revised them as appropriate. Finally, at the end of each round of coding in Nvivo, I updated my methods and analysis memo, a document I created where I documented my procedures and findings. The methods and analysis memo essentially captures the evolution of my codes and findings.

Validity

Several steps were taken to ensure the validity of this research and the findings. First and foremost, I utilized researcher identity memos (Maxwell, 2013) as a tool for ongoing reflection throughout the research study to monitor my subjectivity. Since my subjectivity is so intimately tied to the topic of this research, it was critical for me to monitor and manage my “insider” status as a Latina, my own beliefs about family engagement, and my biases and assumptions (Merriam, 2009). Identity memos served to help me reflect on ways in which my subjectivity could impact this research. These memos were written throughout the research process, including memos created in NVivo during coding, and were revisited on an ongoing basis to keep me grounded and focused on the goals and questions driving this research.

Second, since I considered myself a novice at interviewing at the start of this project, I captured brief reflections on the *interview process* following each interview. Interviewing is a craft which is developed over time through practice (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). As the saying goes, practice makes perfect and it took lots of practice to ensure that I was asking good

questions during an interview (Merriam, 2009). According to Brinkman & Kvale (2015), one does not learn how to interview by reading about it; one learns by doing it. Thus, in my reflections I self-assessed my interviewing skills and made notes of any thoughts, concerns, or reactions I had to the actual interview process. I sought guidance from my advisor and others (e.g., committee members) on an ongoing basis to ensure I was developing the proper knowledge and skills necessary to conduct qualitative interviews.

Third, member checking (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2009) was used to ensure that my interview data and interpretations accurately reflect what participants shared with me. According to Maxwell (2013), member checks are an effective way of ruling out misinterpretations, but they also help to identify any biases or assumptions on the researcher's part. I employed member checks during data collection by reaching out to ten of the eleven¹⁸ participants and asking them to review their transcript and provide me any feedback or make any necessary changes. All ten participants responded within a week of me contacting them. While some indicated they had no changes to make, others corrected typos (e.g., missing accent marks, spelling) and a few added additional information to provide more detail or for clarification. Additionally, some participants expressed gratitude in their responses for including them in the project and allowing their stories to be documented. I documented all of their responses in a table and ensured that the final transcripts used for NVivo coding reflected the revisions of the participants. In addition, during the data analysis phase, I encountered a few of my participants at work-related events and had the opportunity to discuss my progress and preliminary findings.

Finally, peer review was used to ensure my findings are plausible based on the data collected (Merriam, 2009). I sought input from my advisor and committee members, but also

¹⁸ I did not have an email address for the 11th participant, and the phone number I had for her was no longer valid.

from researchers within my personal and professional networks. In addition to seeking peer feedback on my analysis, I also sought feedback on the actual translations of interview data and the use of Spanish with my coding schemes. This is important because as an English-dominant bilingual, I wanted to ensure that my representations of data in Spanish are authentic to the Spanish language. Fortunately, I have relationships with, and access to, bilingual scholars who could provide feedback on these matters.

Ethical Considerations

Although this research posed minimal risk to participants, it did present ethical issues that had to be taken into account and addressed. The primary ethical issue relates to my sample. I targeted Latino parents, a population that has been historically marginalized and disempowered within the U.S. school system (Delgado Gaitan, 2001; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; MALDEF & NEA, 2010; Olivos, 2006; Valdés, 1996; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). They are marginalized and disempowered for a variety of reasons including their race, ethnicity, language, class, and citizenship or immigration status (Baquedano-López et al., 2013; Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; MALDEF & NEA, 2010; Valdés, 1996). In addition, emergent bilinguals, specifically those who are ELs, are protected by federal civil rights laws to ensure these students have equitable access to grade-level content (U.S. Departments of Education & Justice, 2015). Hence, I approached my work with Latino parents with a sociopolitical consciousness (Grant, 2009) of how they are positioned within the school system, their experiences, and the barriers they encounter when engaging with schools.

Another ethical issue relates to the asymmetrical power relationship between myself and the participants. For instance, despite the fact that I may have pre-existing relationships with some participants, it does not mean that the interview process can be considered a casual conversation between friends, or equals, because the “research interview is...a specific

professional conversation, which typically involves a clear power asymmetry between the researcher and the subject” (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015, p. 37). Therefore, even though I am a bilingual Latina, thus afforded insider status and the privileges that come with this, I was still in control of the interview and the research process and had to remain cognizant of this fact.

As previously stated, this research posed minimal risk to participants but that does not absolve me of the ethical responsibility to protect participants. For instance, oral recruitment scripts were used to avoid collecting documentation which could potentially reveal participants’ identities. This research did not involve any type of deception, so through the oral recruitment process, participants were informed of the purpose of the research, their role in the process, and had opportunities to ask questions. One of the potential risks to participants was that they may have felt uncomfortable or embarrassed during the interview due to the structure of the one-on-one interview and the themes of the questions. To minimize such feelings, participants were reminded that they have the right to not answer any question, to end the interview at any time, and that they were not required to reveal identifiable information during the interview. If such information was revealed, it was not included within the transcription. However, despite these efforts, it did not prevent some participants from feeling emotional during the interviews. Three participants cried during the interviews because of the experiences they were sharing. For example, Lila cried as she recounted her own experiences of language loss and why it was so important for her that her children never lose their Spanish. I did my best to comfort participants during these moments, and asked them if they wished to stop, but the three women indicated they wanted to continue with the interview.

Furthermore, steps were taken to protect participants’ identities and ensure confidentiality. For example, pseudonyms were used for names of people, schools, districts, and

communities. All data collected for this study were securely stored on a password-protected storage device. Any hardcopies of data, including researcher reflections and identity memos, were digitally scanned and then stored electronically. The hardcopies were then destroyed. In summary, I was conscious of the ethical issues related to this research and endeavored to ensure this research was conducted with a high level of professional integrity.

Researcher Positionality: *This work is personal*

I embarked on this research study conscious of the fact that this work is deeply informed by my own subjectivity. Hidalgo (1998) states that “the Latino experience in the United States has consisted of living between the hyphens” (p. 104). As a first-generation Mexican-American, I live within the hyphens of my bicultural and bilingual identity. What keeps me grounded is my family and the strong ties I have to my raíces¹⁹. I am a proud Latina and I aspire to doing research within Latino communities, but more importantly for Latino communities.

My interest in family engagement stemmed from my exposure to literature on Latino education. I could not help but notice how often families and the importance of familia appeared as a common theme throughout the literature. For instance, as Pat Mora (1993) so beautifully said about the importance of familia to Latinos, “Family ties are so strong that not even death can sever them” (p. 77). This resonated with me because of the strong ties I have to my family, and because of my prior experience as a teacher working with Latino students and families.

For over a decade, I have worked in the field of K-12 language education in a variety of capacities. I am a former junior high teacher with experience teaching in a TBE program and a TWI dual language program. An overwhelming majority of my students were of Mexican descent. I taught in a suburban K-8 district, who at the time served over two thousand emergent

¹⁹ Roots

bilinguals, of which a majority were Latinos. I left the classroom to work out of the bilingual department at the district office. I was responsible for analyzing students' language proficiency data, providing professional development to staff, and identifying incoming emergent bilinguals. In my years at the school district, I had plenty of opportunities to engage with families of emergent bilinguals. I was often the primary point of contact they had with the school or district. I know from personal experience the questions families have about language development and how confusing language education can be for them. I also know how often I failed to more thoroughly inform parents about their rights and the services their children were entitled to. I am not proud of those moments, but I cannot erase them or deny them. They happened, and all I can do now is learn from them and *do something about it*.

Which leads me to the present. I work for WIDA (www.wida.us), an organization which specializes in the development of language standards and assessments for emergent bilinguals in early childhood through 12th grade. I have contributed to the development of products and resources intended for educators and families, and I have facilitated professional development workshops focused on WIDA standards and assessments for emergent bilinguals in over twelve of the thirty-nine member states that belong to the WIDA Consortium. Through my work at WIDA I have had the opportunity to collaborate with scholars in the fields of bilingual education and English language acquisition, administrators from various state and local education agencies, classroom teachers, and families. For example, in 2014, I led a collaborative project between WIDA and the Illinois State Board of Education to develop online resources for families of emergent bilinguals in Illinois. Through this project, I was able to build relationships with families from across the state. This practical experience with families of emergent bilinguals was

invaluable. My experiences at WIDA have allowed me to gain a national and multi-level perspective on the education of emergent bilinguals which can benefit my work as a scholar.

Also, I approach this work knowing that I have to “embrace my researcher vulnerability” (Hernandez, 2013) due to my Spanish. I am bilingual, but I believe being bilingual means I have dynamic languaging practices (García, 2009) which may not be considered “standard” or “correct” Spanish but are instead valid forms of U.S. Spanish (Anzaldúa, 1987; García, 2014). The Spanish I have was developed at home and through my family. Spanish was my first language, but English was always present in my home as well. I acquired English when I began Kindergarten and proceeded to then lose my Spanish. For over thirty years I have been struggling to reclaim my Spanish. I have been put down in the past by those who consider themselves “fully proficient” speakers of “standard” Spanish—or what I prefer to call “language purists.” Often these experiences were humiliating because of the way my Spanish was publicly “corrected” and judged. As Gloria Anzaldúa so powerfully said, “So, if you really want to hurt me, talk badly about my language” (p. 81). Therefore, I must confess that I felt a hint of trepidation over the fact that I would be conducting interviews in Spanish and transcribing them as well. But as the saying goes, *¡sí se puede!*

In summary, this work is personal. This research was conducted by a proud Latina who recognizes the importance of familia and who has over ten years of experience in the field of language education. I am fully aware of who I am, my personal biases and assumptions, and what I bring to this study. My subjectivity cannot be silenced or ignored. It can, however, be *tamed* (Peshkin, 1988) so that it continues to fuel my passion for this work and drive me, but not cloud my vision and interpretations. I monitored my subjectivity throughout the research process to ensure that I did not allow myself to get in the way of this work.

Chapter 4: The Silencing of Latino Parent Voice

Latino parents of emergent bilinguals have beliefs, dreams, concerns, needs, and wants in regard to their children's language education—all of which contribute to Latino parent voice. However, the analysis of parent interview data and artifacts from federal, state, and district websites reveals that there is little to no space for the voice of Latino parents to emerge within institutionalized family engagement discourse. Despite all of the rhetoric around family engagement, when it comes to the language education of K-12 Latino emergent bilinguals, the message is clear: family engagement practices should focus on students' attainment of *English* and their *academic* achievement. Such messages fail to address the experiences of K-12 Latino emergent bilinguals as they learn and develop the Spanish language and work toward developing bilingualism and biliteracy. Furthermore, as the parent interview data show, such messages fail to address Latino parent voice in regard to Spanish and their children's use of Spanish. Thus, a key finding of this study, and the focus of this chapter, is that the voice of Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals is silenced within the institutionalized family engagement discourse that has the power to influence school-based family engagement practices.

I begin this chapter by defining key terms. I then create a space for parent voice to emerge by presenting examples of Latino parent voice that highlight parents' beliefs, dreams, fears, and concerns in regard to their children's use of Spanish and their children's language education. Next, I present a review of policy, based on the analysis of artifacts collected, and discuss the institutionalized family engagement discourse within the context of Illinois. I then present parent needs and wants to illustrate that a divergence exists between parents' perspectives and experiences with school-based family engagement practices and the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education in Illinois. I conclude with a summary of the chapter.

Definitions of Key Terms

In over ten years of experience in the field of K-12 language education, I have learned that as educators we talk about students' families in a variety of ways, and that these ways of talking about families are often driven by policy. For example, my experience has taught me that when it comes to families of emergent bilinguals, the conversations about families typically revolve around issues of compliance. For instance, I have participated in and been privy to conversations where families are discussed in terms of parental notification of EL placement, obtaining signed consent forms from parents, having to notify parents of their children's English language proficiency assessment scores, and/or the need or desire for parents to "help their children learn English". These ways of talking about parents of emergent bilinguals are driven by policy mandates at the federal, state, and/or local level. Thus, I embarked on this study knowing that within school settings there exist ways of talking about families that are rooted within policy. I refer to this as *institutionalized family engagement discourse*.

I draw from the work of several scholars (Hernandez, 2013; Kainz & Aikens, 2007; Nakagawa, 2000; Pérez Carreón, Drake, & Calabrese Barton, 2005; Simpson Baird, 2015) to define *institutionalized family engagement discourse* as oral and/or written language that influences beliefs about families and home-school relations, and informs decisions made by school officials that target families. Such discourse often stems from, or is shaped by, policy at the federal, state, district, and/or school level. Furthermore, families are often the subjects or objects, rather than the authors or co-authors of such discourse. In short, institutionalized family engagement discourse are ways of talking about families that define expectations for home-school relations and inform local family engagement practices.

Lastly, I adapt the definition for parent voice presented by McKenna & Millen (2013) to define Latino *parent voice* as:

Parent voice is the right and opportunity for Latino parents and caregivers of emergent bilinguals to express their thinking, beliefs, and understandings about language learning and language use, including how their children and family use language at home, how language is used within their community and/or society, and language learning experiences in and out of school. Ideally, these understandings and beliefs have weight within language education programs and ultimately have a positive influence on children's language education. Parent voice may consist of parents' desires, dreams, goals, and hopes for their children's bi- or multilingualism, concern over the language used for instruction and assessment within language education programs, and/or fear that their children will lose the home language. Parent voice may also come in the form of frustration, fear, or anger over isolation, exclusion, discrimination, or disrespect within the language education program and related school-based experiences.

Parent voice, as I define it, is specific to the language education of emergent bilinguals. While I believe that parent voice is critical within the educational process in general, I felt it necessary to narrow the scope of the definition in order to highlight the language learning emergent bilinguals engage in at school. In short, parent voice is used within this chapter to refer to what parents have to say about their children's language use and language education.

Latino Parent Voice

Primero está la familia: Communication in Spanish Helps to Maintain Family Ties

Yo siento que es una falta de educación que alguien venga a su casa de uno y que ellos estén hablando en inglés. Yo digo que es una falta de educación. Por ejemplo, cuando ellos están hablando inglés, mis papás entienden que son niños, pero yo les digo "Hijos, están sus abuelos. Hablen en español por favor." – Maria B

I feel it is a lack of respect for them to be speaking in English when we have visitors. I say it's a lack of respect. For example, when they're speaking English, my parents understand that they're kids, but I tell them, "Boys, your grandparents are here. Please speak in Spanish." – Maria B

Eight of the eleven parents reported that they believe it is important for their children to be able to communicate with family in Spanish. To these parents, Spanish is an essential tool for maintaining family ties. For instance, in the quote above,²⁰ Maria B states that she believes it is "una falta de educación," or a lack of respect, for her children to speak English in the presence of

²⁰ Side-by-side translations of parent quotes entirely in Spanish are provided throughout the chapter. English translations appear in italics. Bilingual quotes include translations embedded within that appear in brackets.

family that only speaks Spanish. When family is present, she wants her children to speak in Spanish. Similarly, other parents also mentioned the need for children to speak Spanish in the presence of family members that do not speak English. Isabel, for example, wishes she could take her children to visit her family more often because she believes it would give her children more opportunities to engage in conversations in Spanish, since her family does not speak English. Diana reported that her daughters call their grandmother in Mexico every month, and as a family they visit Mexico every other year. Although Diana says her daughters now prefer English, she is proud of the fact that they are able to communicate with family in Spanish without a problem. Maria A stated that her daughters must maintain their Spanish so they can communicate with their grandmother in Mexico and their aunts that live in the U.S. but do not speak English. Leonardo reported that his children need to speak Spanish with their aunts and uncles, but that all of their cousins now speak English. To further illustrate parents' beliefs that children must speak Spanish to maintain family ties, below I present excerpts from Olivia, Angelica, and Lila's interviews.

Olivia: Tienen que saber cómo comunicarse con la familia

Excerpt #1: Cuando vienen mis papás se quedan en mi casa hasta cuatro o cinco meses y ellos no hablan inglés. Entonces, [mis hijos] tienen que practicar su español, ósea hablan español. Mis hermanos no hablan inglés. Ninguno. Todos tienen que hablar español y si se comunican muy bien con ellos.

Excerpt #1: When my parents come to visit, they stay in my house for four or five months and they do not speak English. So, my sons have to practice their Spanish. They speak Spanish. My brothers do not speak English. None of them do. Everyone has to speak Spanish and they can communicate very well with them.

Excerpt #2: Porque es muy importante...Ósea, tengo mis papás, tengo mis hermanos, y es muy necesario que hablen dos idiomas. Estamos en un país donde, tu sabes los latinos somos la minoría más grande y yo pienso que les abriría puertas. Y sobre todo, primero está la familia. Tienen que saber cómo comunicarse con la familia. Ósea, abuelos, tíos. Para mí es muy importante eso porque tengo sobrinos, por lado de mi esposo, que llegan a la casa de la abuelita y “Hi, abuelita.” y hasta allí. “Hi, abuelita.” Y ya no hay comunicación con la abuelita. “Hi, abuelita’ y ya fue todo. Ya no pueden comunicarse...Ósea, son cosas muy importantes. Para mí, son muy importantes.

Excerpt #2: Because it’s very important...I have my parents, my brothers, and it’s necessary for them to speak two languages. We are living in a country where Latinos are the largest minority group and I believe [Spanish] will open doors for them. But, above all, family comes first. Like, grandparents, uncles. This is important to me because I have nephews on my husband’s side that come to my house and say “Hi, abuelita” and that’s all. “Hi, abuelita.” There’s no more communication with their abuelita after that. “Hi, abuelita” and that’s it. They can’t communicate...so, it’s all so important. For me, it’s very important.

Angelica: Necesitan hablar con sus abuelitos

Excerpt #1: Si, muy importante porque yo veo la diferencia, como, en niños, como familia de uno mismo que los niños no hablan bien el español y pues los abuelitos no hablan inglés. No saben cómo comunicarse en español...Y pues, para mí, es muy importante porque cuando mi mamá o mi papá, cuando estaba vivo, [mis hijas podían hablar por teléfono con ellos para sus cumpleaños o el día de las madres, o días especiales. Ellas pueden hablar con ellos y con nosotros, que pues, no hablamos bien el inglés. Es muy, muy importante para mí.

Excerpt #1: Yes, I believe it’s very important because I see the difference, for example, in other children in my family that do not speak Spanish well and their grandparents cannot speak English. They don’t know how to communicate in Spanish...and that, for me, is very important because my daughters are able to communicate with my mother or father, when he was alive, by phone for birthdays, Mother’s Day, or other special occasions. They can speak with them, and with us, because we do not speak English. This is very, very important for me.

Excerpt #2: Porque eso ha sido un tema, ¿cómo se dice? Polémico. El de meter a los niños en español. Mucha gente no está de acuerdo en eso. No está de acuerdo en que estén en español, en programas bilingües. Pero, yo me fijo que las personas que dijeron eso, ahora sus hijos, ellos quieren que hablen bien español y no hablan bien. La mamá no habla inglés, el papá si, lo hablan así como, mocho, se dice. Como unas partes inglés y otras [en] español. Y pues a mí, eso no sé hace bien. Yo me siento orgullosa de mis hijas porque ellas lo hablan bien, lo hablan claro. Necesitan hablar con sus abuelitos, hablan en español porque ellos no hablan inglés.

Excerpt #2: Because this is a topic that is—how do you call it? Controversial. Learning in Spanish is something that many people do not agree with. Many people do not agree with bilingual programs. But, I notice that the people that feel that way, now want their children to speak Spanish well, and they can’t. The mom does not speak English, and the dad speaks some broken English where some words are in English and some in Spanish. And for me, well, I don’t think that’s right. I am proud of my daughters because they can speak Spanish well and they speak it clearly. They need to be able to communicate with their grandparents, so they speak Spanish because their grandparents do not speak English.

Lila: Quiero que estén conectados

Excerpt #1: We always spoke in Spanish at home, with [my oldest son], and with the other ones. Y este [And, um], so he’s always had that connection, I think, because...his Spanish has been strong so he’s always been able to connect really well with his grandparents on that side of the family. I think he considers himself to be bilingual, bicultural, and he’s really proud of it.

Excerpt #2: Yeah. That was [my oldest son’s] decision. He said he wanted to, um, continue learning Spanish. I think it’s also because he was always complimented on it, like, his grandparents were proud that he spoke Spanish. His aunts and uncles, when we’ve gone to Mexico, they’re like, “Habla muy bien el español [He speaks Spanish very well].” You know? So, he prides himself in that.

Excerpt #3: I want my kids to see [Spanish] as a way into people's lives. A way to navigate and understand the experiences that people are living. Por ejemplo, cuando vamos a México, ¿verdad? Quiero que entiendan. Quiero que sepan. Quiero que estén conectados. No quiero que se les pase por desapercibido algo que digan sus abuelitos, you know? [For example, when we go to Mexico, right? I want them to understand. I want them to know. I want them to be connected. I don't want them to miss anything their grandparents say, you know?]

Excerpt #4: Y otra cosa también es [And another thing is], I don't like to dictate how it should look. How bilingualism and biculturalism should look. I think it has to be unique for your own situation, for the community that you live in, you know? Or the communities that you wanna be a part of, también [as well]. Para pasársela [to hang out] in our community, our immediate community, our local community, I think that they have enough Spanish to go by. But, if I want them to visit their abuelitos [grandparents] in Mexico, I want them to have more so that they can be full participants and reap the most out of their experiences.

The examples from Olivia, Angelica, and Lila's interviews highlight parents' strong beliefs that communication in Spanish is critical for maintaining family ties, and more specifically, cross-generational family ties such as children's ties to their abuelitos. Most of the participants in this study made explicit references to the importance of children communicating in Spanish with their abuelitos. When family members cannot speak English, or choose not to speak English, it becomes essential for children to speak Spanish. As Olivia stated, "primero está la familia" [family comes first]. Thus, to these parents, their children's Spanish language development and maintenance has significant meaning that goes beyond the classroom. Parents believe Spanish helps children maintain relationships with family in the United States, as well as their home country.

Que conozcan sus raíces: Spanish is a Part of Family Histories and Heritage

Primero, es porque yo hablo español. Soy hispana. Y yo creo que el idioma es el primer principio de mi cultura que yo les puede inculcar a mis hijos. Pueden aprender de las posadas, pueden aprender del día de los muertos...pero yo siento que lo principal que yo debo, y la importancia, lo más grande, es el idioma. No van a entender absolutamente nada de su cultural si no hablan principalmente el idioma. – Maria A

First, it's because I speak Spanish. I am Hispanic. And I believe that language is the first cultural foundation I can instill in my children. They can learn about las posadas, they can learn about el día de los muertos, but I feel that the first thing, the most important thing, is language. They will absolutely not understand anything about their culture if they do not speak the language first. – Maria A

Parents also reported that they believe it is important for their children to know their family histories and heritage, and to be proud of their raíces [roots]. Spanish is inextricably tied

to this. In the above quote, Maria A talks about how Spanish is fundamental to learning and knowing about one's culture. She believes that the most important thing for her to teach her children is the Spanish language. She believes her children cannot understand their culture if they do not speak Spanish. Maria A is bilingual, but lives in a suburban community that is predominantly English-speaking and white. She believes her daughters experience pressure at school to *fit in*, and Maria A does not want them to leave their language, culture, and history behind in order to "fit in." In her interview, she reported that she wants her daughters to know who they are and be proud of where they came from. Below I present additional examples that illustrate parents' desire for their children to know their history and heritage, and to be proud of their raíces.

Claudia and Maria C: Helping children know where their mom came from

Claudia: Elena loves to listen to B96. That's her thing...Since we've been listening to "In the Heights," she wants nothing to do with B96 and she only wants "In the Heights" to be played. Because I think they say a lot of things about, um, being in two cultures and who you are, and I think that she's starting to see the path that I needed to take to get to where I am. And seeing me more of like a strong woman as opposed to just Mommy. Because when she listens to everything that needed to happen, and even Isabel, she says, "Mom, I'm really sorry that you had to go through that." When you listen to it, you'll understand...And so I think they're starting to, they're starting to identify with their mother's culture. Whereas before, at least for Elena, it was like, "No. Absolutely not." And she would just cry and scream whenever she had to go to school, or whatever, for Spanish. She did not want it at all.

Maria C: For me the biggest thing would be that we could go back to Mexico because I want my whole family to understand who I am. I mean, yesterday we were at a Mexican restaurant and the mariachi were there. I was singing and my daughter kept looking at me. They were making fun of me. But she knows a lot of the songs. She loves Shakira, so we'll play Shakira. Like all those songs in Spanish. But I wish I could take her back because she doesn't remember a lot of stuff from when she was little. Desde que nació, ha ido a Ixtapa, ha ido a Riviera Maya, a Michoacán como tres veces, le lleve al D.F.. [Since she was born, she's been to Ixtapa, she's been to the Riviera Maya, she's been to Michoacán like three times, I took her to Mexico City.] I took her to all these places, but that was when she was little. Now that she's older, I can't take her and that's what's killing me.

Maria B: Quiero que ellos aprendan de allá también

Excerpt #1: Uno como hispano, traemos nuestras raíces de México. Claro que los traemos aquí para que se superen, pero el inglés lo van a agarrar. O sea, no hay necesidad de que dejen el español tirao y estén en inglés.

Excerpt #1: As Hispanics, we bring with us our roots from Mexico. Of course, we bring [our children] here for a better life, but they will learn English. There's no need for them to leave their Spanish to the side and just be in English.

Excerpt #2: Y es importante, porque como le digo, si somos hispanos, ¿cómo nuestros hijos van hablar solamente el inglés? Digo yo, ellos tienen que saber de dónde somos nosotros, de dónde venimos, y que ellos necesitan continuar con el español. Ojala y pudieran, a la mejor otra lengua escogen ellos a estudiar, pero ya sería que su primer idioma va ser de sus papás.

Excerpt #2: *It's important because, as I said, as Hispanics how could our children only speak English? I say that they have to know where we are from, where we came from, and that they have to continue speaking Spanish. Hopefully they could learn another language, but their first language will be the one of their parents.*

Excerpt #3: Es que hay que saber que estamos aquí y que a veces nos hacen sentir que, vamos a decirlo, no es nuestro país y estamos aquí por necesidad. Aquí nos tocó estar ya porque queremos salir por delante. Yo quiero regresar a México...pues...las raíces de allá, quiero que ellos aprendan de allá también.

Excerpt #3: *It's just that, we need to know that we're here, and that sometimes they make us feel that, let's just say it, that this country is not ours, but we are here out of necessity. We are here because we want a better life. I want to return to Mexico...our roots are from there and I want them to learn about that too.*

Lila: By knowing and being proud of their culture, they have a greater sense of identity

Excerpt #1: No, pero, si te digo que, [No, but, I'm telling you that] I think I grew up around a lot of the same that I want my kids to grow up around. Culture, language, music, art. Fun, you know, joy. My dad was a musician. Yeah, y se ponía a tocar con mis tíos y mis tías [and he would play with my aunts and uncles], you know, en las fiestas de la casa o en la iglesia [at parties in our home or at the church]. Mi mamá pertenecía a un comité que se llamaba el comité Guadalupano y organizaba todas las fiestas de la Virgen [My mom belonged to a committee called Guadalupano and she organized all of the festivities for the Virgen], you know? So, los bailes tradicionales [the traditional dances], *el jarabe tapatio*, *la raspa*...all these songs I grew up dancing too. I grew up part of this rich community. This community rich in culture, and language and tradition y costumbres [and customs]. Más que nada por el sentido grande de comunidad que yo sentía de familia [More than anything I felt a great sense of community from my family], you know? I wanted my kids to have that same.

Excerpt #2: I wanted them to feel validated, the way I felt validated. That's why I wanted them to have these experiences, through Nuestros Bebés and Artes Tradicionales. Because before that, I was doing it on my own. Que Jose Luis Orozco, las canciones de Jose Luis Orozco en la casa. Que los cuentos que mi mamá me contaba. Que las películas, todas en español. [Jose Luis Orozco, the songs of Jose Luis Orozco at home. The stories my mom would tell me. Movies in Spanish.] Just trying to maximize the little resources I had at my disposal to make sure that my kids were getting as much Spanish, as much culture, as much alimento para su identidad [nourishment for their identity].

Excerpt #3: Because I feel that by knowing and being proud of their culture, they have a greater sense of identity. And I want them to feel complete, you know? And I think that by knowing your identity you feel complete. Because your identity also comes from, not just you and your immediate family, but this community that you're a part of, and also this history that your community has experienced. You have to be aware of that. Que te reconozcas como un ser que está viviendo en el presente y que puedas ver tu ambición a tu futuro pero no olvidándote de tu pasado [You have to see yourself as someone living in the present and you can see your future but without forgetting your past], you know? I have a lot of conversations with my kids about people. Examples of people who struggle for justice so my kids have this sense of who they are, not just right now, and who they want to be in the future, but also who they have been. Who their ancestors have been and how these people throughout history have contributed to who their ancestors have been.

Parents in this study expressed that it is important for their children to know and be proud of where their family came from. A soundtrack from a bilingual musical helped Claudia's daughters connect with their mother's experiences. Similarly, Maria C uses Spanish music to connect her daughters to their Mexican heritage, but she feels it is not enough. She wishes they could fully experience Mexico's culture and traditions. Maria B believes that simply because they crossed the border to come live in the United States, that it should not mean they have to leave their raíces and language behind. She wants her children to speak Spanish and learn about their family heritage. Finally, Lila fervently believes that knowing about their culture and being proud of where they are from will help her children develop a strong sense of identity. Spanish is essential to all of this. These parents want their children to participate in language education programs that help their children develop Spanish because the language is deeply embedded in family histories and heritage, and parents believe their children should be proud of their raíces.

Spanish as an Asset: Opportunities in the Future and Service to Others

Bilingual? I want them to be trilingual. I want them to be multilingual. I want them to have keys into other people's cultures, you know? I want them to be able to see and understand the experiences that other people go through. I think that it's not just about language because I know that there are some people who use language as a way for upward mobility, you know? To be able to work somewhere where it's necessary to be able to speak another language in order to connect with other people for business, you know, or the corporate world. There are people that view language that way, as like a way to achieve some kind of success. But, I don't see it that way. I want my kids to see it as a way into people's lives. A way to navigate and understand the experiences that people are living. – Lila

Ten out of eleven participants spoke about their beliefs that Spanish will open doors for their children in the future and afford their children more career opportunities, as well as, richer life experiences (e.g., study abroad, international travel). In the quote above, Lila alludes to this. She recognizes that speaking more than one language can open doors within the business world for her children. However, Lila believes that her children should use their languages for much more than just upward mobility. Lila was not alone in feeling this way. Four other parents spoke

about how they aspire for their children to use their Spanish as a tool in service of others. Below I highlight examples of this.

Claudia: I hope that part of my legacy is that my children use [language] to help the world be better. That would be ideal for me. And whatever that looks like...if it looks like you work in [the Hispanic community] and try to make that a better world, if it looks like you're a lawyer and you're helping people who can't afford it, whatever that looks like. I'm hoping that the languages allow them to make this world a better place... That would be what I would want my children to use their language for.

Olivia: Si, yo si les ha dicho que para mí es muy importante que ellos mantengan el español. Creo que si les he dicho. A los grandes, más bien. A los tres más grandes, que para mí es muy importante que mantengan el español. Que les abre más oportunidades en diferentes aspectos aquí en este país. Oportunidades de trabajo, ellos pueden ayudarlo a la gente. Ósea, hay muchas cosas por lo que ellos deben mantener el español aparte de que es tu idioma, tu cultura.

Olivia: Yes, I've told them that for me it's very important that they maintain their Spanish. I believe I've told them. My oldest ones, for sure. My three oldest ones have heard me say it's very important to me that they maintain their Spanish. It will provide different opportunities here in this country such as employment opportunities or they can help other people. In other words, there's lots of reasons why they should maintain their Spanish aside from it being their language, their culture.

Maria B: Entonces, ojala ellos continuaran con el español porque es una satisfacción ayudar a alguien que, cuando uno pida ayuda simplemente. Si estamos en el doctor y siento una necesidad que alguien hable español para que le traduzca a uno, entonces cuando aquella persona lo atiende en español tan amable se queda uno, siente uno tan rico saber que alguien lo está ayudando. Entonces yo digo, ojala mis hijos sean así, o sea que ellos tengan la oportunidad de ayudar a personas que lo necesiten. Lo digo porque no toda la vida va ser en inglés, va ver muchas personas que van a necesitar ayuda. Así como necesita su mamá, ellos ven que yo necesito ayuda, entonces yo quisiera que ellos ayudaran a las demás personas también.

Maria B: Well, hopefully they continue with Spanish, because it's satisfying to help someone that asks for help. If we're at the doctor and I need someone that speaks Spanish to translate for me, when that person kindly helps me in Spanish, it feels nice to know that someone is helping me. So, I say that hopefully my boys will be like that, that they have the opportunity to help others that need help. I say that because life won't always be in English, there will be lots of people that need help. Just as their mother needs help, they see that I need help, I hope they will help others too.

Angelica: Bueno, yo les digo a ellas que cuando ellas vean a personas en las tiendas o así que están teniendo problemas para comunicarse...que ayuden. Porque nosotros hemos visto a señoras que están batallando, vemos a la cajera hispana, con el nombre hispano, y no hablan español. Y yo le digo a ellas, "Si ustedes ven una situación así, ayuden a la persona." Se siente uno frustrado cuando quiere decir algo y no puede decirlo. Yo le digo a ellas, y si les ha tocado ayudar a señoras así en las tiendas o así donde salimos que no hablan inglés, y las niñas les traducen.

Angelica: Well, I tell them that when they see people at the store or people having trouble communicating, that they should help. Because we've seen women that struggle, we've seen cashiers with a Hispanic name but they don't speak Spanish. So, I tell my daughters, "If you see a situation like that, help the person." It's frustrating to want to say something and not be able to. I tell them and they have helped women that do not speak English at the stores or when we are out. My daughters translate for them.

Parents reported in various ways their beliefs that Spanish is an asset that will open doors for their children in the future. For instance, Leonardo spoke about the fact that his bilingualism helped him become a teacher here in the United States and he's confident that if his children maintain their Spanish, they will have more opportunities in the future. Maria C and Diana spoke at length about their children's current interests and aspirations for future careers, and how Spanish can benefit their children in their desired professions as a chef and a lawyer, respectively. However, parents also spoke about their belief that Spanish can be used in the service of others. In the case of Maria B and Angelica (see excerpts above), this is very personal to them because as monolingual Spanish speakers they often rely on others, including their children, to help them communicate with English speakers.²¹ In short, parents believe that bilingualism opens doors and affords many benefits in life. But, parents also believe Spanish enables their children to give back and help others.

No quieren hablar español: Concerns Over Resistance to Spanish and Language Loss

When Grace was in first grade, it was like her first adolescence. You know, they get all sassy. It was when she was like 'Spanish is not cool.' It was the first time she was feeling social pressure to English. – Elena

Given parents' strong feelings toward Spanish and their belief that it is critical to maintain, resistance toward the language caused great concern for many parents. All of the parent participants expressed concern, frustration, and at times fear, over resistance to Spanish and language loss. In the quote above, Elena, a bilingual educator, references a point in time where her daughter started to feel pressure at school to speak English. Elena's daughter was enrolled at a dual language school in kindergarten, but by first grade Elena noticed her daughter was starting to refuse speaking Spanish, despite the fact that more than half her day was spent learning in Spanish. This struggle continued until her daughter hit middle school. Below, I

²¹ See Martínez, Orellana, Pacheco, & Carbone (2008) for an example of research on children serving as linguistic brokers.

present quotes from Diana and Leonardo, two other bilingual educators, which highlight parents' concerns regarding their children's resistance to Spanish.

Diana #1: Now, one thing I know is that if it wasn't for the dual program, their Spanish would have been gone. I have no doubt. They are so dominant in English, and they really refuse the Spanish at home. I mean reading or writing. So, if it wasn't for that Spanish base from school, I think I would have daughters that would be like those kids that can understand Spanish to some degree, but they don't speak it, they don't read it, they don't write it. I think those would be my daughters.

Diana #2: So, it has been very difficult for me, as a parent, to push her language because she gets angry. She gets stubborn. And that is a battle that honestly, I don't want to fight. I prefer to fight other battles with her.

Leonardo #1: Si. Que no quiere hablar tanto el español [Yes. She does not want to speak Spanish] and she's like, "Why do I have to speak Spanish? English is my language. We're in America." But I think it's because of the age, because of her friends. She's speaking more English with her friends. The other two, amongst themselves they speak mostly English as well. That's something that we're always concerned about. We still need to work on that.

Leonardo #2: Pero cuando nació mi niña, pues era el español que hablábamos todo el tiempo. Ella hablaba español todo el tiempo. Entonces, yo empecé a preocuparme de cuando iba aprender el inglés. Yo a veces le hablaba inglés a ella cuando estaba más pequeñita. Estaba preocupado de que llegara al preescolar con poquito inglés, pero después me di cuenta que el inglés lo agarro rapidito en preescolar y ahorita yo quiero lo contrario.

Leonardo #2: *When my daughter was born, we spoke Spanish all the time. She spoke Spanish all the time. So, I started to worry about when she would learn English. I would sometimes speak English to her when she was younger. I was worried that she would enter preschool with little English, but then I realized that she quickly picked up English at preschool and now I want the opposite.*

In addition, parents also expressed fear and concerns over language loss. What is interesting to note about this, is that for some parents, the fear was about the impact of language loss to future generations of their family. As parents expressed their fear about language loss, they spoke about its impact to their future grandchildren. Below I present quotes from Isabel, Olivia, and Angelica where they express their fear and concern over language loss.

Lorena: Cuando piensas en ellos en el futuro, ¿cómo los ves usando sus dos idiomas?

Isabel: Pienso que ellos se van a enfocar más en el inglés.

Lorena: ¿Por qué dices eso?

Isabel: Porque todo aquí en este país es en inglés y siempre he visto que el inglés es como el idioma oficial y que quieren que todos hablen más el inglés que otros idiomas. Porque no creo que un americano vaya a estudiar español.

Lorena: Okay. ¿Y eso cómo te hace sentir?

Isabel: Pues...triste.

Lorena: *When you envision them in the future, how do you see them using both languages?*

Isabel: *I think they will focus more on English.*

Lorena: *Why do you say that?*

Isabel: *Because everything in this country is in English and I've always seen that English is like the official language and that they want us all to speak English more than other languages. Because I don't believe that an American will study Spanish.*

Lorena: *Okay. How does that make you feel?*

Isabel: *Well, sad.*

Lorena: *Sad?*

Lorena: ¿Triste?

Isabel: Sí.

Lorena: Dime por qué.

Isabel: Triste porque sus hijos de mis hijos van a hablar inglés. Y este...aunque a mí me gustaría que mis hijos les enseñaran [el español].

Isabel: Yes.

Lorena: Tell me why.

Isabel: Sad because my children's children will speak English. Even though I would like for my children to teach them Spanish.

Olivia: Al momento que tú le hablas español, [mi hijo] entiende bien y mis papás se comunican muy bien con él, y el con ellos. Pero el problema que yo tengo es conforme con que pase el tiempo, se la vaya dificultando más y más y más. Ahorita, todavía pues él no más tenía medio año. Ósea de enero a mayo en clase de puro inglés. Ósea no era mucho tiempo. Ósea, todavía en el verano que fue él todavía hablaba fluente español y mis papás se podían comunicar con él. Y yo me voy hacer una meta que él tiene que, ósea, voy a tratar lo más que yo pueda que mi hijo no va perder el idioma.

Olivia: When you speak Spanish to him, my son can understand okay and my parents can communicate okay with him, and him with them. But the problem I have is that with time, it will be harder and harder for him. Right now, well, it's only been half a year. It's only been from January through May in an all-English class. It hasn't been much time. In the summer he could still speak Spanish fluently, and my parents could communicate with him. It will be my goal; in other words, I am going to do everything I can to make sure my son does not lose the language.

Angelica: Pues yo lo que pensaría es hablar con [mi hija] y decirle que siga hablando español. Como que no deje que se le olvide. Que cuando [mis hijas] tengas sus hijos porque es lo que pasa, o sea, la primera generación, uno si les inculca el español. Pero ya cuando ellas, que hagan su carrera y todo, yo quisiera que ellas lo sigan a sus hijos. Que les inculquen hablar español. Porque es lo que pasa, a veces ya, como que, tienen los hijos y bueno, si los esposos no hablan bien el español. Eso es lo que puede pasar, pues, seguir hablando y mandando mensajes si ya no están con migo en español aunque yo ya aprenda inglés.

Angelica: Well, I think what I would do is speak to my daughter and tell her to continue speaking Spanish. Like, tell her not to forget it. That when my daughters have their own children, because that's what happens, the language is instilled in the first generation, but when they have their own children and their careers, I hope they pass it on to their children. I hope they teach them to speak Spanish. Because that's what happens, sometimes they have their own children, and well, if their husband doesn't speak Spanish well, it can happen. So, even if I learn English, I will continue speaking Spanish with them and sending them messages when they are no longer with me.

Resistance to Spanish and language loss cause great concern for all of the parents who participated in this study. Furthermore, parents are afraid that their children will lose their Spanish if they continue to resist Spanish. For some parents, like Isabel and Angelica, this fear leads them to think of the future generations of their family. These fears and concerns exist, despite the fact that the children are enrolled in language education programs and that Spanish is spoken in their homes. Many parents described countering their children's resistance to Spanish as a constant "battle" they have to fight. Some parents would argue that the battle is worth fighting not just for the present generation, but for future generations as well.

Not Enough Spanish: Concerns Over Bilingual Educators and Instructional Practices

In kindergarten, Isabel was loved. I mean her teacher was Hispanic and adored her... [I would ask], “How’s [Isabel’s] Spanish?” [The teacher would respond] “Oh you know, she’s doing great...she’s progressing...blah, blah, blah,” and we’re pushing and pushing and pushing the English, right? She can’t read in English, she can’t read in English. But, how’s her Spanish? “Well, you know, she’s progressing...” and I’m just like, “I need her to speak Spanish!” – Claudia

Nine of the eleven participants reported their perceptions of an overall lack of Spanish in both the educators instructing their children and in the instructional practices used in their children’s program. This caused great concern for parents. Of the nine parents who expressed such concerns, six of them are bilingual educators with experience in TBE and/or dual language programs. Claudia, for example, is a teacher in the TWI program her daughters are enrolled in. In the quote above, Claudia was describing an encounter she had with her daughter’s teacher. In the quote, Claudia expresses that the teacher was more focused and ready to talk about Isabel’s progress in English than her progress in Spanish. As a TWI parent, Claudia reported that she frequently experiences this in her conversations with her daughters’ teachers. She reported that she often has to ask, “How’s her Spanish?” because the teachers do not seem prepared to talk about the progress in Spanish. Claudia is not alone in this—several other participants expressed similar experiences. In the quotes below, I highlight the voices of the five other parent participants that are bilingual educators because, like all the parents in this study, they possess linguistic funds of knowledge (Smith, 2001) in regard to Spanish language use and development, but these five parents also possess insider knowledge of teaching practices. In their interviews, they spoke at great length about their concerns regarding instructional practices in Spanish and for Spanish language development.

Diana #1: But with [my oldest daughter], I think that by junior high, her Spanish started to suffer as she was more immersed in an English setting. She only had two periods of Spanish, and her teacher had an American accent. I also don't think she forced them much to stay in Spanish, so she stopped developing it. In high school, she regained a little Spanish in AP Spanish because the teacher is a native Spanish speaker. But the class in freshman year was horrible because I think the Spanish teacher had less Spanish than my daughter. That teacher would never expose her Spanish skills with me. If I spoke Spanish to her, she answered in English. My daughter told stories about that teacher's poor Spanish skills, so my daughter's Spanish went down overall.

Diana #2: With one teacher, spelling was very bad for my daughter...And I said, "Okay, I understand it is inventive spelling, but she's already in 5th grade. This cannot continue happening." She answered, "Oh, we don't penalize spelling" and I had to say, "Well, you're going to make an exception for my daughter, please, because this is horrible and this cannot keep happening. So, I need you to grade her spelling. If not she's never going to pay attention to it." And she did. Sadly, it had to come from me and truth is that my daughter knew the spelling of many words but as there was no consequence, she chose not to even try. But, with last year's teacher, I was not even talking to him; I was talking to the principal directly. But, with the teachers that have not been able to support them in their gains in Spanish, I think I have been doing more at home like reading with my daughters, or being more proactive in the Spanish. Trying not to let it go, trying to balance the Spanish and English.

Elena #1: So, when Grace was there, when Grace was in Kinder, they said, "Do you want her in Spanish language arts or English language arts?" and I said, "What [are] you talking about? Do I want her what?" Apparently...in kinder they started following what they'd always done which was a sequential model based on first language. Okay? So, the English-speaking kids who came in would get English language arts to build on their English oracy and then you know, slowly, they would get Spanish. Just not as much, and not formal Spanish language arts until later. And I was like, "Whoa! That's so like 30 years ago, I don't even know what to say!" They have the authority, they must know. But I was like, this doesn't feel right.

Elena #2: So somewhere along the line, I mean, I think there are language arts done in Spanish, right? I think there's language arts but there's not language development. I don't think there is enough, again, skill across the board, across the staff, in scaffolding content that is done in a second language. Whether it's emergent bilinguals who are stronger in either one, right? Whatever the language of instruction is, there is half the kids at least who are wrestling with that language more than the other half.

Maria C #1: [The teacher] told me, "This is how I was taught" and since she came from Spain, and she's following protocol, she said that until [my daughter] reads fluently they cannot move her level. So, I still read Level G books to [my daughter]. My fear is that vocabulary exposure at level E is not the same as level J, you know? She's losing vocabulary that she could be picking up at a higher level. She's not being pushed. [The teacher said], "Oh just do fun stuff with her. Let her count the vowels. Let her count the capital letters." I'm like, no. I'm not gonna have her count capital letters. I need her to work on comprehension. You have to make it fun for her.

Maria C #2: I don't think [my daughter has] told this new teacher [that I am a teacher]. When I asked her to show me the test, she was just like okay. She didn't say anything. Where the other teacher was like "Well what do you do? This is how we do it, and you teach in English. I teach this in Spanish." I just now teach my daughter the way I want. Even with her writing, last year, she got a lot of points deducted because grammatically she wasn't there. But she was in kinder, I mean the stuff these kids are able to write, and I personally don't believe that the American kids are writing the way that my daughter does [in Spanish]. My daughter can write a recipe. I know that other kids can't write a recipe because they don't know the vocabulary. She could. But because it wasn't grammatically correct, she was getting a 2 out of 4. Because the expectation, you know? So, her scores last year in kinder were all 1s and 2s out of 4, when she was reading and writing. But because it wasn't grammatically correct. But she was in kinder, I'm not expecting her to know all this. This year, her first report card, everything is very different. Now it means nothing to me because it's two different scales.

Leonardo #1: Pero es que a veces los maestros, de pronto la única que diría es la maestra de primer grado que con ella han aprendido más español, pero las otras dos, el primer idioma de ellas es inglés, entonces a veces como que, bueno no sé. Estoy asumiendo cosas pero, sí, sería importante preguntarle a las maestras de cómo [mis hijos] están usando el español, si lo usan o no lo usan apropiadamente.

Leonardo #1: *It's just that sometimes the teachers, well the only teacher they've learned the most Spanish with is the teacher from first grade, but the other two, their first language is English and well sometimes, I don't know. I'm assuming things, but it would be important to ask the teachers how my children are using Spanish, if they use it or don't use it appropriately.*

Leonardo #2: [Mi hija] tuvo una maestra el año pasado en cuarto grado que tenía muy poco español.

Leonardo #2: *My daughter had a teacher last year, in fourth grade, who had very little Spanish.*

Lila #1: Well the homework, okay, this is the thing that I mentioned to you a little bit about earlier, like the rigor? ¿Verdad? [Right?] I wish it was more, and that expectations were higher a little bit about what they can do, as far as, what they can produce [in Spanish].

Lila #2: What I feel is that if...they're speaking isn't fluid then it doesn't get into writing. So, I think that if they're building both [speaking and writing in Spanish] and the teachers are sending home una canción que se memorizen, verdad [a song for them to memorize, right]? The teachers could also ask that they componer su propia canción, por ejemplo [compose their own song, for example]. Me gustaría ver eso [I would like to see that].

The preceding examples illustrate parents' concerns about the use of Spanish during instruction and for Spanish language development, the assessment of children's progress in Spanish, the homework assigned in Spanish, and the Spanish proficiency of educators in bilingual programs. The parents highlighted in this section are all educators within the field of language education. They raised specific concerns about instructional practices that non-educator participants did not raise. However, their concerns about the Spanish proficiency of educators reflect similar comments raised by non-educator participants. Another interesting point to highlight is that four of the six parents who are educators expressed that at times it is difficult for them to raise questions and concerns to their children's teachers because (a) they themselves are teachers and do not want to come across as pushy or as a know-it-all, (b) they are well known at the school because of their experience in the field of bilingual education, or (c) they are employees of the same district and do not want any tension or conflict to arise. So, despite their insider knowledge of best practice within language education, these parents often felt they could

not voice their concerns directly to their children's teachers. Thus, it seems that being a language educator and a parent of an emergent bilingual also has the power to silence parent voice.

Listening to Latino Parent Voice: A Summary of What Was Heard

The preceding sections highlighted the voice of Latino parents of emergent bilinguals. In these sections, parents expressed their beliefs, dreams, fears, and concerns in regard to their children's use of Spanish and their language education. When one listens to the voice of Latino parents of emergent bilinguals, it is clear that children's use of Spanish has a much greater purpose and significance in life than to serve as a tool for English attainment and success in school. According to the parents in this study, Spanish is (a) an essential tool for maintaining family ties; (b) inextricably tied to family histories and heritage; (c) an asset that will open doors in the future and allow children to provide service to others; and (d) essential to maintain not just for this generation, but for future generations as well. In addition, parents also expressed concern over a perceived lack of Spanish within instruction and teachers' lack of Spanish proficiency. Parents believe that poor uses of Spanish within the program can be detrimental to their children's Spanish language development. The question then becomes, is there a space for Latino parent voice to be heard within the policies that influence family engagement practices? In the following section, I present a review of policy and discuss the institutionalized family engagement discourse within the context of Illinois.

Setting Expectations for Parents and Educators: Policies Driving Family Engagement Policy at the Federal Level

Ways of talking about parents in general under Title I

Parental involvement,²² as defined in Title I of NCLB (2002), sets clear expectations for a "full partnership" between parents and educators where parents play an active role "at school,"

²² NCLB uses the term *parental involvement*, so the term is used throughout this section to be consistent with the policies discussed.

participate in “decision-making,” and engage in “meaningful two-way communication” with educators regarding student “academic learning and other school activities.” Table 9 below presents the federal definition for parental involvement (NCLB, 2002). With expectations for partnerships embedded in the definition, it is no wonder that parental involvement has been described as “...a key lever in the accountability mechanism of the law” (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 76). Parental involvement plays a role in accountability because NCLB (2002) clearly identifies “...critical points in the process of improving teaching and learning where parents and the community can intervene and assist in school improvement” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 4). In short, NCLB raised the bar on how federal legislation talks about the roles and responsibilities of parents as partners in the education of their children (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Mapp, 2012; National PTA, 2009).

Definition for Parental Involvement
The term ‘parental involvement’ means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—(A) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning; (B) that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school; (C) that parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; (D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in section 1118.

Table 9: Definition for parental involvement (NCLB, 2002)

Furthermore, the definition for parental involvement under NCLB is significant because it helps to set the parameters by which states, districts, and schools implement programs, activities, and/or approaches to parental involvement (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). In other words, the definition for parental involvement under NCLB has the power to drive what states, districts, and schools actually do to engage with families. For example, Section 1118 of Title I (NCLB, 2002), the section of NCLB considered to have the most comprehensive policies on parental involvement (National PTA, 2009), establishes policies for (a) district- and school-level parental involvement policies (see Table 11), (b) explicit steps schools must take to involve

parents (see Table 12), (c) sharing responsibility for students’ academic achievement with parents (see Table 13), and (d) dual capacity-building to support home-school partnerships (see Table 14).

In the case of parents who speak languages other than English, such as Spanish-speaking Latino parents, subsection (f) of Section 1118 (NCLB, 2002; see Table 10) makes it clear that states, districts, and schools are required to address language barriers “to the extent practicable” to ensure that all parents have opportunities to partner with their children’s school, and as stated in Table 9, have opportunities to engage in “meaningful two-way communication” with educators. Federal guidance around this requirement explains that “to the extent practicable” means that states, districts, and schools “have flexibility in determining what mix of oral and written translation services may be necessary and reasonable for communicating the required information to parents with limited English proficiency” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 5). In addition, the requirement to address language barriers is consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Furthermore, federal guidance released in 2015 by the U.S. Department of Education and Department of Justice clarifies the requirements around the use of translators and interpreters, and what it means to be comply with this requirement (U.S. Departments of Education & Justice, 2015). In short, federal policy sets the expectation that language should not be a barrier for establishing a partnership between parents and schools. Educators are required to take steps to address language barriers.

Making Partnerships Accessible to All Parents Title I, Section 1118(f)
“(f) ACCESSIBILITY.—In carrying out the parental involvement requirements of this part, local educational agencies and schools, to the extent practicable, shall provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand.

Table 10: Parental involvement accessibility requirements (NCLB, 2002)

In sum, Section 1118 of Title I (NCLB, 2002) establishes expectations for how districts, schools, and parents should enact their partnership to support student learning. For schools receiving Title I funds, enacting their partnership with parents becomes an issue of compliance. It is important to note, however, that while policy under Section 1118 explicitly references *academic* achievement, *academic* standards, and *academic* assessments, it is silent in regard to *language* learning, *language* development standards, and *language* proficiency assessments—three critical components in the language education of emergent bilinguals. If policy under Section 1118 of Title I does not explicitly reference language education, how then does federal policy discuss partnerships with parents of emergent bilinguals? The proceeding section will discuss policy under Title III of NCLB (2002) that directly addresses parents of emergent bilinguals.

District Parental Involvement Policies Title I, Section 1118(a)(2)	School Parental Involvement Policies Title I, Section 1118(b)
“(2) WRITTEN POLICY.—Each local educational agency that receives funds under this part shall develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parent involvement policy. The policy shall be incorporated into the local educational agency’s plan developed under section 1112, establish the agency’s expectations for parent involvement, and describe how the agency will— “(A) involve parents in the joint development of the plan under section 1112, and the process of school review and improvement under section 1116; “(B) provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance; “(C) build the schools’ and parents’ capacity for strong parental involvement as described in subsection (e); “(D) coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under this part with parental involvement strategies under other programs, such as the Head Start program, Reading First program, Early Reading First program, Even Start program, Parents as Teachers program, and Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and State-run preschool programs; “(E) conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under this part, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background), and use the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parental involvement policies described in this section; and “(F) involve parents in the activities of the schools served under this part.	“(1) IN GENERAL.—Each school served under this part shall jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parental involvement policy, agreed on by such parents, that shall describe the means for carrying out the requirements of subsections (c) through (f). Parents shall be notified of the policy in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language the parents can understand. Such policy shall be made available to the local community and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school. “(2) SPECIAL RULE.—If the school has a parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, such school may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the requirements of this subsection. “(3) AMENDMENT.—If the local educational agency involved has a school district-level parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, such agency may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the requirements of this subsection. “(4) PARENTAL COMMENTS.—If the plan under section 1112 is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the local educational agency shall submit any parent comments with such plan when such local educational agency submits the plan to the State.

Table 11: Policies for the development, implementation, and evaluation of home-school compacts (NCLB, 2002)

School-level Expectations for Parental Involvement Title I, Section 1118(c)
“(c) POLICY INVOLVEMENT.—Each school served under this part shall— “(1) convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school’s participation under this part and to explain the requirements of this part, and the right of the parents to be involved; “(2) offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, with funds provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement; “(3) involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under this part, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parental involvement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b)(2), except that if a school has in place a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of the school’s programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents of participating children; “(4) provide parents of participating children— “(A) timely information about programs under this part; “(B) a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet; and “(C) if requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible; and “(5) if the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b)(2) is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency.

Table 12: School-level Expectations for Parental Involvement (NCLB, 2002)

Shared Responsibilities for Student Achievement Title I, Section 1118(d)
“(d) SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HIGH STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.—As a component of the school-level parental involvement policy developed under subsection (b), each school served under this part shall jointly develop with parents for all children served under this part a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State’s high standards. Such compact shall— “(1) describe the school’s responsibility to provide high quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the State’s student academic achievement standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children’s learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering in their child’s classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time; and “(2) address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum— “(A) parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child’s achievement; “(B) frequent reports to parents on their children’s progress; and “(C) reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child’s class, and observation of classroom activities.

Table 13: School-level responsibilities for building partnerships with parents (NCLB, 2002)

Capacity-Building to Support Parental Involvement Title I, Section 1118(e)
“(e) BUILDING CAPACITY FOR INVOLVEMENT.—To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, each school and local educational agency assisted under this part— “(1) shall provide assistance to parents of children served by the school or local educational agency, as appropriate, in understanding such topics as the State’s academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, State and local academic assessments, the requirements of this part, and how to monitor a child’s progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children; “(2) shall provide materials and training to help parents to work with their children to improve their children’s achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement; “(3) shall educate teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school; “(4) shall, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, the Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, and public preschool and other programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children; “(5) shall ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand; “(6) may involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training; “(7) may provide necessary literacy training from funds received under this part if the local educational agency has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funding for such training; “(8) may pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions; “(9) may train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents; “(10) may arrange school meetings at a variety of times, or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school, in order to maximize parental involvement and participation; “(11) may adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement; “(12) may establish a districtwide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in programs supported under this section; “(13) may develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities; and “(14) shall provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request.

Table 14: District- and school-level expectations for capacity-building (NCLB, 2002)

Ways of talking about parents of students identified as ELs under Title III

Title III of NCLB (2002), the core legislation for the language instruction and education of ELs, makes several explicit references to the involvement of parents of students identified as *limited English proficient*²³ (LEP), or in other words, parents of ELs.²⁴ However, in contrast to Title I, Title III policy emphasizes the role of parents as *recipients* of information and/or services (e.g., parent training activities), rather than emphasizing the role of parents as *full partners* as is the case in Title I. Thus, Title III policy sets the expectation that educators must inform and/or train parents of ELs on how to support their children’s learning. For example, subsection (e) under Section 3302 of Title III defines “parental participation” as providing parent outreach that informs parents of ELs how they can be involved in their children’s education and how they can assist their children in learning English (see Table 15). Is keeping parents *informed* the same as engaging with parents in “meaningful two-way communication” (see Table 9)? Is “receipt of recommendations” under paragraph (2) in the table below intended to imply “meaningful two-way communication?” The answers to these questions are unclear. What is clear from this definition for parental participation, however, is the focus on informing parents of how to support students’ English learning and academic achievement. What then does this mean for Latino parents of emergent bilinguals identified as ELs that are enrolled in programs where students are learning both English and Spanish, as well as grade-level content?

²³ While federal policy uses the term *limited English proficient* (LEP), the terms English learners (ELs) or English language learners (ELLs) are more commonly used in the field.

²⁴ Since emergent bilinguals can be formally identified as ELs within their language education programs, and many of the parents in this study had children identified as ELs and/or children that were formerly identified as ELs, such references are relevant to this study.

Parental Participation Title III, Section 3302(e)
“(e) PARENTAL PARTICIPATION.— “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible entity using funds provided under this title to provide a language instruction educational program shall implement an effective means of outreach to parents of limited English proficient children to inform such parents of how they can— “(A) be involved in the education of their children; and “(B) be active participants in assisting their children— “(i) to learn English; “(ii) to achieve at high levels in core academic subjects; and “(iii) to meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet. “(2) RECEIPT OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—The outreach described in paragraph (1) shall include holding, and sending notice of opportunities for, regular meetings for the purpose of formulating and responding to recommendations from parents described in such paragraph.

Table 15: Definition of parental participation under Title III of NCLB (2002)

Parental notification mandates under Title III also emphasize the role of parents as recipients of information. Subsections (a) through (d) of Section 3302 of Title III outline the information²⁵ that must be shared with parents of ELs regarding their children’s language education program and progress toward attaining English proficiency. Examples of information that must be shared with parents within 30 days of the start of the school year²⁶ under subsection (a) include: how and why their child was identified and placed in a language education program, the type of program offered and how it will help the child attain English language proficiency and achieve academically, the methods of instruction, and the program exit criteria (see Table 16). In addition, subsection (b) states that if the program fails to meet its annual measureable achievement objectives, parents have the right to be informed of such failure within 30 days of the school/district being notified. Furthermore, parental notification policy also establishes parental rights. Parents of ELs have the right to accept or refuse language education services for their children, and the right to select the best program option for their child, if more than one

²⁵ Title III, Section 3302, Subsection (c) states that information required to be shared with parents must be “in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that the parent can understand.”

²⁶ Title III, Section 3302, Subsection (d) states that when children are identified and placed in a language education program after the start of the school year, parents must be informed of all the information outlined in subsection (a) within two weeks of placement.

option is available. In other words, assuming that all of the information outlined in subsection (a) is provided to parents in a comprehensible way (e.g., in the home language if needed), parents of ELs have the right to make an informed decision about the language education of their children. But again, only English is explicitly mentioned. Do parents have the right to be informed of children's progress in Spanish if the EL services are delivered through a bilingual program model?

Parental Notification Title III, Section 3302(a)
“(a) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible entity using funds provided under this title to provide a language instruction educational program shall, not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year, inform a parent or the parents of a limited English proficient child identified for participation in, or participating in, such program of— “(1) the reasons for the identification of their child as limited English proficient and in need of placement in a language instruction educational program; “(2) the child's level of English proficiency, how such level was assessed, and the status of the child's academic achievement; “(3) the method of instruction used in the program in which their child is, or will be, participating, and the methods of instruction used in other available programs, including how such programs differ in content, instruction goals, and use of English and a native language in instruction; “(4) how the program in which their child is, or will be participating will meet the educational strengths and needs of the child; “(5) how such program will specifically help their child learn English, and meet age appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation; “(6) the specific exit requirements for such program, the expected rate of transition from such program into classrooms that are not tailored for limited English proficient children, and the expected rate of graduation from secondary school for such program if funds under this title are used for children in secondary schools; “(7) in the case of a child with a disability, how such program meets the objectives of the individualized education program of the child; and “(8) information pertaining to parental rights that includes written guidance— “(A) detailing— “(i) the right that parents have to have their child immediately removed from such program upon their request; and “(ii) the options that parents have to decline to enroll their child in such program or to choose another program or method of instruction, if available; and “(B) assisting parents in selecting among various programs and methods of instruction, if more than one program or method is offered by the eligible entity.

Table 16: Definition for parental notification under Title III of NCLB (2002)

Lastly, the role of parents as “recipients” of information and/or services is further reinforced under Title III through policy around programs or training activities for parents of ELs. Policy under Title III makes it clear that states, districts, and schools can use Title III funds to promote “parental and community participation” by offering programs or training activities to parents of ELs that are “designed to assist” parents in becoming “active participants in the education of their children.”²⁷ In addition to training parents on how to be “active participants,” family education programs can also be designed to promote adult literacy and English proficiency (see Table 17).

In sum, policy within Title III of NCLB (2002) sets the expectation that states, districts, and schools provide information to parents of ELs. This information can be provided through oral and/or written communication directly with parents,²⁸ or through parent programs or training activities designed to help parents of ELs be “active participants” in their children’s education. It is important to note, however, that “active participants” may not necessarily mean “full partners” as discussed under Title I. It is also important to note that while a bulk of the references to parents under Title III explain how funding can be used to provide parent programs or training, there is no mentioning of the role parents play in determining the content of such offerings (see Table 18). This is another major contrast to how parents are discussed under Title I and the role they play in helping to build dual-capacity (see #6 and #12 in Table 14). Given this, one could argue that federal policy encourages practices that treat parents of ELs as passive recipients rather than full partners in their children’s education. In other words, federal policy promotes top-down approaches to family engagement when it comes to parents of ELs. In

²⁷ For examples, see 3111(d)(6), 3115(e)(1)(A), 3212(a)(2)(B)(iii), 3213(a)(2)(E), and 3247(a)(1) in Table 18.

²⁸ With the use of translations or interpreters as necessary.

addition, it promotes English acquisition and academic achievement. But again, the question remains: What then does this mean for Latino parents of emergent bilinguals that are enrolled in K-12 bilingual programs where students are learning both English *and* Spanish, as well as grade-level content? What does family engagement look like for them? How can parents be partners in language education? The answers to these questions were not found within federal policy. The following section discusses Illinois policy specific to emergent bilinguals and parental involvement.

Family Education Programs Title III, Section 3301(5)
“(5) FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAM.—The term ‘family education program’ means a language instruction educational program or special alternative instruction program that— “(A) is designed— “(i) to help limited English proficient adults and out-of-school youths achieve English proficiency; and “(ii) to provide instruction on how parents and family members can facilitate the educational achievement of their children; “(B) when feasible, uses instructional programs based on models developed under the Even Start Family Literacy Programs, which promote adult literacy and train parents to support the educational growth of their children, the Parents as Teachers Program, and the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters; and “(C) gives preference to participation by parents and immediate family members of children attending school.

Table 17: Definition of family education program under Title III of NCLB (2002)

Section	References to parents of ELs and/or parental involvement under Title III
3102(6)	A purpose of Title III, Part A is “to promote parental and community participation in language instruction educational programs for the parents and communities of limited English proficient children;”
3111(b)(2)(C)(iv)	State education agencies (SEAs) can use a portion of Title III grant funds to provide technical assistance to eligible entities receiving a subgrant from the SEA. Such technical assistance includes: “promoting parental and community participation in programs that serve limited English proficient children.”
3115(d)(6)	Eligible entities can use funds for activities such as “Providing community participation programs, family literacy services, and parent outreach and training activities to limited English proficient children and their families—(A) to improve the English language skills of limited English proficient children; and (B) to assist parents in helping their children to improve their academic achievement and becoming active participants in the education of their children.”
3115(e)(1)(A)	Eligible entities experiencing increases in their populations of immigrant children and youth can funds for activities that include “family literacy, parent outreach, and training activities designed to assist parents to become active participants in the education of their children”
3116(b)	Eligible entities seeking a subgrant from the SEA must submit a plan to the SEA that addresses the following: “(4) describe how the eligible entity will promote parental and community participation in programs for limited English proficient children; (5) contain an assurance that the eligible entity consulted with teachers, researchers, school administrators, and parents, and if appropriate, with education-related community groups and nonprofit organizations, and institutions of higher education, in developing such plan”
3212(a)(2)(B)(iii)	Grants awarded under this section may be used for permissible activities including “implementing family education programs and parent outreach and training activities designed to assist parents to become active participants in the education of their children”
3213(a)(2)(E)	Grants awarded under this section shall be used for mandatory activities including “implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate family education programs, or parent outreach and training activities, that are designed to assist parents of limited English proficient children to become active participants in the education of their children”
3214(g)(1)(B)(iv)	Applications for grants under this subpart shall include a description of the program to be implemented and how such program’s design “involves the parents of the limited English proficient children to be served”
3214(g)(2)(B)(ii)	Each application for a grant by eligible entities shall provide assurances that “the application has been developed I consultation with parents and other representatives of the children to be served in such program.”
3222(b)(1)	Research authorized by this subpart shall include research activities that shall “have a practical application to teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals, school administrators, parents, and others involved in improving the education of limited English proficient children and their families”
3247(a)(1)	Funds awarded under Subpart 4 may be used for “family literacy, parent outreach, and training activities designed to assist parents to become active participants in the education of their children”

Table 18: Relevant references to parents and/or parental involvement under Title III of NCLB (2002)

Policy at the State Level

Illinois School Code and Administrative Code

A review of Article 14C of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/14C) and Part 228 of the Illinois Administrative Code (23 Ill. Adm. Code 228), two sources of state legislation that focus specifically on Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), reveals that Illinois state-level policy establishes expectations for partnerships between educators and parents of emergent bilinguals.²⁹ Both sources of legislation were analyzed to identify examples of how state policy talks about “parental involvement.”³⁰ The focus on policy for TBE programs is significant because Illinois mandates TBE programs in districts with twenty or more ELs of the same language group.³¹ Spanish speakers constitute the largest EL population in Illinois (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015), thus many of the state’s TBE programs serve Spanish-speaking ELs. Therefore, policy mandates in Illinois for partnerships with parents of emergent bilinguals enrolled in TBE programs are highly relevant to this study.

To begin with, Illinois policy promotes meaningful communication with parents of emergent bilinguals, a key component of effective home-school partnerships (Anfara & Mertens, 2008; Araujo, 2009; Delgado Gaitan, 2014; Mapp, 2003). For example, Section 14C-4 of the Illinois School Code (see Table 19) clearly states that “simple, nontechnical language” must be used to notify parents of their children’s placement in a TBE program and of their parental rights in regard to such placement.³² This message is reiterated in the Illinois Administrative Code (see

²⁹ Since the Illinois policy discussed in this chapter focuses specifically on parents of students enrolled in TBE programs, where instruction is provided in the home language and in English, the term *emergent bilinguals* will be used. It is important to note, however, that these students are officially referred to as ELs within Illinois policy.

³⁰ State-level policy in Illinois also uses the term *parental involvement* rather than *family engagement*.

³¹ Districts not meeting this requirement must offer Transitional Programs of Instruction (TPI), such as ESL.

³² In addition, Part 228.40(c)(3) of the Illinois Administrative Code states that parents have the right to access any and all records maintained by the district on their children’s language education.

Table 20). In addition, it is important to point out that while the first nine points under Section 14C-4 are consistent with those outlined in Section 3302(a) of Title III (NCLB, 2002; see Table 16), the tenth point in Table 19 goes a step further than NCLB (2002) to promote meaningful communication with parents by explicitly acknowledging parents' rights to visit their children's TBE classroom in order gain a better understanding of how the TBE program works.

Furthermore, parents have the right to schedule a conference where the program can be further explained (see Table 19). Allowing parents to visit TBE classrooms can help parents make a more informed decision about their children's language education.

One final distinction to make in regard to policy around meaningful communication is that Illinois policy under Section 14C-4 explicitly states that notices sent to parents regarding their children's placement, language education program, and/or parental rights "shall be in writing in English and in the language of which the child of the parents so notified possesses a primary speaking ability"³³ (see Table 19). This is significant because it does not use the language of "to the extent practicable" as is used under federal policy (see Table 10). In addition, the Illinois Administrative Code not only requires that report cards include information on students' progress in the language education program along with progress in the general program of instruction, it also requires that report cards be written in English and in the parents' home language³⁴ (see Table 21). Thus, it is expected that parents of emergent bilinguals receive parent-friendly information about their children's progress in both languages.

³³ State-provided parental notification templates in multiple languages can be found by visiting www.isbe.net

³⁴ Report cards are provided in the home language unless parents waive this requirement.

Notice of Enrollment and Parent Rights Illinois School Code Sec. 14C-4
No later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year or 14 days after the enrollment of any child in a program in transitional bilingual education during the middle of a school year, the school district in which the child resides shall notify by mail the parents or legal guardian of the child of the fact that their child has been enrolled in a program in transitional bilingual education. The notice shall contain all of the following information in simple, nontechnical language: (1) The reasons why the child has been placed in and needs the services of the program. (2) The child's level of English proficiency, how this level was assessed, and the child's current level of academic achievement. (3) The method of instruction used in the program and in other available offerings of the district, including how the program differs from those other offerings in content, instructional goals, and the use of English and native language instruction. (4) How the program will meet the educational strengths and needs of the child. (5) How the program will specifically help the child to learn English and to meet academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation. (6) The specific exit requirements for the program, the expected rate of transition from the program into the regular curriculum, and the expected graduation rate for children in the program if the program is offered at the secondary level. (7) How the program meets the objectives of the child's individual educational program (IEP), if applicable. (8) The right of the parents to decline to enroll the child in the program or to choose another program or method of instruction, if available. (9) The right of the parents to have the child immediately removed from the program upon request. (10) The right of the parents to visit transitional bilingual education classes in which their child is enrolled and to come to the school for a conference to explain the nature of transitional bilingual education. The notice shall be in writing in English and in the language of which the child of the parents so notified possesses a primary speaking ability. Any parent whose child has been enrolled in a program in transitional bilingual education shall have the absolute right to immediately withdraw his child from said program by providing written notice of such desire to the school authorities of the school in which his child is enrolled or to the school district in which his child resides.

Table 19: Notice of enrollment and parental rights (105 ILCS 5/14C-4)

Notice of Enrollment and Withdrawal 23 Illinois Administrative Code 228.40(a)
a) Notice of Enrollment and Withdrawal 1) <i>Notice of Enrollment</i> – No later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year or 14 days after the enrollment of any student in a transitional bilingual education program in the middle of a school year, the school district shall notify by mail the parents or legal guardians of the student that their child has been enrolled in a transitional bilingual education program or a transitional program of instruction. The notice shall be in English and in the home language of the student and shall convey, in simple, nontechnical language, all of the information called for in Section 14C-4 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/14C-4]. 2) <i>Withdrawal by Parents</i> – Any parent or legal guardian whose child has been enrolled in a program shall have the absolute right to withdraw the child from the program immediately by submitting a written notice of his or her desire to withdraw the child to the school authorities of the school in which the child is enrolled or to the school district in which the child resides. (Section 14C-4 of the School Code)

Table 20: Notice of enrollment and withdrawal (23 Ill. Adm. Code 228.40[a])

Maintenance of Records and Reporting Procedures 23 Illinois Administrative Code 228.40(c)(1)
1) Report Cards—The school shall send progress reports to parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in programs in the same manner and with the same frequency as progress reports are sent to parents or legal guardians of other students enrolled in the school district. A) Progress reports shall indicate the student's progress in the program and in the general program of instruction. B) Progress reports shall indicate when the student has successfully completed requirements for transition from the program into the general program of instruction if that information has not been reported separately in writing to the parents or legal guardian. C) Progress reports for all students enrolled in a program under this Part shall be written in English and in the student's home language unless a student's parents or legal guardian agrees in writing to waive this requirement. The parents' waiver shall be kept on file in accordance with subsection (c)(3) of this Section.

Table 21: Maintenance of records and reporting procedures (23 Ill. Adm. Code 228.40(c)(1))

Secondly, Illinois School Code policy promotes parent voice and parents' rights to engage in decision-making. Section 14C-10 of the Illinois School Code establishes district-level parent advisory committees where parents of emergent bilinguals can “express their views” and participate in the planning, operation, and evaluation of the district’s TBE program (see Table 22). In addition, once they are established, parent advisory committees are expected to “autonomously carry out their affairs” which is significant because a majority of the membership must be parents of children enrolled in the TBE program (see Table 22). The Illinois Administrative Code elaborates on this mandate by detailing (a) the minimum number of times the committee must meet; (b) the requirement for maintaining records of meeting minutes; (c) the responsibility of the committee to review the district’s annual program application to the state;³⁵ and (d) the responsibility of the district to ensure the committee receives the necessary training that equips the committee members with the knowledge and skills they need to fulfill their responsibilities as a committee and engage in decision-making for the TBE program (see Table 23).

³⁵ Part 228.50(b)(4)(f) of the Illinois Administrative Code states that districts’ must provide assurances that the Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee had an opportunity to review the program application to the state.

Parent and Community Participation Illinois School Code Sec. 14C-10
School districts shall provide for the maximum practical involvement of parents of children in transitional bilingual education programs. Each school district shall, accordingly, establish a parent advisory committee which affords parents the opportunity effectively to express their views and which ensures that such programs are planned, operated, and evaluated with the involvement of, and in consultation with, parents of children served by the programs. Such committees shall be composed of parents of children enrolled in transitional bilingual education programs, transitional bilingual education teachers, counselors, and representatives from community groups; provided, however, that a majority of each committee shall be parents of children enrolled in the transitional bilingual education program. Once established, these committees shall autonomously carry out their affairs, including the election of officers and the establishment of internal rules, guidelines, and procedures.

Table 22: Parent and community participation (105 ILCS 5/14C-10)

Parent and Community Participation 23 Illinois Administrative Code 228.30(c)(4)
<i>Parent and Community Participation</i>—Each district or cooperative shall establish a parent advisory committee consisting of parents, legal guardians, transitional bilingual education teachers, counselors, and community leaders. This committee shall participate in the planning, operation, and evaluation of programs. The majority of committee members shall be parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in these programs. Membership on this committee shall be representative of the languages served in programs to the extent possible. (Section 14C-10 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/14C-10]) A) The committee shall: i) meet at least four times per year; ii) maintain on file with the school district minutes of these meetings; iii) review the district's annual program application to the State Superintendent of Education; and iv) <i>autonomously carry out their affairs, including the election of officers and the establishment of internal rules, guidelines, and procedures.</i> (Section 14C-10 of the School Code) B) Each district or cooperative shall ensure that training is provided annually to the members of its parent advisory committee. This training shall be conducted in language that the parent members can understand and shall encompass, but need not be limited to, information related to instructional approaches and methods in bilingual education; the provisions of State and federal law related to students' participation and parents' rights; and accountability measures relevant to students in bilingual programs.

Table 23: Parent and community participation (23 Ill. Adm. Code 228.30[c](4))

Finally, the Illinois School Code builds on federal policy regarding programs or training activities for parents of emergent bilinguals by setting expectations for supporting parent advocacy. In Table 17, the definition for “family education program” in NCLB (2002) states that such programs are “designed to” help participants learn English and how to support students’ academic achievement. There is no reference at all to advocacy, much less to helping parents develop the knowledge and skills they need to advocate for their children. Family education programs as defined under Title III are very narrow in scope when compared to “parent academies” as defined in the Illinois School Code (see Table 24). While they both highlight the

need for parents to learn how to support student learning, Illinois parent academies also highlight the need for parents to learn data literacy skills so that they can interpret standardized test scores and advocate for their children’s academic success (see item #1 in Table 24). Another point to highlight is that the purpose of the parent academies is to “increase parents’ ability to successfully navigate the education system and monitor their children’s education” (105 ILCS 5/14C-13[b]). Knowing how to advocate and navigate the U.S. school system are essential skills for parents of emergent bilinguals to have (Auerbach, 2007; Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Hong, 2011; Johnson, 2011).

In summary, state-level policy in Illinois sets clear expectations for partnerships with parents of emergent bilinguals enrolled in TBE programs. Within Article 14C of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/14C) and Part 228 of the Illinois Administrative Code (23 Ill. Adm. Code 228) it is clear that parents of emergent bilinguals are expected to have a voice in their children’s language education, knowledge of their parental rights in regard to their children’s placement in a language education program, opportunities to engage in programmatic decision-making, and opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills they need to navigate the school system and advocate for their children’s learning. Moreover, the Advisory Council on Bilingual Education (105 ILCS 5/14C-13), a council made up of experts in the field of language education, was established to advise the State Superintendent on policy and rules pertaining to bilingual education including how to increase parental involvement in bilingual education programs (105 ILCS 5/14C-13[ii]) and how to best support bilingual parent advisory committees (105 ILCS 5/14C-13[iv]). Furthermore, to support school districts the state provides various resources, including compliance monitoring resources that outline Title III and state-level policy focused on parental involvement in TBE/EL programs (Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE], 2016a,

2016c). The following section focuses on two such state-provided resources published by the Illinois State Board of Education that provide districts and schools guidance on policy, and more specifically, guidance on family engagement practices.

Parent Academies Illinois School Code Sec. 14C-13(b)
(b) For the purpose of this Section: "Parent academies" means a series of parent development opportunities delivered throughout the school year to increase parents' ability to successfully navigate the education system and monitor their children's education. Parent academies are specifically designed for parents of students who are enrolled in any of the English Language Learner programs and are to be provided after work hours in the parents' native language. At a minimum, parent academies shall allow participants to do the following: (1) understand and use their children's standardized tests to effectively advocate for their children's academic success; (2) learn home strategies to increase their children's reading proficiency; (3) promote homework completion as a successful daily routine; (4) establish a positive and productive connection with their children's schools and teachers; and (5) build the character traits that lead to academic success, such as responsibility, persistence, a hard-work ethic, and the ability to delay gratification.

Table 24: Definition of parent academies (105 ILCS 5/14C-13)

State-level Resources for Illinois School Districts

The Illinois State Board of Education recently published the *Family engagement framework: A guide for Illinois school districts, schools and families* (ISBE, 2013) and the *Equitable access to educational excellence: Framing services for English learners in Illinois* (ISBE, 2016) toolkit. The purpose of these two publications is to provide Illinois districts guidance and resources in regard to strengthening family engagement practices and ensuring equity for ELs in Illinois schools, respectively. For example, in order to “encourage more systemic, sustained, and integrated family engagement” at the district-level, the *Family engagement framework: A guide for Illinois school districts, schools and families* (ISBE, 2013) recommends the following four principles: (a) develop systems that support family engagement; (b) build welcoming and supporting environments; (c) enhance communication with parents; and (d) include parents in decision-making (ISBE, 2013). To help districts achieve these four principles, the framework discusses federal and state policies regarding family engagement, as

well as research on best practices for building relationships with families. The framework also includes resources to help districts analyze their current practices and monitor their progress toward improving relationships with families. It is important to note, however, that the framework is not EL-specific. It provides support to districts for establishing relationships with families in general, not just families of emergent bilinguals.

Both publications also send a clear message that the education of emergent bilinguals is a shared responsibility amongst various stakeholder groups which includes parents and families. For example, the *Equitable access to educational excellence: Framing services for English learners in Illinois* (ISBE, 2016) states:

Because English learners are the collective responsibility of districts and all stakeholders within those districts, it is critical that district administrators, school leaders, teachers, and other instructional personnel, in collaboration with the family members and the community at large, develop a cohesive and systemic support structure to meet the students' varying needs (p. iii).

Similarly, the *Family engagement framework: A guide for Illinois school districts, schools and families* (ISBE, 2013) encourages readers to:

Please share the Family Engagement Framework Guide with school board members, parent involvement coordinators, school administrators, coaches, families, and community partners to strengthen family engagement and build relationships among critical partners in the education of students (p. 3).

By explicitly identifying parents and families as critical stakeholders, one could argue that the publications promote practices that support partnerships with families. Furthermore, the more recent publication of the two, the *Equitable access to educational excellence: Framing services for English learners in Illinois* (ISBE, 2016) encourages districts and schools to go above and beyond simply meeting policy requirements. In other words, compliance is not enough. The publication states:

English learners bring value to the educational institution, and their bilingual and biliteracy abilities should be celebrated, especially in today's multilingual world. The vision for ELs in Illinois is to ensure that true equity exists and ELs are reaching parity with all students. Compliance with the federal and state legal requirements is the floor; best pedagogical practices should drive how educational services for ELs are designed and delivered (ISBE, 2016; p. vii).

The statement above is very significant for parents of emergent bilinguals. First, it explicitly mentions the value of bilingualism and biliteracy. Illinois supports bilingual education and mandates TBE programs, and although students in TBE programs learn in both English and their home language, state-level policy is silent when it comes to communication with parents about students' progress in the home language. State-level policy that references emergent bilinguals' "progress in the program" can be interpreted to mean progress in English since accountability under NCLB (2002) is tied to ELs' progress in attaining English. Secondly, the statement opens the door for conversations about equity in the education of emergent bilinguals. If the vision for the state is that "true equity exists" and compliance "is the floor" (ISBE, 2016), then one could argue that districts and schools should be taking steps to ensure that Latino parents of emergent bilinguals have equitable access to information on their children's language education and progress in both English and Spanish.

It is also important to note that within these two publications, the state introduced a shift in language. Both publications move away from "parental involvement," the term used in NCLB (2002) and state-level policy, and instead use the term "family engagement." Furthermore, both publications define family engagement as presented in Table 25.

<i>Definition for Family Engagement</i>
Meaningful family engagement is based on the premise that parents, educators, and community members share responsibility for the academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development of youth. Family engagement is fostered through a deliberate process that is embraced throughout the school. It empowers adults to jointly support student growth, addresses any barriers to learning, and ensures college and career readiness. Foremost, effective family engagement systems, policies and practices are mindful of diverse school-communities that are rich in language, culture, and school experiences. They are responsive to student and family needs. (see ISBE, 2013, p. 7; ISBE, 2016, p. 2)

Table 25: Definition of family engagement used within recent ISBE publications

This definition for family engagement positions families and educators as partners. It promotes a “shared responsibility” for student success. Moreover, the definition implies a need for capacity building so that parents can be “empowered” to support their children’s education. What makes this definition unique, however, is that it explicitly recognizes diverse families and the need for “systems, policies and practices” that are responsive to families’ needs. In short, the more recent definition for family engagement in state-level resources sets expectations for partnerships between educators and parents that promote a shared responsibility for student success and a reciprocal relationship that benefits students, families, and educators. It is important to remember that this definition is not within state-level policy. It is published within state-level resources that districts and schools are not *required* to use—districts and schools can *choose* to use them to guide local practice.

Despite the optional nature of these two publications, ISBE has been taking steps to disseminate the content of these publications to educators across the state. For example, ISBE began offering professional development workshops to Illinois educators on family engagement³⁶. However, at the time of this writing, there were no offerings on family engagement specific to emergent bilinguals and their families. Despite the professional development offerings available, one could argue that attending a conference presentation and/or

³⁶ See <http://isbe.net/family-engagement/html/resources.htm> for information on workshops and webinars offered.

workshop is not enough to change practice. If the state's vision is to secure equity for emergent bilinguals and to build partnerships with their families, then educators and families of emergent bilinguals need opportunities to learn together and from each other in order to build relationships and ensure a systemic change in local practice. For example, just as educators need to have the knowledge and skills for working with families, families must also have opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills they need to work with educators. Dual capacity-building is essential for systemic changes to family engagement practices (Mapp & Kuttner, 2014).

ISBE recognizes that more must be done to disseminate the information within these publications. The family engagement framework, for example, explicitly states that ISBE is “in the process of identifying communication channels for dissemination of materials and developing a continuous feedback loop so that the field can provide input related to the Framework and professional development needs” (ISBE, 2013, p. 6). Thus, dissemination is a work in progress and the outreach efforts continue.

[Institutionalized Family Engagement Discourse within Bilingual Education Programs in Illinois](#)

It is clear that Illinois districts receiving Title I and/or Title III funding must meet the parent involvement policy requirements outlined within NCLB (2002) in addition to state-level mandates outlined in the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/14C) and Illinois Administrative Code (23 Ill. Adm. Code 228). Although Title III policy seems to emphasize the role of parents as *recipients* of information and training from educators, it does state that (a) communication with parents should be in the home language “to the extent practicable,” (b) Title III funds can be used to provide family education programs, (c) parents of emergent bilinguals have the right to accept or refuse language education services, and (d) the goal of parent outreach efforts should be to help parents be “active participants” in supporting student learning (NCLB, 2002). Illinois

policy reflects these federal mandates, but builds on them by introducing state-level mandates that place a bigger emphasis on the role parents of emergent bilinguals as partners. For example, the establishment of district-level bilingual parent advisory committees, the requirement of communication in the home language for parents of children in TBE programs, and parent capacity-building in the home language that includes helping parents learn to advocate and navigate the school system. From this review of policy, I identified four key expectations for family engagement within bilingual language education programs in Illinois. These key expectations are presented in Figure 4.

First and foremost, family engagement within bilingual language education programs in Illinois requires meaningful communication with parents in a language they understand. This calls for translations and interpreters, but it also calls for awareness of the use of educator jargon

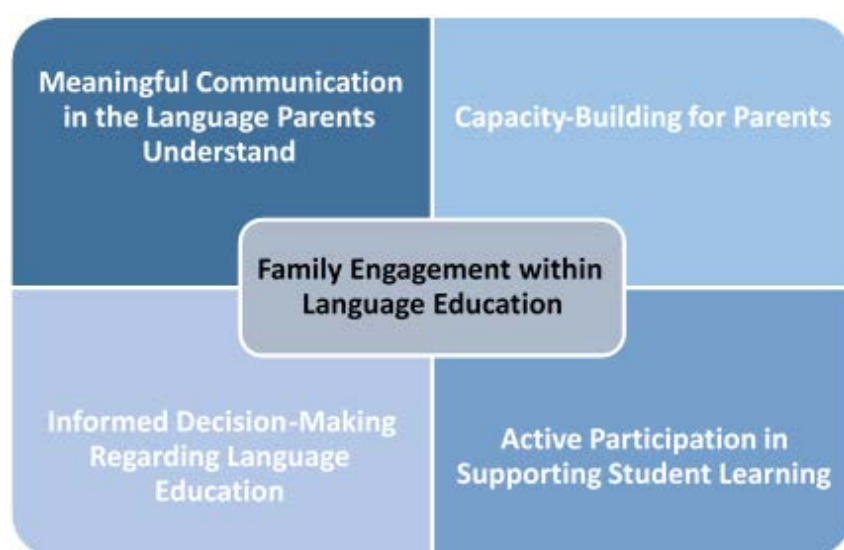


Figure 4: Key expectations for family engagement within Title III and Illinois policy

when communicating with parents. Communication with parents is expected to use parent-friendly language. Second, capacity-building for parents is required to at a minimum ensure that parents understand how to support student learning, how to advocate for their children, and how

to navigate the school system.³⁷ Third, parents of emergent bilinguals should be given opportunities to make informed decisions regarding their children's language education. This expectation plays a key role under federal and state parental notification policy. Like any parent, parents of emergent bilinguals have the right to decide what is best for their children, especially when it comes to decisions that will impact their children's use of language. In addition, parents with children in districts that offer TBE programs have the option to participate in the district's bilingual parent advisory council, whose purpose is to engage in programmatic decision-making. And finally, active participation in supporting student learning, based on statements within federal and state policy, call for a focus on supporting academic achievement. The policies reviewed explicitly highlight supporting academic achievement. It is important to note, however, that such a narrow definition of "student learning" is problematic for emergent bilinguals because their education consists of learning content *and* language.

These four key expectations synthesize mandates in federal and Illinois policy; hence, they are tied to compliance. As such, these four expectations have the power to influence how educators at districts and schools talk about parents of emergent bilinguals, inform decisions made that target parents, and shape the practices or approaches educators implement to engage with parents. For instance, during compliance monitoring visits, Illinois districts must provide evidence to the state that parental involvement mandates, which include the four key expectations in Figure 4, are being met (ISBE, 2016a, 2016c). Thus, for the context of this study, these four expectations establish an institutionalized family engagement discourse that has the power to shape or inform local family engagement practice within bilingual language education programs in Illinois.

³⁷ While the focus here is on capacity-building for parents, it is also critical to consider providing capacity building for educators and staff (Mapp & Kuttner, 2014).

What is critical to note is that despite all the rhetoric from national policy-makers about multilingualism being a key to success in the 21st century (see Duncan & Gil, 2014), and the state-level mandates in Illinois for bilingual education, the institutionalized family engagement discourse within bilingual language education programs is virtually silent when it comes to engaging parents of emergent bilinguals in their children's learning and development of languages other than English. For this study, this means that there is silence in regard to Spanish. Without explicit references to family engagement in support of language education, family engagement practices used to engage with Latino parents of emergent bilinguals will fall short of fully meeting the needs of students and parents. This was evident in the parent-reported data. The following section will discuss parent needs and wants in regard to their children's language education program that could enhance school-based family engagement practices that target Latino families of emergent bilinguals.

When Practice Falls Short: Parent Needs and Wants

During the interviews, parents were asked to discuss school-based opportunities they have had to engage in their children's language education. Parent responses revealed that, more often than not, school-based family engagement practices excluded children's language education and focused heavily on academic achievement. When parents were asked what schools could do to support families of emergent bilinguals, all eleven participants identified needs and/or wants. Based on their reported experiences and opinions, it is clear that a divergence exists between parents' perspectives and the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education in Illinois.

Table 26 was created to honor and highlight the voice of each parent participant.³⁸ Their responses identify a need for districts and schools serving Latino parents of emergent bilinguals to (in no particular order): (a) explain how the language education program works to parents; (b) promote and assist in establishing cross-cultural relationships amongst the students; (c) provide families support to overcome language barriers when helping with homework; (d) promote and support biculturalism; (e) extend language education programs to provide continuity of services; (f) elevate the status of Spanish; (g) provide meaningful information regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (h) provide more resources in Spanish; and (i) listen to parent voice. Parent responses were often driven by personal experience; but in a couple of instances, their responses were driven by their observations of what other parents experienced (e.g., non-Spanish speaking parents in dual language).

³⁸ Parent participants are listed in alphabetical order. In addition, their needs and/or wants are listed alphabetically.

Table 26: Parent participant needs and wants

Need and/or Want		Quote
Angelica	Explain how the program works to parents	Eso era como un miedo que yo tenía porque cuando Natalia empezó en español en la escuela, mucha gente nos criticó que porque en español, que el español la iba confundir, que no iba saber, que la escuela la iba confundir. Que para que la poníamos en español si nosotros en la casa le íbamos a hablar en español. Que ella iba agarrar el inglés muy fácil, que la escuela, que no sé qué. Nosotros no más los escuchábamos. Como siempre hemos hecho. Escuchamos la opinión de las personas pero nosotros hacemos lo que en realidad nosotros pensamos que hasta bien. [...] la empezamos a poner en español y ella se sentía cómoda...No nos dejamos confundir con los comentarios de las personas y este, pero eso es la duda de muchos padres como que si esta correcto que estén en español ¿o no? O algunos quieren que estén en español pero la principal no quiere. Porque dice que no, que ya están listos para entrar al inglés. <i>That was like a fear I had because when Natalia started in Spanish at school, a lot of people criticized us because that being in Spanish would confuse her, that she wouldn't understand, that the school would confuse her. That why would we put her in Spanish if we spoke Spanish at home. That she would learn English quickly, and I don't know what else. We would just listen to them. Like we've always done. We listen to other people's opinion but we do what we think is best. We put her in Spanish and she felt comfortable. We didn't allow ourselves to get confused by others' comments, but that is a concern for many parents—is it okay to put them in Spanish or not? Some parents want them in Spanish but the principal says no. [The principal] says no because the kids are ready for English.</i>
Claudia	Promote and assist in establishing cross-cultural relationships amongst the students	I wish that [Latino] culture would be more open to allowing their children to step outside their comfort zone. I understand the whole, you know, it's cultural differences and blah, blah, blah. But I feel like you're here. Like, you need to work with people. You need to be able to give up some of yourself to make this better for your children. Because if you have playdates with Spanish-speaking kids. You see that you're the same as them. If you have playdates, as a Spanish-speaking person, if you have playdates with a native English-speaking child, you're never gonna feel like you're not allowed in that group, you're always gonna feel like, "What? They're all my friends." Right? Like you're always going to be able to cross those borders without a problem. I wish the school would help with that.
	Promote and support biculturalism	[Schools should make] the Spanish culture an important part of their lives. Because I can say it. I can say Spanish is important, you need to know it. It's going to give you so many opportunities in life. You're going to be able to go to all these countries. I can say that until I'm blue in the face. But, if the teachers can also help the kids understand how important this language will be for them, and how for those whose life it isn't a part of, it will be important to get you to different places, for those kids who this isn't their culture. But for kids who this is their culture, how can the teacher help my child to understand how important their culture is to them?
	Provide families support to overcome language barriers when helping with homework	I would say a homework club where the kids who don't have someone at home to help them in Spanish could come after school and someone could help them do the homework...Because if [my husband] doesn't speak a lick of Spanish...If I'm not around, he's not going to have time to learn Spanish so he can help the kids. But he sure will be willing to pay, let's say tutors, right? Like somebody after school that's willing to sit and do homework club in Spanish for kids who don't speak Spanish at home.

Diana	Extend language education programs to provide continuity of services	If I had a magic wand, I would wish that the high school had Spanish at the level [my daughter] needs. I am afraid that when she goes into high school, her Spanish will suffer. First, they are different districts so she not only changes schools, she changes districts. And there is no continuity. The school that she is going into does not provide anything for dual language students.
Elena	Explain how the program works to parents	[Parents] should be informed about the positive benefits of bilingual education... Sometimes they're refusing just because they look at the two teachers and the teacher in the general ed classroom is just a better teacher. It might be as individual and personal as that. Sometimes it's not about convincing them about the philosophy of bilingual ed. I'm living that now. I believe in what [the dual language school] wants to do, it's just not working for my kids at this moment in time.
	Promote and support biculturalism	I feel that there is this belief in traditional, kind of the old-school, old guard of dual language that like, 'Oh, you just bring these two language groups together!' First of all, they're not clear groups anymore. My kids don't fall into one group or the other, and I don't feel that they should feel like they have to. Right? But, we're missing this opportunity to talk about identity and culture in a much more nuanced, much more multidimensional way. We just assume positive ideas about culture, and positive behaviors toward others exist, you know? I feel like that conversation has been neglected at the school and that a kind of corrosive culture has taken root.
Isabel	Elevate the status of Spanish	Lorena: So, ahora pensando de nuevo, otra vez, en la escuela y lo maestros, en tu opinión, ¿recibes lo suficiente ayuda? Pensando en que tus hijos mantengan sus dos idiomas, ¿recibes ayuda de los maestros? ¿De la escuela? Isabel: No. Lorena: ¿No? ¿Por qué no? Isabel: No. Pienso, en mi opinión, pienso que la escuela está más interesada en que el niño vaya al de inglés para que sea solo inglés. Lorena: ¿Por qué piensas eso? Isabel: Porque lo he visto. Lo he visto y lo he sentido. Porque para un maestro es más fácil o para una escuela tener más niños dedicados nada más al inglés que los niños bilingües es más fácil. Lorena: So, thinking again about the school and the teachers. In your opinion, do you receive enough support? Thinking of wanting your sons to maintain both languages, do you receive support from the teachers? The school? Isabel: No. Lorena: No? Why not? Isabel: No. I think that, in my opinion, I think that the school is more interested in children going into English so that it's all English. Lorena: Why do you think that? Isabel: Because I've seen it. I have seen it and I feel it. Because to a teacher, or the school, it is much easier to have children dedicated only to English than to have bilingual students.
	Provide meaningful information regarding curriculum, instruction and assessment	Bueno, en mi opinión, yo pienso que cada uno de los padres tenía que estar interesado en que la escuela le explicara específicamente a cada padre como trabaja un maestro... Porque pienso que es la mejor manera en que uno puedo ayudar más a su hijo en casa. Porque por ejemplo, yo sé que el maestro habla español...y que le ayuda a mi hijo en español y luego se pasa en inglés, pero en sí...como, por ejemplo, yo Well, in my opinion, I think that every parent should be interested in having the school specifically explain to us how a teacher works because I think that this is the best way that we can help our children at home. Because, for example, I know that the teacher speaks Spanish and that she helps my son in Spanish and then switches to English, but even so, I don't know what topics they teach. The teacher has her topics for the class but I don't know the topics the teacher teaches. If I knew each

		no sé qué temas tienen. El maestro tiene sus temas durante la clase pero yo no conozco esos temas que tiene el maestro. Si yo supiera cada tema que lleva el maestro en la escuela, que va tener mi hijo, si yo lo tuviera en casa yo también estaría al pendiente de saber de qué manera yo también me tengo que preparar para ayudarlo a mi hijo en casa. No solo en una materia si no en todas las materias y no solo en bilingüe sino también en inglés. Aunque uno no entienda el idioma.	<i>topic teachers cover at school, that my son will learn, if I had it at home I could also be aware of what I need to prepare to help my son at home. Not just in one subject, but for all subjects, and not just for bilingual but for subjects in English too. Regardless of not knowing the language.</i>
Leonardo	Extend language education programs to provide continuity of services	Yo sé que [el programa] llega a middle school y ya después ya no hay más. ¿Cómo piensan seguir fomentando el español en sexto grado y en middle school antes de que lleguen a high school?	<i>I know that the program goes to middle school and then that's it. There's no more. How do they plan to keep promoting Spanish in sixth grade and middle school before they get to high school?</i>
	Provide families support to overcome language barriers when helping with homework	Pero sí, yo sé que muchos padres han mostrado preocupación por eso porque no pueden ayudar a los hijos en la casa. Y las maestras lo que han tratado de ayudar es a los papás que no saben el español, les mandan también la tarea en inglés. Unas maestras han tratado de hacer eso, es lo que me han contado.	<i>But yes, I know that many parents have expressed concern because they can't help their kids at home. What the teachers have tried to do, to help those parents that don't speak Spanish, is send home the homework in English too. Some teachers have tried that—that's what I've been told.</i>
	Provide more resources in Spanish	Libros en español, no hay muchos. Y eso no es solamente en la escuela, también en el distrito [donde trabajo] no hay muchos libros de español autentico. No hay literatura en español autentica, son traducciones pero digamos que falta literatura autentica. Aunque yo, es que no conozco muchos autores para niños del hispana, no conozco muchos pero tiene que haber...Faltan recursos también para el nivel de internet. No hay muchos. Sería chévere, deben de hacerlo. La gente puede leer o aprender más el español, el vocabulario en español y son cosas más que todo para los padres de habla inglesa que no pueden ayudar tanto a los hijos.	<i>There's not that many books in Spanish. This isn't just at this school, but also in the district where I work. There aren't that many books in authentic Spanish. There's no authentic Spanish literature, just translations. Even though I don't know many Hispanic children's authors, there has to be some. There's also a lack of internet resources. There's not that many available, but it would be nice if there were. People could read or learn more Spanish, the Spanish vocabulary, and more than anything, it would help English-speaking parents that can't provide much help to their children.</i>

Lila	Provide meaningful information regarding curriculum, instruction and assessment	First of all, it would have to be something I could look at...and say, 'Oh, okay. Good.' You know? Or 'On no. Not doing good.' So, it would be like a rubric...like the six points that the WIDA standards have. Yeah, like a rubric...Something quick, something simple...and maybe some suggestions about what to do at home. Some information about what the teachers are doing in the classroom...like a plan to build up their strengths or help with their weaknesses or something, and then like suggestions for the parents about what we could do. It would kind of be like this table, you know? It would have the numbers, it would have where they're at in listening, speaking, reading, and writing [in Spanish], you know? And things that can help in each of these areas.	
Maria A	Explain how the program works to parents	¿Y sabes una cosa? Yo vi muchas veces...que papás no saben ni en que programa están sus hijos. No saben del programa ELL, no saben ni de que se trata. No saben ni a qué hora sacan a sus hijos. A mí, mi hijo ya habla bien el inglés y mi hijo ya sabe bien y mi hijo esto y el otro, pero si ni ellos saben bien el inglés ¿cómo van a saber que sus hijos hablan bien el inglés? Si ni su español es bueno, ¿cómo van a saber que están hablando un español bueno? ¿Académico? No por el hecho que te comuniques con alguien, no quiere decir que sepas hablarlo ni escribirlo ni leerlo ni nada. Eso yo lo vi...No saben ni de que les estás hablando.	<i>And you know what? I saw on several occasions that parents don't even know what program their children are in. They don't know about the ELL program; they don't even know what it's about. They don't even know what time their children are pulled out. To me, they say that their children can speak English well, and this and that, but if they themselves don't know English well how can they know if their children can speak it well? If they don't speak good Spanish, how will they know if their children are speaking good Spanish? Academic [Spanish]? Just because you can communicate with someone, doesn't mean that you can speak it, write it, read it, or anything. I've seen that...they don't even know what you're talking about.</i>
	To be heard	Yo voy a mover mar y tierra hasta que mi voz se escuche y que me hagan caso.	<i>I will move heaven and earth until my voice is heard, and people pay attention to me.</i>

Maria B	Explain how the program works to parents	No sé si sabe usted acerca del programa dual. Yo tengo ganas de comentar de eso aquí con [la directora del programa bilingüe]. Mis cuñadas están en [suburbio X] y les están ofreciendo el programa dual y están súper enojadas porque la gente no sé arrima. O sea, quieren firmas de las personas que quieran el programa dual y la gente no sé arrima. Le dije, “¿Qué es el programa dual? ¿De qué hablan?” Yo tengo ganas de comentarlo, pero no he tenido la oportunidad de hablar con [la directora del programa bilingüe]. ¿Por qué no ofrecen ese programa aquí? ¿De qué se trata? ¿Qué es lo que les falta? Porque la mayoría de los niños son hispanos. En cual quiera escuela, salen como hormiguitas y la mayoría son hispanos. Allí en [suburbio X], hay niños güeros hablando el español. ¿Cómo va ser eso? De que los güeritos hablen el español, y nosotros los hispanos que traemos, como dice la gente, el nopal aquí, estén hablando inglés.	<i>I don't know if you know about the dual program. I want to talk about it with the bilingual director. My sisters-in-law live in Suburb X where they're offering the dual program and are upset because people are not showing interest. They are collecting signatures from people that want the dual program and people are not interested. I said, 'What is the dual program? What are you talking about?' I've been wanting to talk about it, but I haven't had the opportunity to speak with the bilingual director. Why don't they offer the program here? What's it about? What are they missing? Because a majority of the students are Hispanic. At any of the schools, the students come out like a swarm of ants and a majority are Hispanic. At Suburb X, there are white children speaking Spanish. How is that possible? How can white children speak Spanish and us Hispanics [...] be speaking English?</i>
Maria C	Promote and support biculturalism	Last year's teacher, she was from Mexico. She did a lot of the holidays. She incorporated it. My daughter was so happy because they would do a lot of like, for Día de los muertos she brought bread, pan de muertos. She made costumes, they made a calavera, and they did a parade. So, they were constantly doing stuff. This year's teacher, she's from Spain, and she's new to the district. She just literally came from Spain this year. So, it's been a little bit different, compared to our expectations from last year where the teacher did a lot to expose them to our culture. Where this year you can tell, she's just, you know, doing the minimum...I've taught her a lot about her culture and the importance of this, but that's just me and nobody else talks about it. But if she saw it at school, and had already heard about it at home, she would know that we're not the only ones...She was proud that other kids were learning about her culture...That's the only thing I wish they could do so she could have that connection and she would feel proud. I just know last year she was so proud.	
	Provide families support to overcome language barriers when helping with homework	A lot of the Anglo parents wanted to know how they were gonna help their kids. Being that I know Spanish, for me that was not a problem. For the English-speaking families that was a lot of the conversation they had. How were they gonna help their kids understand the homework and everything, especially since in elementary the first couple of years were going to be mostly in Spanish...I'm like, “Okay! She's gonna be in Spanish!” I never thought about that...They did explain it [at the dual parent meeting]. They said that if we needed help, we needed to help each other. So sometimes I have parents who email me or text me, or they send me a picture of the homework and ask what the homework says. Or stuff like that.	

Maria C, continued	Explain how the program works to parents	I think my goal is that I want her to maintain her Spanish and not lose it. I think that's the reason that I put her there. Because I wanted her to keep Spanish. But as a district, or as a program, I've never heard, like, "Oh, this is her goal". Because it's still, like I said, they're only at the junior high level so they're still not even thinking about what's gonna happen in high school, so because they haven't done it enough, like, as a district. So, what's gonna happen when they pass junior high? Is it gonna continue in high school or is this gonna end?	
	Extend language education programs to provide continuity of services	From my understanding, and from my other coworker, they're up to 7th grade right now in the dual program. They've been looking at other models. Like, [a neighboring suburb] has a dual program and it's a little bit further on than ours, so they've been looking to see if maybe we can have the same one. I guess in [the neighboring suburb] at high school, kids can get credit for college by knowing Spanish and taking the Spanish courses. So, parents are very interested, and hopefully we can get the same thing by the time our kids go to high school.	
Olivia	Extend language education programs to provide continuity of services	Ósea, ¿por qué no hay un programa de educación especial bilingüe? Yo no sé si haiga, pero a mí nunca me lo ofrecieron. No creo que mi hijo sea el único en educación especial y bilingüe. Yo pienso que hay más niños en el país que tienen que tener ese problema que están yendo, que están en educación bilingüe y que tienen...que sea bilingüe y educación especial no creo que sea el único...Yo no creo que el distrito lo tenga porque si no me lo hubieran ofrecido. Digo, ¿por qué los distritos no tienen eso? Porque no creo que mi hijo sea el único. Entonces todos los que van a tener el problema de mi hijo van a tener, van a tropezar así como está el mío.	<i>So, why isn't there a bilingual special education program? I don't know if there is one, but I was never offered that option. I don't believe my son is the only one in special education that is also bilingual. I think there are more children in this country that have the same problem, that they are in bilingual education and have...that they are bilingual and in special education. I don't think my son is the only one. I don't think the district has this program or else they would have offered it to me. So, I wonder why districts don't have this. My son can't be the only one. So, what will happen is that all the kids with problems like mine, will struggle like my son is struggling.</i>
	Provide more resources in Spanish	En la biblioteca, fíjate que no sé qué tan grande es la variedad de libros en español. Porque siempre estoy leyendo los que tengo en casa o los que ellos me llevan de allí de la escuela y son los mismos.	<i>I don't know how big of a selection of books in Spanish the library has. I am always reading the ones I have at home or the ones they bring home, but they are always the same ones.</i>

Based on the data, it is evident that parent needs and wants call for educators to “walk the walk” (Auerbach, 2009) when it comes to institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education in Illinois. For example, how can these parents make informed decisions about their children’s language education (see Figure 4) when five of them identified a need for districts and schools to provide explanations to parents on how the program works? Furthermore, it is also evident that many of the needs and/or wants reported by parents correspond to their beliefs about Spanish.³⁹ For instance, “promote and support biculturalism” connects to parents’ beliefs that Spanish is inextricably tied to families’ histories and heritage. As previously discussed, parents reported that they want their children to know their history and heritage, and to be proud of their raíces [roots]. Here, we see that parents believe schools are not doing enough to address Latino culture and/or biculturalism within language education programs.

Another critical example to highlight is the parent-reported need for extending the programs and providing continuity of services. This is also tied to the previous discussion on Latino parent voice. To these parents, their children’s Spanish language education is much more than an enrichment opportunity (in the case of dual language programs) or compliance (in the case of EL programs). Spanish is a tool for maintaining family ties; an asset that will open doors in the future and allow children to provide service to others.⁴⁰ But, too often programs are designed and rolled out without consideration of parent voice. In this case, parents like Diana, Leonardo, and Maria C are left wondering what will happen to their children’s language education when they complete the last grade-level in the dual language program. Or, in the case

³⁹ See section titled *Latino Parent Voice* in Chapter 4.

⁴⁰ See section titled *Latino Parent Voice* in Chapter 4.

of Olivia, she was left advocating for her son because he was moved into special education, and there were no bilingual services available in the special education program to continue supporting her son's Spanish language development.

To summarize, parents identified that they need: information, continuity of services, access to Spanish resources, support in helping with homework and establishing cross-cultural relationships, cultural recognition, Spanish to be afforded the same status as English, and their voice to be heard. When given the time and space to reflect and discuss their beliefs, perceptions, and experiences regarding their children's language education, Latino parents of emergent bilinguals have a lot to say. Thus, they can contribute to the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education and help to strengthen or enhance school-based family engagement practices that target emergent bilinguals and their families. Furthermore, Latino parent voice is critical to the design and implementation of language education programs. The trick, however, is to create a space for their voice to emerge and to ensure that educators are ready and willing to listen.

Summary

Decades of research show that Latino families engage in their children's education in a variety of ways. However, little is known about how Latino families of K-12 emergent bilinguals specifically engage in, or support, their children's language education. Thus, the findings discussed in this chapter are significant because they illustrate examples of Latino parent voice in regard to language education; and furthermore, they identify examples of how Latino parent voice is silenced in institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education in Illinois.

Research has shown that the voice and presence of parents from non-dominant groups, such as Latinos, is neither fully understood nor recognized, much less given any weight, within

institutionalized family engagement discourse (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013; Ceja, 2004; DaSilva Iddings & Katz, 2007; Hidalgo, 1998; McKenna & Millen, 2013; Pérez Carreón, Drake, & Calabrese Barton, 2005; Poza, Brooks, & Valdés, 2014; Salas, 2004; Tejero Hughes, Martinez Valle-Riestra, & Arguelles, 2008; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). If the voice of Latino parents of emergent bilinguals, parents that represent the nation's largest and fastest growing population of language learners (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011; Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011), is not understood, recognized, or given any weight, how exactly can Latino parents be expected to fulfill the expectations for partnerships embedded within family engagement discourse?

Furthermore, the notion of “partnerships” as discussed within family engagement policy and discourse is not easily achieved by parents from non-dominant groups. For instance, the definition for parental involvement under NCLB (2002) presents many challenges for Latino parents of emergent bilinguals. First, a “partnership” implies equality between parents and educators. However, power relations that are deeply embedded within the U.S. school system coupled with histories of racism and marginalization make “parents as full partners” (NCLB, 2002) nearly impossible to achieve when the families in question are Latino or from other non-dominant groups (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013; de Carvalho, 2001; Delgado Gaitan, 2014; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). Thus, educators seeking to establish partnerships with Latino parents of emergent bilinguals must not only create spaces for parent voice to emerge and be heard, but they must also closely examine power relations and ensure that the partnerships are inclusive of, and responsive to, students' language education.

In this study, the voice of Latino parents of emergent bilinguals rang loud and clear. To these eleven parents, the significance of their children's language education and Spanish language development goes beyond the school walls. Yet, the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education in Illinois does not explicitly recognize this. According to the parents in this study, Spanish is (a) an essential tool for maintaining family ties; (b) inextricably tied to family histories and heritage; (c) an asset that will open doors in the future and allow children to provide service to others; and (d) essential to maintain not just for this generation, but for future generations as well. In addition, parents also expressed concern over a perceived lack of Spanish within instruction and teachers' lack of Spanish proficiency. Parents believe that poor uses of Spanish within the program can be detrimental to their children's Spanish language development.

The parents in this study want their children to be successful in school. Of that there is no doubt. However, they also want their children to maintain and further develop their Spanish. These eleven parents aspire for their children to be bilingual in the future and to be able to use Spanish for a variety of purposes. Therefore, educators seeking ways to engage with Latino parents of emergent bilinguals must acknowledge that from a parent's perspective there is more to students' language learning than using language for academic purposes within the confines of the classroom. Additionally, educators must provide parents access to meaningful information on their children's content learning *and* language development.

However, the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education in Illinois is virtually silent when it comes to engaging parents in students' learning and development of languages other than English. This can be problematic for Latino parents of emergent bilinguals because the silence around languages other than English (e.g., Spanish) can

result in school-based practices that focus on English attainment and academic achievement. This was evident in the parent-reported data about school-based family engagement practices, despite the fact that a majority of the participants have children enrolled in bilingual programs that promote bilingualism and biliteracy. Borrowing from the words of several of the participants, the question that begs to be asked is, “Yes, but what about the Spanish?”

In summary, when the voice of Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals is silenced within institutionalized family engagement discourse, the results—according to parents—are school-based practices that fall short of engaging families in supporting students’ language education. Furthermore, the silencing of parent voice is also detrimental to efforts in establishing partnerships with Latino parents of emergent bilinguals. The parents in this study are invested in their children’s academic achievement, but they are also heavily invested in their children’s language education. Their voice, as well as the voice of all parents of emergent bilinguals or ELs, deserves to be heard and reflected within the discourse that drives school-based family engagement practices.

Chapter 5: When Latino Parent Voice is Silenced, Advocates Emerge

This chapter discusses the second key finding of this study, which shows that Latino parents of emergent bilinguals face challenges as a result of the silencing of Latino parent voice.⁴¹ As the five stories⁴² presented in this chapter will show, too often decisions impacting the language education of Latino emergent bilinguals are made without consideration or inclusion of Latino parent voice. This occurs despite the fact that the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education in Illinois clearly calls for parents of emergent bilinguals to have opportunities to engage in decision making.⁴³ The five parents highlighted in this chapter were driven to advocate for their children because of strongly held beliefs about Spanish and bilingualism, concerns over the language services their children received or lack thereof, and at times because of their own personal experiences and observations at schools. In short, they were driven to advocate because Latino parent voice did not have a seat at the table when programmatic decisions were made, and these five parents felt their children were the ones paying the consequences. These five stories were selected because they represent challenges families of emergent bilinguals may face within language education programs at different points of the K-12 trajectory: initial screening and placement, program changes and/or change in the language of instruction, and program extension into high school.

⁴¹ For a definition of Latino parent voice, see Chapter 4.

⁴² Four of the five accounts I will present in this chapter were shared with me entirely in Spanish. As a bilingual, I know that things can get lost in translation—not everything translates easily or smoothly. Thus, I adapted all five accounts to a 3rd person English narrative. In retelling parents' stories and to honor parent voice, I highlight direct quotes from the interviews. This means that some quotes appear in Spanish without additional translation, but they are explained within the English text.

⁴³ Four of the five parents highlighted in this chapter were members of their district's bilingual parent advisory council, but yet they still felt they did not have a say in decision-making. These bilingual parent advisory councils are mandated by state law in Illinois and are discussed in Chapter 4.

I begin, however, by defining *advocate* within the context of this discussion. I define *advocate* as a parent, guardian, close friend, or family member who speaks out or takes action on behalf of a child or family. An advocate is emotionally invested and driven by the goals and dreams they hold for the child or family, and/or they may be driven to advocate based on personal or familial experiences of marginalization or discrimination within society and/or social institutions (e.g., schools). Furthermore, an advocate takes action in ways that can be overt, but at times subtle. This way of defining advocate reflects the voices and presence of the eleven participants of this study. At no point during the interviews did the parents in this study explicitly describe themselves as advocates, or the actions they took on behalf of their children and families as advocacy. Nevertheless, “parents as advocates” emerged as a theme in the data.

No lo quiero en inglés: Advocating for Placement in the TBE Program

Maria B describes her experience with her son’s initial English language proficiency screening and kindergarten placement as “traumatic.” This is because of everything she went through to get her son placed in the TBE program. Maria B wanted her third son, Ramiro, to be enrolled in the TBE kindergarten classroom, but based on Ramiro’s initial English language screening⁴⁴ he did not qualify for TBE services, and the recommended placement was the mainstream, all-English kindergarten classroom. Maria B was devastated when she was informed of this. “But I don’t want him in English,” is what she said to the teacher who did the screening. “I’m sorry, but he scored high in English,” was the teacher’s response according to Maria B.

Con el que batallé fue con Ramiro. Ramiro ya era puro inglés...primero fue a preschool un año y me paso algo bien—en parte fue algo traumático para mí.

⁴⁴ Per federal policy under NCLB (2002), each state has identification criteria for EL services. Students eligible to be screened for EL services, are given an English language proficiency assessment (screener) and their scores are used to determine if they qualify for services.

She remembers leaving that appointment feeling stressed, yet hopeful. She was stressed because she had exactly one week to resolve this issue and get her son

Yo me salí de allí, confiaba en que yo estaba en el comité. Yo dije, “Yo tengo quien me ayude.”

placed in the TBE program where he would learn in Spanish, and she was hopeful because she was a member of the district’s bilingual parent committee and was confident that she would find someone through that group’s network to help her. When she shared with her husband what had happened, he at first indirectly blamed Maria B because it was her idea to enroll Ramiro in preschool where he learned a lot of English. This further exacerbated her initial stress and frustration over the situation.

Maria B’s first step toward finding a resolution was to seek the help of Mrs. Garcia, the district’s parent liaison that worked with the bilingual parent committee. Mrs. Garcia offered to

Entonces yo lleve a mí niño y yo me sentía mal porque, le dije “Mijo, no quiero que hables inglés. Te van hacer un examen pero no quiero que vayas hablar en inglés.” Es algo bien traumático porque como le estoy pidiendo a mí hijo algo que, que le van a preguntar, ¿no?

give Ramiro the screening again. This time, Maria B told Ramiro that she did not want him to speak in English at all during the screening. She explained to him that they were going to ask him questions in English, but that she wanted him to only speak in Spanish. Telling her son to

not speak in English during the second screening is what, according to Maria B, made this a traumatic experience. As a mother she felt it was wrong to ask her son to do this, and she felt guilty. But she felt she had no choice. Unfortunately for Maria B, once Mrs. Garcia started speaking to Ramiro in English, he quickly started to respond in English and once again scored high enough to not qualify for the TBE program. Maria B remembers fighting back tears as she pleaded with Mrs. Garcia for help. Mrs. Garcia offered to speak to the school’s principal to see if there was anything he could do to help. That evening, Maria B cried as she shared the events of

the day with her husband. This time she recalls that he directly said, “It’s all your fault.” By this time, Maria B was consumed with guilt and was starting to blame herself for her son’s placement in the English kindergarten classroom.

What pains Maria B the most about this experience, however, is Ramiro’s interpretation of the events. After his second screening with Mrs. Garcia, Ramiro saw his mother cry. He told his father that his mother was crying because he had taken a test and scored high. He believed that Maria B was upset because he had done well on the test. In her interview she said, “He was only six years old; what

Sí, pero fue algo que no sé me va olvidar porque esa frase de mí niño que le dijo a mí esposo, “Mí mami está enojada porque saque alta calificación.”

was I supposed to do? I felt horrible.” What Ramiro could not understand, at his young age, is that his mother was reacting this way because she was afraid she would not be able to help him in school if he was in the English classroom. Maria B had been in communication with the bilingual teacher during this experience, and the teacher had offered to help her translate the English homework assignments if indeed Ramiro was placed in an English classroom. The teacher’s offer, however, was not a solution in Maria B’s eyes. She did not want to be dependent on someone else to help her son; she wanted to be the one helping her son get ahead in life. That meant she needed him in the bilingual program so she could help him with his homework. She recalls trying to explain to Ramiro that she wanted him in the bilingual classroom because she could then speak with his teacher in Spanish. But, Ramiro was too young to understand. Nonetheless, his interpretation of the events haunts Maria B—she feels she will never forget how he said that she was upset because he did well on the test.

The following day, with three days left for the start of the school year, Mrs. Garcia informed Maria B that the principal said there was nothing he could do. Ramiro would be placed in the English classroom. “But that’s not what I want,” she said through tears to Mrs. Garcia.

Le hable a una de mis sobrinas, tenía mi sobrina de 12 años. Le dije, “Mija, necesito que vayas con migo a la escuela.” “Tía, ¿para qué?” “Vamos hablar con el director.” Era una niña...pero yo necesitaba que alguien me ayudara. O sea, yo dije, “¿A quién, dios mío?” Dije, pues ni modo.

“What am I going to do?” she asked herself. At that moment she realized she needed to speak to the principal directly, but she needed help to do so because she does not speak English. She called the only person available at that time to help her—her twelve-year-old niece. Her

niece agreed to serve as an interpreter, as long as she could bring the three-year-old she was babysitting. Off they went to speak to the principal—Maria B, Ramiro, her twelve-year-old niece, and a three-year-old child. Maria B recalls wishing that the children would remain quiet during the meeting, but unfortunately they were not. It was the price she was willing to pay, however, to have her niece there as an interpreter.

Maria B presented her case to the principal, and he said he would think it over and get back to her the next day. Upon hearing that Maria B recalls telling him, “Where do I have to call? What else do I have to do? If you cannot help me I will go somewhere else to find help because I want my son in the bilingual program.” Maria B had never been this direct with an educator, much less with a principal, but at this point she was determined to find someone to help her.

Entonces yo le dije a él, “¿A dónde tengo que hablar? ¿Qué más tengo que hacer?” le dije, “Porque si usted no me resuelve yo me voy a ir a otro lado a hablar porque lo quiero en bilingüe.” No, es que a mí se me puso y dije alguien me tiene que ayudar.

The principal told her that he would have an answer for her the following day, so Maria B and the children left. Later that same day, she received a phone call from the school asking her to

Ya al niño lo iban a dejar allí. Era un trauma para mí porque era una semana lo que me quedaba. Dije, no. No lo quiero así. Fue algo un poquito difícil.

return because the principal wanted to speak with her.

At this second meeting, the principal informed her that he would make an exception and allow Ramiro to be placed in the bilingual program. Maria B recalls feeling

overjoyed upon hearing the news. She remembers crying and hugging the principal—an action that is very out of character for her. But she said she couldn't help it; she simply hugged him and thanked him for helping her. As she left the school, she encountered Mrs. Garcia. Upon hearing the news of Ramiro's placement in the TBE program, Mrs. Garcia told Maria B that perhaps she had not done a good enough job of explaining Maria B's problem to the principal. Maria B now looks back at the situation and believes that in reality, Mrs. Garcia did not help her at all. She believes that Mrs. Garcia never truly explained her situation to the principal. This is disappointing to Maria B, because she believed that Mrs. Garcia was there to help parents like herself.

After everything Maria B went through to get Ramiro placed in the program, she wanted to make sure he stayed there as long as possible. She recalls one of her sisters telling her about a letter she had to sign, so Maria B demanded that the staff at Ramiro's school provide her a letter to sign. She didn't necessarily know what the letter was about, but since someone told her to sign something, she asked for

Les decía, "Quiero que me den una carta. Denme esa carta que necesito firmar." Y no sabía ni que carta les estaba pidiendo, pero yo quería esa carta.

a letter to sign.⁴⁵ At that time she didn't know that as a parent of child in an EL program, she had the right to consent or refuse EL services every year that Ramiro was in the program. Going forward, however, Ramiro's teachers presented Maria B with the parent notification letter, and she happily signed and gave her consent for his continued placement in the TBE program. The district's TBE program ends in third grade, at which point the children are transitioned into English classrooms. Because of her older son's experiences, Maria B was aware of this transition in fourth grade, although she didn't fully understand why it happened. When Ramiro finished third grade she knew he would be going into an English classroom, and she let it be. But prior to that, from kindergarten through third grade, she looked forward to signing the consent letter every year.

Up until this experience with Ramiro, Maria B had never before assumed the role of advocate so overtly at her sons' schools. She was driven to advocate for Ramiro's placement within the TBE program because she wants to help her son be successful in school and get ahead

Yo a mí niño lo voy a sacar adelante. Pero no lo quiero en inglés. Hasta ahorita en tercero fue cuando ya me quede calladita y dije, ni modo. Y es porque ya se terminó el programa, si no allí me tenían.

in life, and she wants to do this *in Spanish*. The bilingual program presented her with an opportunity to help her son maintain his Spanish, communicate with teachers directly, understand homework assignments, and support

her sons' learning at home. So, within one week, Maria B had to advocate for her son in ways that she had never done so before. She reached out for help to Mrs. Garcia and her niece, she met with the principal directly, and she was determined to find a resolution to her problem. The experience was "traumatic" for her because it was emotional and stressful, and drew her out of

⁴⁵ The letter Maria B is referring to is the parent notification letter required for placement in an EL program. Federal policy under NCLB (NCLB, 2002) requires that parents of ELs be notified annually about their child's placement in an EL program and that parents be given the option to consent or refuse EL services.

her comfort zone. Further, it not only affected her, it also affected her husband and Ramiro.

Maria B wants her sons to be bilingual, and she wants to be able to help them at school, so she believes the TBE program is the best option for her family. When faced with an all-English placement for her son, Maria B knew she had to act. She feels fortunate that the issue was resolved.

¿Qué pasa si no la firmo?: Advocating for Additional TBE Services

As she discussed her sons' experiences in their district's TBE program, Isabel recalled the time she received a letter indicating that her oldest son, Alexander, was ready to transition to an English classroom. The letter asked for her signature to indicate her consent that Alexander be placed in a 4th grade mainstream classroom.⁴⁶

Alexander had been receiving instruction primarily in Spanish since Kindergarten; however, English was introduced in third grade. Even though the letter,

...el tercer año me mandaron una carta para decirme que cuarto año mi hijo tenía que ir al inglés. Pero ahora yo tenía que firmar para que el cambiara de idioma porque él ya estaba preparado...Pero yo no lo firme.

according to Isabel, stated that Alexander's assessment results showed he was ready to fully transition to English, Isabel chose not to sign the letter. It was the first time she chose not to sign something that was sent home. Little did Isabel know that by not signing the letter, she set into motion a series of events that would place her in the role of advocate for her sons' language education.

⁴⁶ The goal of TBE programs is English acquisition, not bilingual development (Christian, 2006). Hence, TBE programs "transition" to English instruction. In most cases, students are transitioned to all English instruction around 3rd or 4th grade. In this case, the transition to an all-English classroom happened in 4th grade.

Isabel said she did not sign the letter for two reasons. First, she learned at parent workshops and conferences that parents have the right “to not sign.” In other words, Isabel learned that parents have the right to make decisions for their children, and that schools do not

Yo no la firme porque en todas las reuniones que he ido de información para padres, en todas las conferencias que ha ido, siempre dicen “ustedes tienen la opción de no firmar.” Pues es que siempre dicen que el padre tiene el poder de decidir. Dicen “no la escuela.” La escuela no puede decidir por ti.

have the right to make decisions on behalf of parents.

So, if a parent does not approve of something, he/she

can choose not to sign or consent. Secondly, she spoke

about the letter with her husband. He supported her

decision, and she recalls that he said, “If you don’t want

to sign it, don’t sign it. Let him stay in the bilingual

program for 4th grade.” For both Isabel and her husband, bilingual education was the best option for their sons because their home language is Spanish, and they want their children to be bilingual. She knew that English was introduced in 3rd grade; however, Alexander was still receiving some instruction in Spanish. She wanted that to continue, so she didn’t sign the letter. She assumed that the TBE program with Spanish instruction was available for all grades. Thus, she figured that by not signing, Alexander would remain in the TBE program and continue receiving some instruction in Spanish.

Shortly thereafter, Isabel started to receive messages from Alexander’s 3rd grade teacher regarding the letter. The teacher was asking Isabel to return the signed letter. Isabel ignored the messages. The teacher then called her and asked her for the letter. Isabel remembers that the teacher said that out of a class of 27, Isabel was the only parent who had not signed and returned the letter. Isabel responded to the teacher by asking, “What happens if I don’t sign it?” Isabel

wanted to know what would happen to her son if she didn't sign the letter. The teacher informed her that she would need to schedule a meeting with the principal and the district's bilingual director to discuss the issue because she (the teacher) was not in a position to talk about it with Isabel. When Isabel indicated that she would make an appointment with the principal, she

Hasta que ella me hablo... y me dijo, "Señora, necesito su carta". Le hace, "Es la única persona que no me ha entregado la carta de 27 alumnos. Es la única que no me ha firmado la carta." Y yo le pregunte, "¿Qué pasa si yo no firmo esa carta?" Y ella me dijo, "¿Por qué no la piensa firmar?" Entonces yo le dije, "No. Yo solo le estoy preguntando. ¿Qué pasa si no la firmo?"

remembers that the teacher sounded surprised and said, "So, you're really not going to sign it? You're the only mom that has not returned the letter." Isabel stood firm by her decision and ended the call with the teacher by saying, "I just want to know what happens if I don't sign it."

Isabel and her husband scheduled a meeting with the principal, bilingual director, and Alexander's 3rd grade TBE teacher. Isabel simply wanted to know why her son had to transition

...fue cuando me enseñaron las gráficas y me hablaron acerca de los exámenes que se le hacen a mi hijo. Pero yo tuve que ir allí y estar todos presentes para explicarme todo el proceso que hacen para ellos cambiar al inglés.

to English. At the meeting she asked the team, "Why can't he stay in the bilingual program for 4th grade?" It was then that the educators produced all types of graphs and assessment scores to show her that Alexander was ready to transition to English. They explained the

assessments Alexander had to take, and they walked her through his results. It was the first time that this information was explained to her, and Isabel couldn't help but wonder why it had never been shared with her before. He had been in the program since Kindergarten.

Despite the data showing that Alexander had met the criteria to transition to English, Isabel persisted in asking why he couldn't stay in the program one more year. What if her son had trouble communicating with the teacher in English? What if he needed help but didn't know how to ask for help in English? If the 4th grade teacher did not speak Spanish, as was explained to her, then who would be available to help her son?

These were the questions that Isabel remembers asking.

The team assured her that her son would be okay. They informed Isabel that they would be in contact with the 4th grade teacher to monitor Alexander's progress in

class.⁴⁷ However, Isabel persisted in wanting to know

Dice, "No, es que aquí...en esta escuela ya no hay espacio para tener otro grupo bilingüe." Le digo, "Bueno. Y si ya no hay espacio, ¿aquí en el distrito no tienen más escuelas donde vayan allí los niños que no están preparados para ir al inglés? ¿En una sola clase de cuarto grado bilingüe?"

why he couldn't stay in the program for one more year, and that's when the team finally explained to her that the TBE program with Spanish instruction ended after 3rd grade. Isabel recalls that they told her there simply wasn't space for a 4th grade bilingual classroom. All of the TBE students transitioned to English classrooms in 4th grade.⁴⁸ Isabel argued that if space at the school was an issue, why didn't the district create a 4th grade classroom at another school and provide transportation for students that needed bilingual services? "That's what the buses are for, right? To transport the kids?" she remembers asking them. But, the response from the team was simply, "It's just not possible."

⁴⁷ Per federal policy under NCLB (NCLB, 2002), schools and districts are required to monitor ELs that exit the program for two years. It is possible that this is why the team told Isabel that they would be "in contact" with the 4th grade teacher to monitor Alexander's progress.

⁴⁸ The district provided ESL support for students in grades 4-8 that were still considered ELs.

In the end, Isabel conceded to the fact that there was no TBE option for 4th grade. She signed the letter, and Alexander was transitioned to a mainstream classroom the following year. Looking back at the experience, she said she did not have an issue with signing letters that were

No, le digo, yo no tengo ningún problema para firmar ninguna hoja. Solo quería saber el motivo por el que a mi hijo lo están cambiando. Porque yo no entiendo. En verdad yo no entiendo ni lo que quiere decir ni porque me lo están cambiando.

sent home. But, she did have an issue with being asked to sign something that she didn't understand or didn't agree with. In this case, because she did not have a full understanding of how the TBE program worked, nor did she know that children would eventually exit the

program and transition to English classrooms, the letter she received did not make sense to her. When she was initially offered bilingual services for her son, she assumed it would be through 8th grade. As a result of this experience, Isabel feels she learned new information about the program, but she still has lingering questions.⁴⁹ However, she feels more confident in asking questions, or seeking clarification. She is no longer afraid to speak up at school.

Si no habla español, ¿cómo lo va apoyar?: Advocating for a Spanish-Speaking ESL Teacher

Olivia is the mother of four boys. Both she and her husband are actively involved in their sons' schools. They volunteer, they attend events, and they participate in various district committees. Furthermore, they speak English, so language has not been a major barrier for them as they interact with district staff. However, despite her experience within the schools, nothing prepared Olivia for what she would have to do to advocate for her youngest son's language education. Like his older brothers, Jaime—Olivia's youngest—was identified as an EL when he enrolled for kindergarten and was placed in the TBE program. When Jaime was in first grade, however, he

Me dan ganas de llorar, Lorena. Toda vía se me salen las lágrimas.

⁴⁹ At the time of the interview, Isabel's youngest son was still in the TBE program.

was screened for special education and qualified for services. This resulted in a major change to his EL services. As Olivia recounted this experience, a year after the fact, she said, “I feel like crying. To this day, the tears just come out.”

At home, Jaime was easily distracted and, according to Olivia, he did not want to go to school. During parent-teacher conferences, Olivia was informed that Jaime was demonstrating

Veía que tenía demasiada dificultad en la escuela...Y yo dije no, pues, aquí hay algo. Voy a pedir una evaluación del niño.

similar behaviors at school. His teachers were using various strategies to help keep him focused, but Jaime was clearly struggling. When she learned that the

strategies and supports provided by the teachers were not working, Olivia realized that something was going on. Jaime needed additional help.

Olivia spoke to the principal and requested that Jaime be evaluated. When she made this request, she knew very little about special education and the evaluation process. All she knew was that parents could request their child be evaluated.

She learned about this at a presentation she attended at a conference for parent leaders. So, she made the request. The principal provided her the paperwork she

De las conferencias que hemos ido... yo me metí una vez a una clase de los derechos de los padres y yo recuerdo haber oído de las evaluaciones, y dije “Oh. Le voy a decir al director.”

needed to sign, and informed her that it may take a few days to complete the evaluation because Jaime did not speak English and the district did not have a bilingual school psychologist. Therefore, they had to request one from a neighboring district. At this time, Olivia was completely unaware of the fact that the district did not have any bilingual-certified staff in the special education program. Jaime’s instruction thus far was primarily in Spanish.

When she was notified to come to the school to discuss the results of Jaime's evaluation, Olivia really did not know what to expect. Her husband, Manuel, joined her for the meeting, and they met with Jaime's teacher, the school social worker, and the school psychologist. Based on

Y dijeron que ellos recomendaban que el niño estuviera en educación especial. Que era lo mejor para él... Y te juro que no hallaba que hacer, no les dimos la decisión ese día.

the results, Jaime was eligible to receive special education services, and the team's recommendation was that he be placed in a special education classroom. The team presented Olivia and Manuel with two options:

Jaime could be placed in a special education classroom for the full day, or he could spend half the day in the special education classroom and the other half in his TBE classroom. This would mean that he would have math and reading with the special education teacher in English, and the rest of his subjects would be in Spanish with the bilingual teacher. As she recounted this, Olivia said, "I swear I didn't know what to do. We left without making a final decision. I just wasn't expecting to hear that."

As they discussed the team's recommendation, Olivia remembers telling Manuel, "You know what? No. I don't want Jaime in special education. There has to be another type of support for him." Olivia felt this way because she was concerned that Jaime would get confused with the change in the language of instruction. She could not

Dije, como que algo no, como que algo no hace sentido. ¿Si me entiendes? Creo que se iba confundir más de lo que lo iban a ayudar.

understand how learning math and reading with one teacher in English, and everything else in Spanish, would help him. She felt it would do more harm than good. However, before making a final decision, Olivia reached out to the bilingual director, someone who knew the family well, and asked for her opinion. The director also told Olivia that special education was the best placement for Jaime.

Olivia then agreed to accept the special education services. Jaime would be placed in a special education classroom, where instruction was in English, and he would receive ESL support. The district did not have a special education TBE classroom. Olivia was still unsure

Eso fue mi preocupación más grande...Yo digo, ¿cómo es posible que mi niño va entrar a un programa de puro inglés donde no va a entender nada?

about the change from TBE to ESL. She wondered how her son could go from a program where he had learned the alphabet, numbers, and colors in Spanish to a program where everything was in English. She was

afraid Jaime would not understand anything. She said that when she raised her concerns over his language development to the team, they assured her that Jaime would be okay. In fact, she recalls that they told her Jaime would quickly pick up the English language because he already knew letter sounds and syllables in Spanish. This explanation did little to ease her concern. Despite the team's assurances that Jaime would "quickly pick up the language," Olivia continues to question how the change from Spanish to English is helping her son.

Her concerns over Jaime's language education program were compounded by the fact that his new ESL teacher did not speak Spanish. She understood that the ESL support would be in English, but she had hoped that the ESL teacher was a Spanish-speaker and would be able to help Jaime in Spanish if needed. When Olivia

discovered that the ESL teacher was an English monolingual, she again expressed her concerns to the team that put together Jaime's individualized education plan (IEP). The team tried to reassure her and informed

Entonces me dijeron, "Olivia, no te apures. Estamos buscando una persona que va apoyar a tu hijo con sus clases en español." Pero como es muy difícil encontrar una persona bilingüe, se tardó hasta en agosto que el entro al segundo cuando ya le dieron el apoyo que el necesita.

her that they were looking for a Spanish-speaking ESL teacher to help Jaime, but at the present time, they simply did not have one on staff. All of their bilingual teachers were assigned to TBE

classrooms and could not provide ESL support to Jaime. Olivia felt her hands were tied. She had expressed her concerns, but what else could she do? She felt she had no choice but to wait and pray that the district would find someone soon.

Unfortunately, it took several months for the district to hire a new Spanish-speaking ESL teacher. The new teacher was hired in August and began working with Jaime at the start of his second-grade year. This means that Jaime was in an all-English learning environment from

Yo sé que si le hubieran dado la educación especial en español, yo sé que estaría en un paso bien avanzado. Si. Yo sé que si estaría. Pero, pues no, no. Lamentablemente no tienen el servicio ese y se me atraso. Yo siento que esta un año más atrasado.

January through May⁵⁰ after learning in Spanish for one-and-a-half school years. Olivia has mixed feelings about this. She feels that from January through May, Jaime was not receiving the support he *really* needed—support in Spanish. Olivia believes that this negatively impacted

Jaime because she does not notice any gains in his reading or writing. Further, she cannot understand why the district does not offer a bilingual special education classroom. “I find it hard to believe that my son is the only bilingual student that needs special education services,” she said. In fact, Olivia knows that there are other Latino students in Jaime’s special education classroom that also see the ESL teacher. But she’s learned (from the teacher) that these children were never in the TBE program. They have been receiving ESL support since kindergarten because of their special education services. “I know that my son would have been doing better in school if he had been placed in a bilingual special education class,” Olivia said. “Yes. I know he would be okay. But no. Unfortunately, they don’t offer that and I believe that held him back. I feel he’s lost a year of learning.”

⁵⁰ Jaime transitioned to the special education classroom in January following the winter break.

Olivia advocated for Jaime's language education by frequently expressing her concerns over his transition to an English environment and requesting that the district provide Jaime access to a Spanish-speaking ESL teacher. While she admits that she does not fully understand how the ESL teacher works with Jaime, or provides him support, she is more at ease now that she knows he has a Spanish-speaking teacher. None of her other sons were in special education, so this was a major learning experience for both Olivia and her husband. She never doubted that special education services would help Jaime in learning academic subjects. Her primary concern was the impact it would have to his Spanish. She continues to hope that the district will one day offer a bilingual special education program. "It may not benefit my family, but it may benefit other families in the future."

Y a veces digo, "Oh my god, ¿por qué no tendrán eso?" Tal vez en el futuro lo implementen pero a mí ya no me va beneficiar...pero ojala otras familias si puedan y que se beneficien.

No me gusta que jueguen con los niños: Advocating to Get Out of the Dual Program

Maria A describes herself as a mother that will not be silenced. When it comes to her children, she said she will "move heaven and earth until my voice is heard and people listen to me." She is the mother of four children, and at the time of the interview, only two were in an EL program in grades 1 and 3. Her oldest daughter, Isabela, was in 11th grade and had exited the EL program in elementary school. Maria A's youngest was only two years old at the time of the interview. Maria A advocates for her children because of her daughters' experiences in school and because of what she herself has witnessed as a classroom volunteer. Needless to say, she has several concerns about the language education programs her daughters have been, and are currently, enrolled in.

Yo voy a mover mar y tierra hasta que mi voz se escuche y que me hagan caso.

Life experiences have taught Maria A to be vigilant against discrimination and racism. “I’m going to tell you something that I told my oldest daughter,” she said to me, “racism will never change.” In her experience as a classroom volunteer, Maria A has witnessed incidents that lead her to believe that Latino students, especially Latino students that do not speak English, do not receive the same level of attention from teachers as the rest of the students. When her second daughter, Elena, was in preschool, the family lived in a suburban community with a high Latino population. Maria A was not familiar with the local schools, so she decided to volunteer. As a volunteer, she often observed White students actively participate in class and answer questions. Meanwhile, the Latino students would remain quiet. “They wouldn’t answer questions,” she said. “They were silent.” This observation, according to Maria A, traumatized her. She remembers working with one Latino student and speaking with him in Spanish. She told his teacher, “He knows all of his colors but he knows them in Spanish.” Maria A recalls that the teacher said that the student needed to be able to say them in English. The teacher did not speak Spanish. In fact, Maria A was surprised to learn that the district did not have a bilingual program—all the classes were in English. “How could that be possible?” she asked. “There were children that didn’t speak English, but there were no teachers that spoke Spanish? That traumatized me,” she said. “That little boy probably knew more than the rest of the kids, but his only mistake is that he knew it all in Spanish.” Her experience with this little boy hit home because her oldest daughter, Isabela, had once been in his shoes.

Yo era voluntaria en la escuela y yo miraba a todos los niños de este color [POINTS TO WHITE MAN NEXT TO US], todos contestaban y rápido. Entonces cuando a mí me tocaba ver el grupo de los hispanos, todos calladitos...no contestaban. Entonces eso a mí me traumo. Yo me sentaba con el niño y le hablaba en español porque él no hablaba inglés, y yo le decía a la maestra, “El sí sabe sus colores pero se los sabe en español.”

As the first child to go through the U.S. school system, Isabela had experienced something very similar. Isabela was born in the United States, but the family moved back to

Y te lo juro que así como él, hubo muchos casos. Que se sentaban en el tapete y no supieron nada. Y te lo digo porque mi hija...ella es nacida aquí pero nosotros nos fuimos para México, y ella llegó igual. No sabía absolutamente nada. Tenía la noción de México...Entonces cuando yo vi todo eso, con mi hija, yo diario me paraba...Y es triste. Es bien triste.

Mexico when she was very young and she attended school there. When the family moved back to the United States, Isabela did not speak English and was placed in an EL program. “My daughter was the same. She didn’t know anything. She had been to school in Mexico and knew how to add and subtract, but she didn’t understand

what the teacher was saying,” Maria A said. “It’s sad. It’s so sad.” Maria A did her best to help Isabela. She made an effort to be physically present at the school as much as possible. But Isabela was teased for not speaking English. According to Maria A, the children would taunt her by saying, “You don’t speak English!” Maria A believes this had detrimental effects on Isabela’s identity. For example, several years after the fact, Isabela continues to feel social pressure to hide and/or deny her roots, language, and heritage. Maria A and her husband have to frequently remind Isabela that she can never change who she is or where she is from. Isabela was formally exited from the EL program after being in the program four years, but the damage was done. Even as a teenager, Isabela continues to struggle with her ethnic, racial, and linguistic identity.

By the time Elena, the second oldest, was ready for kindergarten, the family had moved to a different suburban community. This school district, unlike their previous one, offered TBE, ESL, and a Spanish/English dual language program. However, Maria A was not aware of the differences in the programs, and she does not recall being informed at enrollment of which

program Elena was placed in. She found out Elena was in the dual language program at the first parent-teacher conference. The first thing she noticed in the classroom was that everything was written in Spanish. She asked the teacher, Ms. Garcia, what was

“Oh. La clase es 90% en español y 10% en inglés”. Dije, “Oh. Yo no sabía”. Entonces, allí fue donde yo me...pues como qué onda, ¿no? A mí no me dijeron. Yo ni sabía que existía el programa dual ni nada o sea aquí, aquí lo fui a conocer yo.

going on. She recalls that the teacher explained that the class was in Spanish 90% of the time and in English for 10% of the time. Maria A simply said, “Oh. I didn’t know.” No one had ever explained that to her. “I didn’t know the dual language program existed; I found out that day,” she said.

Because of what Isabela had experienced, and what Maria A had witnessed as a volunteer, she did not want Elena learning in Spanish. She wanted her to be learning in English.

Yo siento que [Ms. Garcia], a las que tuvo oportunidad de hablarles sobre mi caso, les dijo que yo...no quería hablar en español...me dijo, “¿Por qué no quieres que este en la escuela en español? ¿Si tú hablas español?” Le dije, “¿No me estas entendiendo?”

Being bilingual is important to Maria A and her husband, but since the family speaks Spanish at home, she was confident her children would learn Spanish at home. At school, she wanted them in English. When Maria A informed the teacher that she did not want

Elena in dual language, she believes the teacher thought that Maria A was ashamed of her Hispanic heritage. Furthermore, Maria A believes the teacher told this to others. “Why don’t you want her learning in Spanish? You speak Spanish, don’t you?” she remembers the teacher asking her. Maria A did not persist with her request, and Elena stayed in the program. But, Maria A volunteered in the classroom to gain a better understanding of the program.

As a volunteer in the kindergarten dual class, Maria A was not satisfied nor impressed with what she saw. For example, Maria A was not pleased that the English instruction, which was 10% of the day, was all about singing songs. “They didn’t teach English; it was just singing along to the song. If you understood the song, okay; and if not, that was okay too. The day would end and that was it,” she said. In addition, she noticed lots of errors in the

Es que...tuvieron que aprender a deletrear la jirafa, hablar de la jirafa, dibujar una jirafa, todo con jirafa, ¿verdad? Le digo, “Oyes, Ms. Garcia, ¿si te diste cuenta que la jirafa me la mandaste con una 'g' de gato?”...No quede satisfecha. Ni con el español, ni con el inglés.

Spanish homework. For instance, the class was working on a project focused on giraffes. In Spanish, giraffe is spelled “jirafa” but the teacher spelled it “girafa” and this was misspelled on all of the project’s assignments. Maria A notified the teacher of this mistake, and the teacher sent home an apology to all the families the following day. In short, Maria A was not pleased with the Spanish or the English used in the classroom for instruction.

Maria A also had concerns of how the program was implemented at the district level. Specifically, she was not pleased with the inconsistency in placement and what she believed to

Y le dije a [la directora del programa ELL], “Oyes, ¡están jugando con los niños! ¡Están jugando con los papás! Pues es una inconsistencia académica.” Para mí...como padre es una inconsistencia académica que español primero, luego inglés, español y luego inglés.

be a constant flip-flop of the language of instruction. For example, her youngest daughter, Amparo, was enrolled in the district’s bilingual preK program. At first, she was placed in a Spanish classroom. But the following year, due to low enrollment, the program was changed and

suddenly it was all English. Maria A was then contacted by the district and told that they had the enrollment numbers needed to offer Spanish and they wanted to place Amparo back in a Spanish class. At this point, Maria A recalls saying to the bilingual director, “Are you kidding me? One year, you don’t have enough kids for your program, the following year you do. English, Spanish,

English, Spanish?” By this point, Maria A was extremely frustrated. “You’re messing with the kids! You’re messing with the parents!” she said to the bilingual director. Moreover, she also expressed that the program was too inconsistent. “Do you think it’s okay to do this to kids?” she asked the director. Maria A had had enough with the district’s dual language program.

Despite the bilingual director’s efforts to convince Maria A to leave Amparo in the bilingual preK class, Maria A refused. She demanded that Amparo and Elena be moved out of the dual program. Furthermore, if Elena does not meet the exit criteria by the end of 3rd grade, Maria A plans to refuse EL services and pull her out of the ESL program beginning in 4th grade. At the time of the interview, she had not made a decision yet about Amparo. “It’s frustrating,” she said to me, “I just don’t like how they mess with the kids, you know?” Maria A’s experiences in her current district, and her previous district, helped her realize that many parents of ELs are not aware of the types of programs their children are placed in. “[Parents] don’t know what the program is about. They don’t know when their kids get pulled out,” she said. “I’m a mother, and I consider myself to be super protective of my daughters. I had to know who they were with, how they were being taught, and how they were being treated.” Maria A started volunteering at her daughters’ schools to learn about the schools. In the end, she was able to use the knowledge she gained from everything she witnessed as a volunteer to advocate for her daughters.

...es que no me gusta que jueguen con los niños. ¿Y sabes una cosa? Yo vi muchas veces, no en este distrito nada más, lo vi en el otro distrito que hay veces que papás no saben ni en que programa están sus hijos. No saben...del programa ELL, no saben ni de que se trata. No saben ni a qué hora sacan a sus hijos.

I will fight that battle: Advocating for Appropriate Language Programs at the High School

Diana, a mother of two, is preparing to once again advocate for her children's language education. When Diana and her daughters moved to the suburbs, she purposefully purchased a

And I even bought a house here just to be able to go to that district for the dual program. Yeah. I did that. There were other cheaper houses somewhere else, but I said no. My daughters need to go to the dual program...Believe me, it was just for the dual program.

home within the boundaries of a K-8 school district that offered a Spanish/English dual language program. Diana wanted her daughters enrolled in a dual language program because she wants them to be bilingual and biliterate. Plus, as a bilingual educator, Diana wanted to

work as a dual language teacher. Therefore, she sacrificed having a larger and more affordable home just to live within a community that offered a dual language program. However, despite the fact that the K-8 district has had a dual language program for over twenty years, the high school district—in Diana's opinion—has yet to offer classes that meet the language needs of incoming dual language program students.

Diana described her experiences advocating for her oldest daughter, Maria, as a "battle" she had to fight with the high school to ensure Maria was placed in a Spanish class that was appropriate for her level of bilingualism and biliteracy, and would further develop her Spanish. Maria had been in the dual language program from 2nd grade through 8th grade. As an incoming freshman, she was originally placed in Spanish III, a world language class. This was problematic for both Diana and Maria. "She was with students that could not say one word in Spanish, you know? Well, they could say words, but they could not say sentences," Diana explained. In addition, Diana strongly believed that the teacher was ill-equipped to work with

So, while everybody took an hour to do a task, [Maria] would take five minutes and have 45 minutes doing nothing and helping the others. The teacher got angry at her for helping the others. The teacher did not understand that my daughter had a strong background in Spanish.

students, like Maria, that already had a strong background in Spanish. “The teacher did not know how they teach [Spanish] in dual,” Diana said to me, “The teacher did not know that they teach them through exposure to the language.”

According to Diana, the biggest problem with placing students like Maria in a world language class is that such classes often heavily focus on grammar instruction. In her experience as a dual language educator in the K-8 district, and as a parent of dual language students, Diana

I don't think she knew how to teach her, so she did what they do in world languages—the grammar. Which obviously my daughter has no clue of what pluscuamperfecto is. Who cares what it is! Tell her how to conjugate one verb and tell her what she needs to do and she will do it.

knows that such an approach is not used in her daughters’ program. For example, in the dual language program, her daughters learned to conjugate verbs in Spanish, and could do it correctly for the task at hand, but they were never expected to learn the names of all

the verb tenses. Students in dual language were not tested on their knowledge of grammatical rules; they were tested on their knowledge of academic content learned in Spanish. Thus, the Spanish III teacher felt that Maria lacked knowledge of Spanish grammar, as it is taught in world language classes, and so she recommended that Maria be placed in Spanish II her sophomore year to learn Spanish grammar. Diana refused this recommendation. The teacher then recommended that Maria repeat Spanish III her sophomore year to help her with the grammar. Diana strongly believed Spanish II and Spanish III were not appropriate placements for her daughter. She realized then that she would have to take her fight to the principal.

“I sent a letter to the principal,” Diana said during her interview. “I said to the principal, ‘How far do I have to go for this? Do you want me to go even higher than you? Because I will. If I need to get to the Board, I will.’” Diana never heard a direct response from the principal.

Instead, she received a call from a counselor and the chair of the language department. During that call, Diana was essentially asked where she wanted Maria placed. There was no discussion about the Spanish classes offered at the school, or the experience Maria

They kept saying, "You tell us where you want her and that's what will happen." And I said, "Okay. I see where we are going. I think that you have no clue, so I want her in AP Spanish for next year." And they said okay. They put her in AP Spanish.

was having in Spanish III. The counselor and department chair—according to Maria—simply said, “You tell us where you want her and that’s what will happen.” Diana recalls feeling frustrated because she felt that they, as high school educators, should have been able to make appropriate recommendations for Maria’s language education. Maria was not the first incoming freshman that had been in a dual language program, nor would she be the last. However, it became clear to Diana that the high school simply did not know what to offer students like Maria. Since the school was not offering a solution, Diana requested that Maria be placed in AP Spanish, a class typically offered to juniors and seniors.

Maria took AP Spanish her sophomore year and that was her last high school Spanish class. The high school had nothing to offer her for her junior or senior year.⁵¹ Diana looks back at the whole experience and believes that the lack of appropriate Spanish classes negatively

...my daughter and another dual student were in [AP Spanish], so [the teacher] was very good at providing challenging things for these two kids. I really feel a lot of respect for that teacher because he really provided for her what she needed, and at her level. And at the same time taught her conjugations and accents, but from what she needed.

impacted Maria’s Spanish. The Spanish III placement during Maria’s freshman year was a very negative experience and Diana believes Maria did not make any gains in her Spanish that year. Fortunately, the AP Spanish class during sophomore year was a positive experience because Diana feels that the teacher was able

⁵¹ At the time of the interview, Maria was in 12th grade.

to differentiate his instruction to meet Maria's language needs. Both Diana and Maria were really pleased with the AP Spanish teacher, and Maria continues to pop by his classroom to speak in Spanish with him. However, at the time of the interview, Maria had not taken any language classes for two school years, and this troubled Diana. "Languages...you forget them if you don't use them. And that's the sad part," Diana explained during her interview. "I know that Maria had better Spanish before, and it's been two years without Spanish for her already."

Of her two daughters, Diana believes Maria is the strongest in Spanish. Ana, the youngest, has been in the dual program since Kindergarten, but was exposed to English at a much younger age than Maria. Over the years, Ana has demonstrated a preference for English and frequently mixes English and Spanish in ways that Maria never has. Thus, Diana is already concerned of what will happen when Ana graduates from the dual program in 8th grade and enrolls at the high school.⁵²

Given her experiences with Maria, Diana said, "I'm thinking that probably for the youngest, I would say that one more time I will fight that battle, but...I'm

What do I want for the youngest? That the story does not repeat. I know that she needs more support in Spanish than the oldest one. But I know there are battles that I will need to fight. I just know that [Ana] will be fine until 8th grade, and then I'm so scared that she will lose a lot of what she has gained because she is not as strong as [Maria]. In either language, you know? She's dominant in English at this point.

thinking already that in 8th grade I'm going to start fighting that battle." With Maria, Diana did not know what to expect at the high school. She was aware that the high school district did not offer a formal dual language program, but she was not aware of how problematic Spanish world language classes would be. Her battle for Maria's language education started freshman year, but this time, with Ana, Diana plans to be proactive by beginning to advocate during Ana's 8th grade year for a proper high school placement. Diana fears that if Ana does not continue to receive

⁵² At the time of the interview, Ana was in 7th grade.

consistent opportunities to learn in Spanish, she will lose all of the gains she has made with the Spanish language since Kindergarten. Although her experience advocating for Maria was frustrating, Diana learned from it and feels better prepared to advocate for Ana's language education.

Summary

If families and schools are expected to be partners in students' education, as is stated in family engagement policy (Mapp, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2004; NCLB, 2002) and discourse (Kainz & Aikens, 2007; Nakagawa, 2000), then the voices of parents of emergent bilinguals must be heard and taken into account in the design and implementation of language education programs. The five accounts presented in this chapter are evidence that parents hold strong beliefs, dreams, goals, fears, and/or concerns for their children's language education and future language use. Yet, decisions impacting emergent bilinguals' language education, decisions that can have detrimental effects on their future language use and family dynamics, are often made by schools and districts with little to no consideration or inclusion of parent voice. Thus, to make their voices heard, parents of emergent bilinguals assume the role of advocate to ensure that their children's and families' language needs are being met. The five accounts presented in this chapter are evidence of this.

Latinos in the United States have a long history of fighting for the education of their children. For over a century, Latinos have experienced social injustices and inequitable treatment within U.S. schools (San Miguel & Donato, 2010). For example, Latino children and youth have been subjected to subtractive practices in schools that strips them of the social, cultural, and linguistic resources they bring to their education, and thereby leaving them vulnerable to academic failure (Midobuche, Benavides, & Koca, 2015; Valenzuela, 1999). Latino families have been the subjects of deficit-oriented rhetoric that paints them as uncaring, uninvolved,

and/or disengaged from their children's education (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013; López, 2001; Rodríguez-Brown, 2010). Such rhetoric ignores the fact that Latino families highly value education and support their children's learning in a variety of ways (Ceja, 2004; Espino, 2016; López, 2001; Poza, Brooks, & Valdés, 2014; Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryalls, & Nero, 2010; Suizzo, 2015; Valdés, 1996). Furthermore, it ignores the resiliency present within Latino families that helps them overcome the many obstacles they face as they navigate the school system (Carger, 1996; Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Olmedo, 2003; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999). In short, for many Latino families, including the parents in this study, schools have been and continue to be sites for contestation and struggle that require the knowledge, skills, and will to take action (San Miguel & Donato, 2010).

Furthermore, the experiences of Maria B, Isabel, Olivia, Maria A, and Diana contribute to the literature that identifies a critical need for schools and families of emergent bilinguals to engage in meaningful dialogue about language and language education. For example, García (2000) found that face-to-face, two-way communication was more effective in helping Latino parents understand the state-wide changes to bilingual education, and thus helped parents make a more informed decision for their children's language education. Parkes and Ruth (2011) found that frequent communication with dual language parents helps parents establish realistic expectations for their children's progress in the program. On the other hand, in their study with dual language parents, Giacchino-Baker and Piller (2006) found that although parents supported the dual language program, they felt there was not enough communication on their children's progress. Other studies have highlighted the wealth of knowledge on language use and development parents and community members possess, but is often not acknowledged by educators (Michael-Luna, 2013; Smith, 2001). Lastly, studies have shown that when working

with Latino families of emergent bilinguals, it is imperative for schools to create spaces where educators and families can communicate openly about fears of language loss and the use of Spanish in the home (Brown & Souto-Manning, 2008; Cuéllar & Garcia, 2012; Farrugio, 2010; Rodríguez, 2015).

Moreover, the experiences of the five mothers presented in this chapter highlight the need for more research that examines the challenges families of emergent bilinguals face as their children navigate K-12 language education programs. Programs such as TBE, ESL, and dual language, the programs mentioned in this chapter, differ in their language and cultural goals, how language is used for instruction, grades served, and typical length of participation (Christian, 2006). Of these three program models, only dual language has a goal for developing bilingualism—TBE and ESL have goals of English acquisition (Christian, 2006; Potowski, 2016). Furthermore, TBE and ESL are only available for students who are eligible, or qualify, for EL services. Dual language programs, such as two-way immersion programs, the type of program Maria A and Diana spoke about, are considered enrichment programs and are available to both ELs and non-EL students (Christian, 2006). Given the variety of program models, and the frustration it can cause when parents do not understand how the program works, it becomes essential to provide parents of emergent bilinguals access to meaningful information that explains (a) the goals of the program (e.g., English acquisition, bilingualism); (b) how, when, and for how long English and Spanish are used for instruction; (c) the EL exit criteria and process for transitioning out of the program (if applicable); (d) the language assessments used in the program; (e) children's progress in their language development, and last but not least; (f) their rights as parents of emergent bilinguals (García, 2000; MALDEF & NEA, 2010; Parkes & Ruth, 2011; U.S. Departments of Education & Justice, 2015). However, despite the fact that

program models vary, or change as students move up the grades, little is known about the impact of these program differences and changes to families.

Lastly, the five accounts present descriptive examples of what parents of emergent bilinguals do to overcome challenges they face when their voice is not heard and/or they feel they do not fully understand how their children's language education program works or will benefit their children. Thus, these five accounts specifically highlight how parents of emergent bilinguals advocate for their children's language education. For instance, upon hearing that her son did not qualify for placement in the kindergarten TBE program, Maria B was driven to act in order to contest the initial English language proficiency screening and placement results. Similarly, when Isabel was notified that her son would be placed in a mainstream classroom for 4th grade, and no longer receive TBE services, she refused to sign the consent letter until the school clarified and explained why her son had to transition to English. Olivia was faced with having to advocate for a Spanish-speaking ESL teacher when her son was moved from the TBE program to an all-English special education classroom with ESL services. On the other hand, Maria A was so displeased with the quality of language instruction and implementation of the dual language program that she advocated to have her daughters removed from the program. Maria A was also driven to act because of what she personally witnessed in schools as a classroom volunteer. Lastly, Diana's account reflects the challenges faced when high schools do not offer a language education program that meets the needs of students, like her daughters, with strong backgrounds in Spanish and/or students that had been in a K-8 dual language program. In her own words, Diana had to "fight a battle" with the high school for her oldest daughter, and she is currently preparing to "fight the battle" again for her youngest.

In summary, all five of these mothers are native Spanish speakers that speak Spanish in their homes. However, to them, Spanish is much more than just a language. As mothers, Spanish is the language they raise their children with. It is the first language their children heard. Spanish is used to express love, dreams, happiness and fears. Spanish is used to *educar*,⁵³ to teach *respeto*,⁵⁴ and to keep children grounded in their family's culture and *raíces*⁵⁵. Spanish is the language of their children's ancestors and the language that, they believe, will contribute to their children's success in the future. Thus, while they want their children to learn English and become bilingual, these five Latina mothers highly value Spanish and want to ensure their children preserve their home language. Their voice deserves to be heard by the policymakers, school leaders, and educators invested in the language education and academic success of emergent bilinguals.

⁵³ *Educación*, and more specifically *educación*, is a key concept within Latino culture used to refer to parents' responsibility to teach their children good morals, respect, values, and manners (Elenes, Gonzalez, Delgado Bernal, & Villenas, 2001; Espino, 2016; Olmedo, 2003; Rodríguez-Brown, 2010; Valdés, 1996).

⁵⁴ Respect

⁵⁵ Roots

Chapter 6: Latino Parent Presence through Pedagogía Casera

This chapter discusses the third finding of this study, which reveals that a key form of Latino parent presence is to engage in what I refer to as *pedagogía casera*, or the teaching and learning of Spanish language and culture at home. Through the analysis of the interview data, it became clear that the participants believe it is their role and responsibility to use their experience with, and knowledge of, Spanish to help their children maintain the language. Parents, therefore, utilized their linguistic funds of knowledge (Smith, 2001) in a variety of ways, and in some instances even sought additional resources or activities outside of school, to help their children maintain their Spanish. Thus, a key form of Latino parent presence is to engage in *pedagogía casera*. I begin this chapter by defining key terms and concepts. Then, I highlight participants' linguistic funds of knowledge. I do this by presenting examples of participants' knowledge of their children's language use and of the Spanish language in general. Next, I present examples of how participants engage in *pedagogía casera*. I conclude with a summary of the chapter.

Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts

Parent presence is a key term used throughout this work. It is a core component of the theoretical framework guiding this research. In general, parent presence refers to the practices parents engage in to support their children's education (McKenna & Millen, 2013). These practices can occur in formal and informal spaces. To ground the definition of parent presence within the context of this research, I adapted the definition presented by McKenna and Millen (2013) in order to reflect the presence of Latino parents of emergent bilinguals in supporting their children's language education. I therefore define Latino *parent presence* as:

Parent presence in support of children's language education refers to a parent or caregiver's actions and engagement in their children's language education, whether through participating in traditional family engagement activities within formal learning contexts (e.g., school, district) or through participating in non-traditional family engagement activities within informal learning contexts (e.g., home, community). Traditional activities may include helping with homework, attending school-sponsored events, being a member of the PTA or other school-based parent groups, or responding

to notes or queries from the school. Non-traditional activities may include serving as a language model for children by speaking in the home language or demonstrating the benefits of bi- or multilingualism, using dynamic language practices to help children with homework, providing opportunities for children to speak the home language and learn about the family's roots and culture, providing emotional support and motivation to do well in school and maintain the home language, and speaking to children about issues of race and social justice that impact Latino communities.

Similar to the definition for parent voice presented in Chapter 4, I felt it was necessary to ground the definition for parent presence within the context of Latino family engagement in language education. In addition, my definition for parent presence includes concrete examples of non-traditional forms of engagement that were shared during the interviews. Thus, I believe this is an authentic representation of Latino parent presence.

Linguistic funds of knowledge is another key concept I wish to define. To promote an asset-based view of Latino parents' linguistic resources, I frame parents' experience and knowledge of Spanish as *linguistic capital* (Yosso, 2005) and *linguistic funds of knowledge* (Smith, 2001). Linguistic capital is defined by Yosso as "...the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style..." (2005, p. 78). Therefore, parents' experiences with bilingualism (English/Spanish) and exposure to different Spanish varieties⁵⁶ (e.g. U.S. Spanish), including diverse language practices⁵⁷ (e.g., code-switching), are a form of linguistic capital. Linguistic funds of knowledge, on the other hand, extends the concept of *funds of knowledge*⁵⁸ (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) by focusing specifically on speakers' knowledge of a language, including knowledge of how the language is learned and used (Smith, 2001). Thus, parents' ongoing experiences with Spanish in

⁵⁶ I use the term *Spanish varieties* to refer to the different ways in which people speak and use Spanish, both in standard and non-standard form (García, 2009). This includes differences due to ethnicity and geographic regions.

⁵⁷ I use the term *language practices* to refer to distinct ways of using language.

⁵⁸ Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez define funds of knowledge as the "...historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being..." (1992, p. 133).

their homes, communities, and in society at large, together with the fact that language is dynamic and constantly evolving to meet the needs of its speakers (García, 2009), means that parents' linguistic funds of knowledge are also dynamic and evolving over time. In short, parents' linguistic capital nourishes their linguistic funds of knowledge. Parents' lived experiences as Spanish speakers and exposure to language (linguistic capital) affords them resources to support their children's language education (linguistic funds of knowledge).

The final key concept I wish to elaborate on and define is *pedagogía casera*. I define *pedagogía casera* as the communication and practices for teaching and learning that transpire specifically within the homes of Latino families. It involves the transmission of knowledge that Latino families regard as critical for their family's survival, prosperity, and preservation of their cultural and linguistic heritage. The data show that parents consider their knowledge and use of Spanish to be worth transmitting to their children. Thus, participants engaged in *pedagogía casera* to transmit their knowledge of Spanish to their children. In some instances, participants also transmitted knowledge on cultural practices to their children. My notion of *pedagogía casera* draws from the work of Delgado Bernal (2001) on *pedagogies of the home*. According to Delgado Bernal, pedagogies of the home are the "communication, practices, and learning that occur in the home and community" (p. 624, 2001). Furthermore, Delgado Bernal states that pedagogies of the home "also connect to the anthropology of education research that defines 'funds of knowledge' as those historically developed and accumulated strategies or bodies of knowledge that are vital to *Mexicano/Latino* family survival..." (p. 625, 2001). Lastly, *pedagogía casera* also promotes an asset-based view of Latino parent presence by recognizing actions Latino parents take at home to support children's language learning and development as a formal process of teaching and learning.

Parents' Linguistic Funds of Knowledge: Knowledge of their Children's Language Use

Research has shown that parents can be careful observers of their children's language use and development (Michael-Luna, 2013). Such observations are critical for helping families understand how children are progressing in their language development, especially when formal language assessment data from the school are not available and/or shared with families, as was the case here. Few participants reported that they received formal assessment data from the school on how their children were progressing in Spanish and/or English language development. Instead, parents relied on their observations of their children's use of English and Spanish, as well as their own understanding of how language is learned and used, to form perceptions of children's language abilities. Ultimately, parents' perceptions served as a resource to help parents determine how to support their children's language education. Hence, I begin the discussion on the findings by presenting examples of what parents reported they observe and know about their children's language use.

They "sprinkle" Spanish

Claudia's⁵⁹ two oldest daughters, Elena and Isabel, are both enrolled in a TWI program. Rosita is the youngest and is not enrolled in school yet. At the time of the interview, Elena was in 5th grade, Isabel was in 1st grade, and Rosita was only two years old. Claudia's daughters are biracial, bilingual, and bicultural. Although Spanish is Claudia's native language, and she teaches in the TWI program at her daughters' district, English is most often used at home. Claudia's husband is multilingual, but Spanish is not one of the languages he is currently proficient in. In the interview excerpt below, Claudia describes how her daughters "sprinkle" Spanish into their conversations at home; especially around Rosita.

⁵⁹ Pseudonyms are used for names, including schools, districts, and communities, to protect participants' identities. In addition, the researcher is identified in interview excerpts by the use of "L" for Lorena.

L: So, when they talk to each other, do they talk in English?

Claudia: Yes.

L: So, how about with Rosita? With the little one?

Claudia: So, Isabel will speak to Rosita, actually now that Isabel has been really leading the Spanish team at our house, Elena and Isabel will both sprinkle Spanish into Rosita.

L: Okay.

Claudia: And so, Isabel will say to her, “You have to say gracias [thank you].” You know? And then Rosita will be like “gracias.”

L: Aww.

Claudia: And then, Elena, the ten-year-old, will do stuff like “No, Rosita, no más [no more]” or “Para. Ya no más [Stop. No more],” you know? I think it works for Elena because Rosita is a baby, so the little words that Elena does know, it's okay for them to speak to Rosita, for her to use those words with Rosita because she's a baby. You know what I mean? So she's comfortable in those few words she knows to use them with Rosita because she's a baby. Whereas if she were gonna have a conversation with an adult, she wouldn't be able to do that because she would expect that she should have bigger vocabulary in Spanish. And she has an extensive vocabulary in English, just not in Spanish. So, I would say that they both sprinkle Spanish into Rosita. I would say that Isabel does it more, and when Elena sees Isabel do it, then Elena jumps on the bandwagon.

Claudia accepts the practice of “sprinkling” Spanish around Rosita as a reflection of her daughters’ abilities with the Spanish language. Claudia believes they sprinkle Spanish because Rosita is a toddler, and the language used to communicate with her is simple, everyday language. Although Elena has been in a TWI program for several years, due to a variety of reasons and experiences, Elena often resists speaking Spanish at home and has struggled with the language. Speaking Spanish to Rosita, according to Claudia, does not require an extensive vocabulary in Spanish, and this makes it easier for Elena to participate in “sprinkling” Spanish at home. On the other hand, Isabel loves Spanish, according to Claudia, and has been speaking more Spanish at home ever since she started the TWI program in Kindergarten. Claudia observes that Isabel frequently practices at home the language she is learning at school. Isabel often initiates this practice, and Elena will then join. To the best of their abilities, Elena and Isabel use simple words and phrases in Spanish around their little sister. Claudia observes these interactions, and it helps to give her a sense of what her daughters feel comfortable doing in Spanish on their own.

They're bilingual and biliterate, but stronger in English

Diana, like Claudia, is also an educator with experience in TWI programs. She also has two daughters, Maria and Ana. At the time of the interview, Maria was in 12th grade and no longer in TWI. Her high school did not offer TWI, or any type of dual language program, but she had been enrolled in a TWI program from 2nd grade through 8th grade⁶⁰. Ana was in 7th grade at the time of the interview and has been enrolled in TWI since Kindergarten. Similar to Maria, Ana's TWI experience will end after 8th grade when she transitions to the high school. Diana is a native Spanish speaker and primarily uses Spanish at home with her daughters. However, despite the use of Spanish in the home and the experiences in TWI, Diana has observed that her daughters have become "stronger in English." In the excerpt below, Diana describes her perceptions of her daughter's language use.

Diana: Okay, the oldest. She's an extrovert. She is absolutely smart. She was in the gifted program in junior high. She learned language very fast. She came when she was in 2nd grade. In 3rd grade, she got the grades to be out of the ELL program.

L: She exited a year later, huh?

Diana: Yes. They only had to wait for the results but at the end of 3rd grade she was done. She speaks a lot, so she was really good at trying the new language, trying to fit in. And at that point...well, she became stronger in English. Around 5th grade, English became her dominant language and if it wasn't for the dual program, I think she would have forgotten her Spanish. At this point, she barely speaks in Spanish, she barely reads and writes in Spanish although she has the ability to do it. She just chooses not to.

L: Okay.

Diana: The youngest is an introvert. She struggled in school...When she came to US, she was two years old and I had her tested for speech and development. She would speak only a few words in Spanish. In English, she would speak nothing. So, she had therapy. She had developmental therapy and speech therapy. So, when she was three years old, she entered an at-risk program in English. There is where she learned all the English. She was really good at it. When she discovered that I knew English, she switched to speak to me in English. Because I would not speak in English at home, but one day she caught me. Then she entered the dual language program in Kinder, but at that time they separated the students in two groups and she became part of the English group because she was dominant in English.

L: By Kindergarten?

Diana: By Kindergarten. And when I say dominant in English, it doesn't mean that she was good at English; it was that it was her strongest language. But she was in the ELL program until 3rd grade. She loves speaking Spanish. She speaks more Spanish than the oldest one, which is funny. I think she's more balanced. She likes to read in both languages although she doesn't read much. But, she's more balanced in her languages.

⁶⁰ Diana's oldest daughter took AP Spanish in high school. See Chapter 5 for more information on her daughter's experience in high school. In addition, in her interview Diana uses "dual program" to refer to TWI.

Diana believes her daughters are bilingual and biliterate, but definitely “dominant,” or stronger, in English. English became the stronger language for both girls, according to Diana, within a few years of being in the United States. Maria was enrolled in a U.S. school for the first time in 2nd grade. By 5th grade, Diana had already noticed that Maria was stronger in English. She states in the excerpt that currently Maria barely speaks Spanish—much less reads and writes in Spanish. Ana was only two years old when the family came to the United States, but by the time she was enrolled in Kindergarten, she was identified as an English speaker in the TWI program because she was dominant in English due to her experience in an English “at-risk” program when she was three years old. Diana credits the TWI program with helping her daughters achieve the level of bilingualism and biliteracy they have, but she is well aware of their preference toward English.

[She can just switch from one to the other](#)

Maria C described how her daughter, Maya, started switching between English and Spanish at a very young age. Maya’s father is African-American and a monolingual English-speaker. No one on his side of the family speaks Spanish. On the other hand, Maria C is Mexican-American and a native Spanish speaker. Her family primarily speaks Spanish, and she only speaks Spanish with her children. In the excerpt below, Maria C describes Maya’s ability to switch between languages and how this led Maria C to consider enrolling Maya in a dual language program to help her further develop both languages.

Maria C: Like, if we're talking, she will tell me, “Oh guess what, mami? Hicimos esto en la escuela [we did this in school],” and she will just start going, and dad will give her a look like, “Oh, what happened?” and she'll be like, “Oh! This is what we did at school” and she will translate the conversation. Sometimes if we're at the restaurant or the store, she hears something happening in Spanish, or she hears somebody else and we will start laughing, and my husband will be like, “Now what happened?” and she'll translate. Since she was, I wanna say, one and a half, she picked up very fast. She would just, like, switch. My husband's family is all English, and then ours is Spanish. She will switch. She could switch between the two languages at one and a half. I knew she was good for the dual program because at one and a half, I still remember, she would be talking to my mother-in-law in English, and then she would switch to me in Spanish. She could just keep the conversation going. And we'd be like, she just did that and without even thinking. She'd go and

do it all in English and then come back to me. People were like, “Cool! She needs to be learning more than one language,” and I’m like, “I know! But I don’t have the money to put her in a program!”

Maya’s ability to switch from one language to the other, and at such a young age, greatly impressed her parents and family. During her interview, Maria C provided several examples of how Maya switches languages at home based on who is present or who she is speaking with. She describes Maya as doing this naturally. In other words, she can identify the language she needs to speak with someone and just switches. Sometimes Maria C and her husband have to remind Maya to switch languages, but for the most part Maria C observes that Maya can do this on her own. These observations of Maya’s ability to navigate both languages with ease helped Maria C recognize her daughter’s potential to become bilingual and biliterate. Maya’s abilities also reinforced Maria C and her husband’s decision to raise Maya speaking English to one parent, and Spanish to the other. Ultimately, Maya was enrolled in a TWI program in Kindergarten and at the time of the interview was in 1st grade.

He started to forget Spanish when they changed his program

Olivia is the only participant with a child that is dual-identified for services in ESL and special education. When her son Jaime, who was in 2nd grade at the time of the interview, was identified for special education services, he had to switch schools and this resulted in a change to his EL services. Jaime went from a Spanish TBE program, to an all English special education classroom and ESL program. He had been in TBE, learning in Spanish, for Kindergarten and most of 1st grade. In addition, Spanish is the primary language spoken in the home. In the quote below, Olivia talks about how shortly after his transition to his new school and new services in English, Jaime started to show signs that he was forgetting his Spanish.

Olivia: Ahora que cambio del programa bilingüe al que me lo tienen en educación especial y puro inglés, el, siento que ya me está hablando mucho inglés. Muchas palabras en español, ya no, ya no sabe ya. No se acuerda como decirlas en español si no que ya me está hablando la mitad en español y siempre me mete una palabra en inglés ya. Con el sí. Con los otros nunca lo note, pero ellos si sacaron su...ellos se fueron a un programa bilingüe hasta que ya estuvieran listos para brincar al...que agarraron su puntuación.

Olivia: Now that they changed him from the bilingual program to an all-English special education program, I feel he's speaking more English. There are a lot of words in Spanish that he doesn't know anymore. He doesn't remember how to say them in Spanish, so instead what he does is speak to me half in Spanish and adds words in English. With him yes. I never noticed this with the others, but they did complete their...they were in a bilingual program until they were ready to change to...until they achieved the scores.

Olivia has four sons, of which Jaime is the youngest. At the time of the interview, Jaime was the only one enrolled in a language education program (ESL). The three oldest had already exited out of the district's TBE program. In less than one year of being at his new school and receiving his new services, Olivia began to notice a change in Jaime's language use at home. Olivia is afraid that Jaime is starting to forget Spanish. She observes that Jaime is forgetting simple words he knew in Spanish, and that he's starting to code-switch.⁶¹ In the quote, Olivia states that Jaime will start speaking in Spanish but then insert words in English to finish his sentence. She says she never noticed her older sons doing this, but states that the three oldest were in a TBE program until they were ready to exit, or transition out of the program. Thus, they were in a bilingual program much longer than Jaime. She associates this change in Jaime's language use with the change in his language services (from Spanish to English) and the placement in an all-English special education program. During the interview, she expressed a lot of concern over the changes to Jaime's services and the impact they may have on his ability to maintain his Spanish.

My youngest is eager to learn English

Maria B is a monolingual Spanish speaker and mother of four boys. When asked to

⁶¹ I draw from García (2009) to define code-switching as a language practice used by bilinguals where they go back and forth from one language to the other in the same speech act.

describe how her children use language at home, Maria B described how her two oldest sons use English at home and how she believes this has impacted the language use of her two youngest sons. Ramiro, her third son, was speaking English before he started school because he was exposed to English at home by his brothers. Additionally, she believes her youngest son, Roberto, is eager to learn English because he hears his brothers speaking in English. This eagerness to learn the language is something she had not observed with her other sons. The examples below highlight Maria B's observations of her sons' language use, especially the youngest, Roberto, who was three years old at the time of the interview (see #1 and #2).

Example #1

L: Okay. ¿Qué idioma se habla en casa?

Maria B: Español. Pero, entre ellos es inglés.

L: ¿Entre ellos? ¿Entre los cuatro?

Maria B: Si.

L: ¿Incluyendo el chiquito?

Maria B: El chiquito trata de decirles cosas y él quiere hablar inglés. Él, no sé, nos da mucha risa porque llega alguien y están hablando en inglés y el habla inglés con la gente. O sea, no les está diciendo palabras, en realidad no está diciendo nada. Él dice, "Ellos son mis hermanos." [THEN REPEATS "ELLOS SON MIS HERMANOS" IN A FAST, HIGH PITCHED VOICE] O sea, él pensó que ya les dijo algo en inglés. A él le gusta. A ellos les gusta mucho.

Example #2

Maria B: Y ahora es mi preocupación meter al niño otra vez a preschool. Porque este niño está súper adelantado. El conoce las vocales, conoce los números, entonces digo yo, "¿Qué voy hacer?" ¡A este niño le encanta el inglés! Él lo va aprender y lo va agarrar bien rápido.

Example #1

L: Okay. What language is used at home?

Maria B: Spanish. But they use English amongst themselves.

L: Amongst themselves? Amongst all four?

Maria B: Yes.

L: Including the youngest?

Maria B: The youngest tries to say things and wants to speak English. He, I don't know, it makes us laugh because someone will come over and they will speak English and he speaks English with them. However, he's not saying words, in reality he's not really saying anything. He says, "They're my brothers." [THEN REPEATS 'THEY'RE MY BROTHERS' IN A FAST, HIGH PITCHED VOICE] In other words, he thinks he said something in English. He likes it. They all like it.

Example #2

Maria B: And now I worry about enrolling my youngest in preschool. Because he is really advanced. He recognizes vowels, he knows his numbers, so I ask myself, "What should I do?" This child loves English! He's going to learn it and learn it quickly.

Example #3

L: ¿Cuándo empezó a notar este cambio que prefieren más el inglés?

Maria B: Cuando entraron al escuela. Para ellos, escuchar el inglés, o sea fue como que, ellos querían también hablarlo. Rafael normalmente como que lo fue agarrando y le gusto, pero para él era el español. Y Raul igual. Con el que batalle fue con Ramiro. Ramiro ya era puro inglés.

Example #3

L: *When did you start to notice this change toward a preference for English?*

Maria B: *When they started school. For them, hearing English, it was like they wanted to speak it too. Rafael, naturally, started learning it and like it, but for him Spanish was it. Raul was the same. The one I struggled with was Ramiro. For Ramiro it was all English.*

Maria B's oldest sons, Rafael and Raul, were monolingual Spanish speakers when they entered school. Both boys learned English in school. On the other hand, her third son, Ramiro, already knew English by the time he started school. In example #3, she describes Ramiro's preference toward English as a battle she had to fight. Maria B believes that Ramiro developed this preference for English because Rafael and Raul use English at home to communicate amongst themselves. The youngest, Roberto, is already demonstrating an eagerness to learn English at the age of three, something that none of the other boys demonstrated when they were his age. Maria B has noticed that Roberto "thinks" he can speak English and he demonstrates this by changing the tone of his voice (uses a high pitch) and speed (speaks faster). Maria B is aware that Roberto likes the idea of speaking English, and in example #2 she expresses concern about Roberto starting preschool. She is afraid that Roberto will pick up English quickly once he starts school. Maria does not speak English and is afraid that soon all four boys will only speak English.

Parents' Linguistic Funds of Knowledge: Knowledge of Spanish Language Varieties and Diverse Language Practices

...ellos quieren que [sus hijos] hablen bien el español y no hablan bien. La mamá no habla inglés, el papá sí, lo hablan así como, mocho, se dice. Como unas partes inglés y otras en español. Y pues a mí, eso no sé hace bien. — Angelica

...they want their children to speak Spanish but they don't speak it well. The mom doesn't speak English, the dad does, and they speak broken English. Some parts are in English and others in Spanish. And well, to me, that isn't right. — Angelica

Latino families living in the United States are likely to encounter different ways of speaking Spanish. Moreover, they may also encounter language practices commonly used by bilinguals such as code-switching and translanguaging⁶² (García, 2009, 2014; Reyes & Moll, 2008; Zentella, 1997). Parents in this study frequently shared their observations on different ways Spanish is spoken by others and ways in which their children “mix” English and Spanish together. Along with general observations, parents also expressed opinions and/or concerns over these differences and practices. For example, in the quote above, Angelica states that she disapproves of mixing English and Spanish together. It just does not seem right to her. On the other hand, as will be discussed later in this section, Angelica expresses great pride in the fact that her children do not mix the languages and thus speak “puro español” [pure Spanish]. Thus, parents’ linguistic capital and linguistic funds of knowledge include awareness of, and experience with, diverse Spanish varieties and language practices present in their communities and in their children’s schools. The sections that follow provide examples of the perceptions and experiences parents reported having with Spanish varieties and diverse language practices.

Parent Perceptions and Experiences with Spanish Varieties

In this first example, Diana talks about her own accent and how it changed as a result of living in the United States. As a Mexico City native, she describes “Mexican, Mexico City Spanish” as sounding like the speaker is “singing.” She states, “They always say that people from Mexico City sing when they speak...” However, she herself never noticed the “singing” intonation because she was immersed in it. That all changed when she immigrated to the United States. We see in the excerpt below that Diana believes being exposed to “many different ways

⁶² According to García (2009), translanguaging is defined as the “...multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to *make sense of their bilingual worlds*. Translanguaging therefore goes beyond what has been termed code-switching...although it includes it, as well as other kinds of bilingual language use and bilingual contact” (p. 45). Further, translanguaging does not view bilinguals as having two separate linguistic systems, but instead views their linguistic repertoires as one fluid, flexible, and permeable system (Beres, (2015).

of speaking Spanish” and hearing “all the different Spanish accents in the USA” has changed her accent and made her more aware of her own family’s “Mexico City” accent.

Diana: And they even say that I have an accent in Spanish. I think it's just because you hear so many different ways of speaking Spanish here that you kind of lose that really Mexican, Mexico City Spanish. Because before, they always say that people from Mexico City sing when they speak...

L: Yeah, there's an accent. A very interesting accent.

Diana: Yes. And I would never hear it before. I would say, “They are crazy, we don't sing” and now when I go to Mexico and I hear my family, I think, “Could you stop singing?” I believe I hear all the different Spanish accents in the USA, so it changes your Spanish accent.

Similar to Diana, Leonardo also spoke about the different Spanish varieties he and his family have encountered in the United States—especially within his children’s TWI program. Leonardo and his wife are natives from Colombia; thus he considers their Spanish “Colombian Spanish.” In example #1, Leonardo states that his children are exposed to different Spanish varieties because they have had teachers in the TWI program from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Colombia, and Spain. His family notices that vocabulary used by teachers, and within textbooks, is often different from the vocabulary used at home. Leonardo states that because of these differences in vocabulary, he often has to help his children look up the meaning of words. He provides the examples of “chamarra” being used in Mexico for jacket, while “chaqueta” is the word his family uses for jacket. He also describes how the textbook used the word “cazo” for pot, a word he and his family had never seen before so they had to look up the meaning of the word. In example #2, Leonardo states that living amongst a Mexican community has helped him learn the differences in Mexican and Colombian Spanish, and therefore makes it easy for him to explain those differences to his children. Furthermore, in example #2 he states how he believes that differences in Spanish can be very confusing for families that have never encountered them before. Leonardo feels it can be a “choque,” or a clash. One could argue that he feels this “choque” is a form of linguistic culture shock Spanish-speaking families may experience.

Example #1

Leonardo: Sí, en el vocabulario más que todo. También las maestras lo han notado.

L: ¿Me puedes dar un ejemplo de algo que ellos han notado?

Leonardo: Bueno, la maestra de kínder es mexicana. La maestra de segundo grado que les toco era Puertorriqueña. Les ha tocado maestra Colombiana, les ha tocado maestra, um, ahorita hay una Española, en primer grado. O sea, ellos han estado dispuestos a diferentes tipos, a diferentes formas de español. En vocabulario, más que todo, si en México se usa la chamarra, nosotros usamos la chaqueta. Cosas así. O en la misma tarea a veces hay palabras que tenemos que buscar en español. El programa de lectura que tienen en español, que para nosotros no tiene sentido la palabra que está allí o no la conocemos. Por ejemplo ayer, parecía una olla, pots, y tenía una z y la o, cazo, o algo así, o cozo, no sé. Una palabra que era para pots que no habíamos escuchado eso. No sé en qué parte usan eso. Si, el vocabulario. El vocabulario en general.

Example #2

Leonardo: Y pues el hecho de estar también con una población Mexicana, pues yo he aprendido también y les explico más fácil. Pero me imagino padres que no tengan mucho contacto con eso se van a confundir. Es un choque también.

Example #1

Leonardo: Yes, more than anything in vocabulary. The teachers also noticed it.

L: Can you give me an example of what they've noticed?

Leonardo: Well, the kindergarten teacher is Mexican. The second-grade teacher is Puerto Rican. They have had a Colombian teacher, and right now there is a Spanish teacher in first grade. They have been exposed to different types, to different forms of Spanish. Vocabulary, more than anything, like if in Mexico they use "la chamarra," we use "la chaqueta." Things like that. Sometimes in the homework there are words that we have to look up in Spanish. The reading program they have in Spanish, uses a lot of words that don't mean anything to us or we have to look them up. For example, yesterday there was an image of a pot but it was spelled "cazo" or something like that, I don't know. It was a word for pots that we had never heard before. I don't know where they use that word. Yes, in vocabulary. Vocabulary in general.

Example #2

Leonardo: And well, the simple fact that I live within a Mexican community, has helped me learn and it makes it easier for me to explain to [my kids]. But, I can imagine how confusing it can be for parents that don't have that kind of contact. It's like a shock too.

The final two examples below illustrate how certain Spanish varieties are associated with one's level of education and/or socioeconomic status. Diana and Maria C noticed that their children were speaking Spanish in a way that they believe is commonly used by people of lower class that lack education. Or as Diana describes it, by *nacos*. The Real Academia Española (www.rae.es) defines *naco* as an adjective used in Mexico to describe someone of indigenous origin. However, the term *naco* (or *naca*, the feminine form) is commonly used in vernacular speech by Spanish speakers of Mexican descent, both in Mexico and in the United States, as a derogatory word to describe someone from a low socioeconomic class who is vulgar and uneducated. In example #1, Diana's use of "naquita" is a diminutive form of *naca*. Diana states that both her and her oldest daughter tell the youngest daughter that she speaks like a "naquita"

because she uses certain words (“pa’ tras”, “mover”) and a certain intonation that is associated with the way *nacos* speak. Diana expresses her opinion on this practice by saying, “Honey, I don’t speak that way, you need to speak properly.” In example #2, Maria C does not explicitly use the word *naco* or *naca*, but instead says “When did we get una hija del pueblo,” to describe her response to her daughter’s use of certain words (“pata”, “troca”) which she picked up from her babysitter. The phrase “hija del pueblo” can be interpreted as meaning something similar to *naca*.

Example #1

Diana: She has a kind of Spanish...oh, this is going to sound so bad, but my oldest daughter and I say, “You speak like a *naquita*.” Because she says some things that I think, “Honey, I don’t speak that way, you need to speak properly.”

L: Like what? Give me an example.

Diana: It is most notorious in her intonation. She says, “Que te pasaaaa” [CHANGE ON INTONATION ON “PASA”]. She also has said, “Su mamá la va a llevar pa’ tras” or “Mi amiga se va a mover de casa.” Who taught her how to say that? And I know it’s from her friends.

Example #2

Maria C: At one point, because of her babysitter, like she would say *pata*, or like, *troca*, like she would start speaking like the babysitter. “Ma!” I’m like, “¡Hija!” it started getting to the point where I was like, “When did we get una hija del pueblo?” And now my little one says it. She’ll be like, “Ma! Ma!” I’m like, okay...

The excerpts and quotes from Diana, Leonardo, and Maria C’s interviews show examples of how Latino parents form perceptions of Spanish varieties based on their own experiences and exposure to diverse ways of speaking Spanish. Exposure to Spanish varieties within the United States helped Diana become aware of her family’s “Mexico City accent,” and she feels it also changed her own native accent. As a “Colombian Spanish” speaker, Leonardo feels he has benefited from his exposure to “Mexican Spanish” because it enables him to explain to his children the differences in vocabulary that they encounter at school. Finally, we also see how parents can associate certain Spanish varieties with social class and/or level of education. In the final two quotes, Diana and Maria C describe how they respond when they notice their children speaking a form of Spanish that they associate with people of lower class and low levels of

education. All of these experiences contribute to parents' linguistic funds of knowledge because they build on parents' knowledge of how Spanish is used.

Parent Perceptions and Experiences with Diverse Language Practices

The subsequent sections focus on the following three language practices discussed by parents: borrowing and inventing words, code-switching, and being able to speak “pure” Spanish. Within the context of this discussion, *borrowings*, or *loanwords*, is a linguistic practice where an individual takes a word from English and uses it in Spanish, with a Spanish pronunciation (Potowski, 2011). In other words, the English word is “Spanish-ized” for use in Spanish. As will be noted in the examples presented in this section, participants often described borrowings as “invented words.” García (2009) defines code-switching as a language practice used by bilinguals where they go back and forth from one language to the other in the same speech act. The reference to “pure Spanish” derives from the words of one participant, and simply refers to children's ability to speak Spanish without mixing in borrowed words or English.

Borrowing and Inventing Words

Isabel, Diana, and Angelica all reported examples of how their children use borrowed words from English when communicating in Spanish, or invent new words by mixing the two languages together. What their children are doing with words is an example of borrowings (Potowski, 2011). For example, Isabel (#1) talks about “parkando,” a word her children invented and use in Spanish to mean *parking*. In the second quote, Diana is talking about her daughter's use of “atuna” and “socketines,” words her daughter invented by mixing the English and Spanish words for *tuna* and *socks*. Lastly, Angelica, in the third quote, talks about the words “parqueadero” and “troca.” Two commonly used words in Latino bilingual communities to mean *parking lot* and *truck*, respectively.

Example #1

Isabel: Como por ejemplo, otra palabra que ellos se inventaron, para mi ellos se lo inventan, cuando alguien estaciona un carro mi hijo dice "Él se estaba parkando." Entonces yo le dije, "¿Parkando? Tu sabes lo que quiere...explícame la palabra parkando." "Pues cuando pones el carro allí afuera." Le digo, "Eso se dice lo estaba estacionando, ¿verdad? Estacionar es la palabra correcta." "Okay. ¿Entonces se dice estacionar?" Le digo, "Si, estacionar." Son palabras que ellos, este, ya las están combinando como parquear que dijimos nosotros. Entonces ellos están diciendo parkando que es otra palabra que pues, tampoco existe, igual que parqueando. Yo les explico, "No se dice parquear, tampoco se dice parkando. Y se dice se está estacionando porque me lo estás diciendo en español." Esas son palabras que yo les estoy corrigiendo. Así las corrijo.

Example #1

Isabel: For example, another word they invented, a word I think they invented, is for when someone is parking a car. My son will say, "Él se estaba parkando." So, I say, "Parkando? Do you know what that...explain parkando to me." "Well, it's when you leave the car outside." I say to him, "You're supposed to say estacionando, right? Estacionar is the correct word." "Okay. So, you're supposed to say estacionar?" I say to him, "Yes, estacionar." They're words that they combine, like the one we use, parquear. So they've been saying parkando, which is a word that doesn't exist just like parqueando. I explain to them, "You don't say parquear, and you don't say parkando. You say estacionando because you are saying it in Spanish." These are words that I correct for them. That's how I correct them.

Example #2

Diana: I remember she was about three years old and she would say "Quiero atuna" and I would be "Honey, you say tuna or atún, but you don't say "atuna." She would answer, "But I like "atuna." And she would say socketines. "Quiero mis socketines." Socks! And would say, "No! It's socks or calcetines" and she would add, "But you know what socketines are, so I want you to say socketines." I'm not going to say socketines! She liked to mix languages, and I think that she thought that everybody knew what she was saying, so she was okay saying it. And I think that some of it still lingers in her as if she thought, "Who cares that I'm saying that? You understand it!"

Example #3

Angelica: Lo que les trato de corregir es así cuando se estaciona uno, ya ves que dices "ay que el parqueadero" y digo "el estacionamiento." O que "la troca," le digo "la camioneta." Cosas así como que dicen que pocho, así como palabras así, yo trato que ellas digan bien como son en español no así como la mera verdad como palabras que uno va acomodando como que las quiere decir en inglés pero en español. Pero yo les digo así como son para que ellas sepan cómo son las palabras.

Example #3

Angelica: What I try to correct, is like when someone is parking, you know how sometimes we say "oh the parqueadero" but I'll say "the estacionamiento." Or the "troca," I'll say the "camioneta." Words like that, that are "pochos," like words like that, I try to get them to say the words like they are in Spanish and not like, to be honest, like words that you combine as if you want to say them in English but in Spanish. But, I use them as they are so that [my daughters] can know how the words are.

The quotes above also show that the three women respond to their children by correcting their language use. Thus, it is apparent that the women do not believe this practice of using borrowed words or inventing words is a correct or appropriate use of Spanish. Isabel states that she explicitly explains to her boys that when they are speaking in Spanish, the correct word for parking is "estacionar" and not "parkando" or "parquear" (*Yo les digo, les explico, "No se dice*

parquear, tampoco se dice parkando. Y se dice se está estacionando porque me lo estás diciendo en español.”). Diana corrects her daughter’s use of invented words like “atuna” and “socketines” by essentially telling her daughter that she can say the English word or Spanish word but not these invented words that are a mix of the two (*Honey, you say tuna or atún, but you don't say “atuna”*). Diana also states that when her daughter asks her to use “socketines,” Diana refused by saying, “I’m not going to say socketines!” Lastly, Angelica states that when words like “parqueadero” and “troca” are used, she points out that the correct words in Spanish are “estacionamiento” and “camioneta.” Moreover, Angelica describes the use of words like “parqueadero” and “troca” as “pocho” Spanish, or the Spanish used by Chicanos or Mexican-Americans, because people invent these words by adapting or as she states, *acomodando* [accommodating], words from English to use in Spanish.

Isabel, Diana, and Angelica were born and raised in Mexico. They came to the United States as adults. Thus, Spanish is their native language and the language they are most comfortable in. Through the quotes we see that these three native Spanish speakers do not believe borrowed and/or invented words are a correct use of Spanish, therefore they address it by correcting their children’s language use. The women’s opinions on this language practice (e.g., borrowing words) are informed by their knowledge of Spanish and experience with the language.

Code-Switching

Maria A and her husband disapprove of their children mixing the languages when they communicate at home. Maria A refers to this language practice as “Spanglish.”⁶³ In examples #1 - #3 below, Maria A reports examples of how her children mix the languages and the debate this practice has caused between her and her husband.

Example #1

L: ¿Todo depende?

Maria A: Todo depende de con quien están hablando porque si hablan con mi esposo, todo es en español. Pero creo que si es más fuerte el inglés que el español.

L: ¿Por qué dices eso?

Maria A: ¿Por qué? Porque entre ellas hablan más inglés que español y a veces creo que lo mezclan. Hablan Spanglish y es lo que mi esposo corrige con ellas. “O hablas todo en inglés o me hablas todo en español.”

Example #2

Maria A: Por ejemplo, cuando mi hijo lo sabe decir, dice “Papi, dame una cup” o algo así. “Where’s the stuffed pepper?” Cositas así que no...lo mezcla. Mi esposo dice que no. Es allí donde las corrige, les dice “No. Mejor dime que no sabes y yo te digo como lo digas pero no quiero que me mezcles español con inglés.”

L: Y tu cómo te sientes cuando ellas usan Spanglish, ¿o lo están mezclando?

Maria A: Igual, también. Al principio no le tomaba mucha importancia pero igual cuando me voy informando más en los talleres a los cuales ha asistido me han ayudado a tratar de mejorar los lenguajes...que los separen. Todo inglés o todo en español.

Example #1

L: *It all depends?*

Maria A: *It all depends who they are speaking to because if they are speaking with my husband, it’s all in Spanish. But I think English is much stronger than the Spanish.*

L: *Why do you say that?*

Maria A: *Why? Because amongst them they speak more English than Spanish and sometimes I think they mix them. They speak “Spanglish” and that’s when my husband corrects them. “Either you speak all in English, or you speak all in Spanish.”*

Example #2

Maria A: *For example, when my son knows how to say it, he’ll say “Papi, dame una cup” or something like that. “Where’s the stuffed pepper?” Things that don’t...he mixes them. My husband says no. That’s when he corrects them. He says, “No. I prefer that you say you don’t know how to say it, and I’ll tell you how but I do not want you to mix Spanish with English.”*

L: *And how do you feel when they use Spanglish or they’re mixing them?*

Maria A: *The same, as well. At first I didn’t give it too much importance, but I’ve been more informed because of the workshops I attend where they’ve helped me learn about how to improve both languages...by separating them. All in English or all in Spanish.*

⁶³ “Spanglish” can be described as a bilingual language practice. It involves the use of both Spanish and English within the same speech act, but it follows grammatical rules (Potowski, 2011). It does have a negative stigma associated with it, but linguists promoting asset-based perspectives of bilingual language practices argue that it is a skill that requires high levels of bilingualism (Potowski, 2011).

Example #3

Maria A: De hecho era un debate que teníamos mi esposo y yo. Como te dije al principio, mi esposo era el que siempre, siempre “Habla en español, habla en español, y habla en español.” Este, y mi hija, como se dice, primero no hablaba en inglés o tenía no más el inglés básico de México, que no es comparado como el de aquí. Y entonces, este, empezó a hablar el inglés y como que ya agarro más el inglés y le contestaba a veces en inglés. Y este, le hace “No, hálame en español y contéstame en español.” Pero casi antes era nada más mi esposo. Hasta que yo aprendí que si este, que no está bien. Que no es algo que se ve bien que hablen el Spanglish. O es un idioma o es otro. Ahora yo por ejemplo le digo “hálame todo en inglés o hálame todo en español.”..es una repetición constante porque no podemos cambiar algo que hicimos todos estos años, bueno que yo hice porque mi esposo si lo estaba haciendo bien, pero yo era la que siempre...mi esposo siempre era el que “Que ridícula te vez hablando inglés con ellas. Háblales en español.”

Example #3

Maria A: *In fact, it was a debate my husband and I would have. As I told you earlier, my husband was the one that always, always said “Speak in Spanish, speak in Spanish, speak in Spanish.” And my daughter, how do you say it, at first she didn’t speak English or she had basic English from Mexico, which is nothing like the English here. So, then she started to speak English and she picked up English more, and sometimes I would answer her in English. But my husband says, “No, speak to me in Spanish and answer me in Spanish.” But before, it was mostly my husband. Until I learned that yes, it wasn’t right. It doesn’t look right that they speak Spanglish. It’s either one language or the other. Now, for example, I say to her, “Speak to me all in English or all in Spanish”...it’s a constant repetition because it’s hard to change something we’ve been doing for so many years, well, that I’ve done because my husband was doing it right, but I was the one that always...my husband would always say [to me], “You look ridiculous speaking English to them. Speak in Spanish.”*

Across the three examples, it is evident that the current message conveyed to Maria A’s children is that they must either speak *all* in English or *all* in Spanish (*O hablas todo en inglés o me hablas todo en español*), but not “Spanglish.” However, this was not always the case. Since Maria A learned English as an adult when she came to the United States, she often spoke English to the girls and at times would also speak Spanglish. What we see in these three quotes is that Maria A has changed her view on the practice of *mezclando* [mixing] the languages and on speaking English at home primarily because of her husband, but also because of what she learned by attending workshops on language separation. In examples #1 and #3, Maria A makes it clear that her husband has always disapproved of English being spoken in the home and of mixing the languages. She states that her husband corrects her daughters when they engage in this practice (see #1 and #3), and that he has been the one that consistently reminds the girls to speak Spanish (see #3). However, it is also evident that this issue has been a cause for debate, or conflict, between Maria A and her husband (see example #3) because Maria A, as previously stated, used

to engage with her daughters at home in both languages. She even states that her husband has told her that she looks ridiculous speaking English to the girls (see example #3). Maria A now believes that as a result of her not supporting her husband's views on language use at home, the girls need constant reminding about speaking Spanish. Thus, Maria A blames herself for her daughters' use of Spanglish and their preference for English. In addition to the messages received from her husband, Maria A was also persuaded to stop encouraging "Spanglish" after attending workshops offered at the school on language separation. In example #2, Maria A states that the workshops informed her of how to help language development by keeping the languages separate—all English or all Spanish. Language separation is commonly used in program implementation for TWI. For instance, programs can be 50/50 or 80/20 models where the language is allocated a certain percent of the day (e.g., 50% Spanish, 50% English).

Maria A's experience and perspective bring to the forefront the fact that the use of certain language practices can cause stress and tension within a family. Both Maria A and her husband are immigrants from Mexico. They are raising bilingual children and are encountering unexpected challenges, such as trying to enforce the rule of only speaking in Spanish at home. Additionally, both children are using language in a way that is common for U.S. bilinguals, but not for their parents—especially their father. Maria A acknowledges that over the years, English has seeped into their home more and more. However, she is hopeful that by firmly supporting her husband's expectations for language use at home and keeping the languages separate that they can help her children maintain and further develop their Spanish.

Speaking Pure Spanish

In this last section, I put forth an example of a parent feeling pride over their children's language use in Spanish. The following three quotes highlight comments made by Angelica

about her daughters' abilities to speak puro español [pure Spanish]. In other words, her daughters do not mix the languages and are able to sustain conversations in one language.

Example #1

Angelica: Pero cuando estamos mi esposo y yo con ellas, puro español. Y cuando vamos a México, mi familia piensa que no hablan inglés porque no llegan diciendo "hi," no llegan "bye." Un día me dice mi hermano, "¿Que tus hijas no hablan inglés?" Le digo, "Claro, ¿por qué? Si en la escuela están estudiando el inglés." Dice, "Es que yo no las veo como otros niños que llegan 'hi,' 'bye,' o que van caminando y hablando en inglés." Ellas no. Ellas puro español. Aunque estén hablando entre ellas, no hablan inglés en México. Ellas puro español.

L: Oh wow.

Angelica: No mezclan, como, el inglés y el español. Se me hace bien. Lo hablan bien. No lo hablan como decimos, mocho.

Example #1

Angelica: But when my husband and I are with them, it's all Spanish. And when we go to Mexico, my family thinks they don't speak English because they don't arrive saying "hi," or arrive saying "bye." One day, my brother said to me, "Your daughters don't speak English?" I said, "Of course. Why? At school they are studying English." He said, "It's because I don't see them like the other kids that get here saying "hi" and "bye," or that speak English as they walk around." Not them. They speak pure Spanish. Even if they are just talking amongst themselves, they will not speak English in Mexico. They speak pure Spanish.

L: Oh, wow.

Angelica: They don't mix, like, English and Spanish. I think that's good. They speak it well. They don't speak it, as we call it, "mocho."

Example #2

Angelica: Porque una vez en la tienda, en la Jewel, andábamos y estábamos comprando unas flores y una señora oye a Marisol, que tenía 6 años, diciéndome que flores, y que estas están bonitos y cosas así, y dice "¿La niña no habla inglés?" y luego le digo, "Si, si" y ella dice, "¡Ay, la felicito! ¡Habla un español perfecto!" Porque no mezclaban el inglés y el español. Tenía 6 años. Dice, "Que bueno que le ha inculcado hablar el español."

Example #2

Angelica: One time, we were at the store, at Jewel, and we were there buying flowers and this woman heard Marisol, who was 6 years old at the time, talking to me about the flowers and how pretty they were and stuff like that, and she says, "Your daughter doesn't speak English?" So, I said, "Yes, yes." And she said, "Wow! I congratulate you! She speaks perfect Spanish!" That's because she didn't mix English and Spanish. She was 6 years old. The woman said, "Good for you for teaching her to speak Spanish."

Example #3

Angelica: Bueno, si las han felicitado porque hablan bien el español y que no mezclan el idioma, el inglés y el español. Si ellas están hablando inglés, puro inglés. Si ellas están hablando español, puro español.

Example #3

Angelica: Well, they've been complimented because they speak Spanish well and they don't mix the language, English with Spanish. If they are speaking English, it's pure English. If they are speaking Spanish, it's pure Spanish.

As a native Spanish speaker, Angelica feels great pride in the fact that her daughters are growing up bilingual but have been able to maintain the ability to speak Spanish without mixing in English words. Furthermore, the fact that her daughters sound like native Spanish speakers is also a source of pride. In all three quotes, Angelica makes reference to the fact that her

daughters' use of Spanish has been complimented by others. In the first quote, she describes how the girls were able to speak purely in Spanish when the family visited Mexico. Angelica's brother noticed this and even thought that the girls did not know English because unlike other children that would visit from the United States, Angelica's daughters were not using English at all. In the second quote, a woman at the grocery store overheard Angelica's youngest daughter, Marisol, speaking Spanish and was impressed with the fact that Marisol spoke "perfect" Spanish (*¡Habla un español perfecto!*). Angelica states that the woman complimented her on instilling in her daughter the ability to speak Spanish. Finally, in the third quote, Angelica reiterates that her daughters' use of Spanish has been complimented by others because they speak Spanish well and do not mix the languages. To Angelica, mixing the languages is a form of speaking "mocho," or broken Spanish (see #1).

Both Maria A and Angelica, to different degrees, express disapproval of mixing English and Spanish. While Maria A more explicitly states that she does not approve of that practice, Angelica expresses the same message by emphasizing the pride she feels in the fact that her daughters do not engage in that practice. These discussions on code-switching and speaking pure Spanish highlight the strong opinions and beliefs parents have about language practices.

Pedagogía casera: Keeping Spanish Alive and Present

Y a mí me dicen que practique el inglés con mis hijos pero a mí me importa más que ellos continúen con el español porque a ellos se les va ir el español...
– Maria B

They tell me to practice English with my children but to me, it's more important that they continue with Spanish because they will lose their Spanish...
– Maria B

One of the primary reasons parents utilized their linguistic funds of knowledge was to keep Spanish "alive and present" in the lives of their children and family. To keep the language "alive and present" means that parents are aware that language loss is a possibility, and that their children may lose their Spanish. The quote above from Maria B is evidence of that. Keeping the

language “alive and present” also means that parents aspire for their children to know and understand how to use the language in correct and/or appropriate ways. Finally, it means that parents want their children to authentically experience Spanish and make connections between the language and their families’ raíces [roots]. Parents want the language to live and thrive in their family, and in future generations. In other words, ¡que viva el español [long live Spanish]! The sections that follow put forth examples of what these Latino parents said they do, and/or would like to do, to keep Spanish alive and present.

En casa hablamos español

In one way or another, Spanish is spoken in the homes of all eleven parent participants. In some homes, it is the primary language spoken, in others it is used about half the time, and in some it is “sprinkled” into conversations. Nonetheless, the data show that parents expected, and in some cases explicitly required, their children to speak Spanish at home. The examples in this section illustrate the different expectations parents have for their children’s use of Spanish at home.

Forzándolos to speak Spanish

Isabel, Diana, and Leonardo are three native Spanish speakers that feel more comfortable speaking in Spanish. Isabel describes herself as someone that cannot speak English, but she understands some of it. Both Diana and Leonardo are bilingual, and can navigate both languages with ease, but they prefer to communicate in Spanish—especially at home. In the examples below, these parents describe having to “force” their children to speak Spanish.

Example #1

Isabel: Pues, sería yo seguir hablando siempre español y forzándolos. Como mi hijo, el mayor mío, a veces ya batalla mucho...para decirme algo en español. Entonces yo tengo que tener una paciencia bien grande y lo que hago yo es escuchar todo lo que me dice, todo en inglés, porque él me lo dice todo en inglés...lo estoy escuchando todo lo que dice en inglés. Él me dice todo su problema en inglés. Entonces yo le digo, “Ahora dímelos...trata de decírmelos en español todo lo que tú me dijiste.” Y lo fuerzo un poco a que me...a que hable español. Es lo que yo hago. Que aunque me lo diga en inglés, lo escucho en inglés, pero luego le digo “Dímelos ahora en español.”

Example #1

Isabel: Well, it would mean that I have to keep speaking Spanish and forcing them. For instance, my son, the oldest, sometimes struggles a lot...to say something in Spanish. So, then I must have lots of patience and what I do is listen to everything he tells me, everything in English because he says everything in English, so I listen to everything he says in English. Then, I say to him, “Now tell me, and try to say everything you told me in Spanish.” And I force him a bit to speak in Spanish. That’s what I do. Even though he says it all in English, I listen to him in English, but then I say, “Now say it in Spanish.”

Example #2

Diana: I speak Spanish at home all the time. Well, as much as I can. I feel much more comfortable with Spanish. And they answer in English...and that's the way we do it. Sometimes I become stubborn and I say, "I don't understand you...I don't understand you" but they get frustrated because they know I understand. They just don't want to do it. They don't want to go through the pain. But for example, with Ana...when she talks about her classes...every day she comes and tells me period by period how it went. So, the rule is, if she has a period in Spanish, she has to tell me in Spanish and if she has a period in English she has to tell me in English. So, I really have to force them into the Spanish.

Example #3

L: Nice. So, at home, what language do you use when you speak to the kids?

Leonardo: Spanish, yeah.

L: ¿Siempre? [Always?]

Leonardo: Sí. Sí. [Yes. Yes.] That's the struggle that we're having right now. My wife is fluent in Spanish and we speak Spanish at home. I speak Spanish to them, but they respond back in English, and we always say, “try again, try again.” I mean, it's every day. Sometime, they follow through and they respond in Spanish. We have to be constantly reminding them to speak in Spanish but sometimes if they catch us off guard, you might respond in English or you might respond to them in Spanish. We told them, “If you don't speak Spanish, I won't respond to you,” but sometimes, like I said, sometimes they speak to us in English and “Oh yeah, yeah,” so we don't follow through every day. So, it's also hard for us to follow through with that rule.

In their interviews, Isabel, Diana, and Leonardo all expressed that they want Spanish spoken in the home because it is the family’s native language and they want their children to maintain their Spanish. The challenge they often face at home is that although these parents prefer to speak Spanish, their children prefer English. In example #1, Isabel describes her interaction with her oldest son, who at the time of the interview was in 7th grade and had already exited the TBE program. She describes having to “force” her oldest son to speak to her in Spanish. Alexander, her son, will communicate with her in English, and she listens to everything

he says in English, but then she asks him to repeat it in Spanish. Isabel is aware that her son struggles with Spanish (“ya batalla mucho,” [he struggles a lot]), but she forces him to speak Spanish. Diana, in example #2, describes how her daughters get frustrated with her when she reminds them to speak to her in Spanish because they know their mother is bilingual. Diana believes that at this point in their life, her daughters simply “don’t want to do it.” Diana also says she has to “force” her daughters to speak Spanish, and even established a rule with her youngest where she requires her youngest to speak to her in Spanish about the classes she has in Spanish in her TWI program. If the class is in English, she can speak in English. Finally, in example #3, Leonardo describes having to constantly remind his children to speak Spanish at home. Within his family, the rule is that Spanish must be spoken at home; however, Leonardo describes how it can be difficult to follow through with this rule because sometimes the kids use English to communicate with him, and he will respond to them in English if they catch him “off guard.” For these three parents, speaking Spanish at home with their children on a regular basis requires them to have a lot of patience (Isabel), it causes frustration (Diana), and it is an ongoing struggle (Leonardo). But they do it anyway to keep Spanish alive and present.

Spanish is just naturally used

Olivia, Angelica, and Lila are three mothers that spoke about the use of Spanish in their home as something that just happens. Although Spanish is the native language of all three women, they differ in their bilingualism. Olivia learned English when she arrived in the United States by attending adult ESL classes, but she prefers to speak Spanish. Angelica is currently taking ESL classes, but still feels more comfortable in Spanish. Lila was born in the United States and grew up with both languages. She feels comfortable navigating both; however, she prefers to speak Spanish at home with her children. In the examples below, the women describe how their children speak Spanish to them at home with little to no reminders, or rules, needed.

Example #1

Olivia: So, en mi casa, yo hablo puro español, Lorena. Ellos también saben que a la hora que se van a comunicar con migo es español.

L: So, Olivia, les tuviste que decir a tus niños, cuando estaban chiquitos, con migo solamente vas a hablar en español, ¿o es algo que ellos aprendieron?

Olivia: Cuando estaban chiquitos, no. Es algo que ellos aprendieron. Ha sido su primer idioma, es el idioma materno. Y creo que nunca se los he tenido que repetir. Con Manuel es que si he tenido unos contratiempos porque yo quiero que ellos sigan manteniendo su idioma. Pero yo creo que ellos saben, ósea, con migo es español pero sin que yo se los tenga que decir.

Example #1

Olivia: So, in my home, I speak purely in Spanish, Lorena. [My sons] know that when they communicate with me, it will be in Spanish.

L: So, Olivia, did you have to tell your boys, when they were little, that they had to speak Spanish with you, or is that something they learned on their own?

Olivia: When they were little, no. It's something they learned. It's their first language, their maternal language. And I don't think I've ever had to repeat it to them. With Manuel I've had some issues because I want them to continue to maintain their language. But, I think they know that with me it's all Spanish and I don't have to say that to them.

Example #2

L: ¿Qué idioma se habla aquí en casa?

Angelica: Español.

L: ¿Español? So, cuando tú hablas con tus hijas, ¿tú les hablas en español?

Angelica: Si. Español.

L: ¿Y ellas?

Angelica: También.

L: ¿Te contestan en español?

Angelica: Ellas cuando estamos platicando, [...] por ejemplo cuando estamos comiendo siempre español y no meten palabras en inglés para nada. Siempre español. Ya solo cuando están en el cuarto, haciendo tarea, o que están juntas ellas hablan inglés. Pero también español. Aunque estén juntas ellas, hablan como español e inglés, los dos.

Example #2

L: What language is spoken here at home?

Angelica: Spanish

L: Spanish? So, when you speak with your daughters, you speak in Spanish?

Angelica: Yes, in Spanish.

L: What about them?

Angelica: Them too.

L: They answer in Spanish?

Angelica: When we're talking, they, for example, during meals it's always Spanish and they don't mix in English words or nothing. Always Spanish. When they're in their rooms doing homework, or they're together, they speak English but also Spanish. Even when they're together they speak both English and Spanish.

Example #3

L: At home, is it predominantly one language or the other?

Lila: Cuando han estado chiquitos los niños, en español solamente. A ellos se les hace hasta raro hablarme en inglés cuando están chiquitos. Pero ya cuando empiezan a ir a la escuela, cuando ya están en segundo, en tercero, con sus amiguitos hablando más en inglés, y se dan cuenta de que yo también hablo inglés [...], ya quieren ellos hablarme en inglés, ¿verdad? Pero yo trato de mantenerme hablando con ellos en español lo más que yo pueda, hasta la edad que yo pueda.

Example #3

L: At home, is it predominantly one language or the other?

Lila: When the kids were little, it was only Spanish. To them, it was even weird to speak to me in English when they were little. But when they start school, when they're in second and third grade, or when they're with their friends they speak more English and they realize that I also speak English. Then they want to speak to me more in English, right? But I try to stick to speaking to them in Spanish for as much as I can and as long as I can.

In these three examples, it is evident that Spanish is naturally used by the parents and their children at home. Olivia, in example #1, says that Spanish is “el primer idioma, es el idioma materno” [the first language, the native language], and that her children just know that they have to speak Spanish with her. Olivia doesn’t recall ever having to tell them that they had to speak Spanish with her, her children just do it. It’s important to point out that her children are aware that she’s learned English and can communicate in English; however, that has not affected how they communicate with their mother. In example #2, Angelica states that Spanish is the language used at home, and even repeats “siempre español” [always Spanish] to get her point across. Furthermore, she specifies that her daughters not only use Spanish at home to communicate with Angelica and her husband, but that they do so without mixing in English (“no meten palabras en inglés,” [they don’t mix in English words]) and the girls use both languages to communicate amongst themselves. Most participants shared that their children tend to use English at home to communicate amongst themselves. Lastly, we see in example #3 that Lila makes a point to use Spanish as much as she can, and for as long as she can (“yo trato de mantenerme hablando con ellos en español lo más que yo puedo”) with her children. For Lila, staying in Spanish was something she had to be consciously aware of because she grew up with both languages and can easily switch from one to the other without recognizing it. However, she was able to raise her five children speaking in Spanish and even states that her children felt odd speaking to her in English when they were younger (“A ellos se les hace hasta raro hablarme en inglés cuando están chiquitos.”) While all the parents reported using Spanish in their homes, only Olivia, Angelica, and Lila were among the few that did not report having to require, remind, or force their children to speak to them in Spanish.

Spanish is used to “connect”

Elena is biracial, bilingual, and bicultural. At the time of the interview, her two youngest children, Ximena and Francisco, were enrolled in a TWI program at the school that Elena’s mother helped to start, and that Elena once worked at. Elena and her husband do not have any set rules about the use of Spanish in the house, or how they as parents use Spanish to communicate with their children. In the quote below, Elena describes how she primarily uses Spanish to feel connected with others.

L: So, even in my time here I’ve seen you use both languages with the kids. On a regular day, is that kind of like the flow? Whatever language it comes out in?

Elena: It’s mostly, it’s a couple of things. One is, I try to keep it alive and present in our lives, right? There’s certain things where it just comes out naturally, and I’ve noticed that it’s around *cariño* and discipline. So, if I like I’m mad at them, or extra lovey-dovey with them, Spanish is the natural language for that for some reason. And it makes sense, because I’ve noticed that when I feel close to someone, I’ll speak to them in Spanish, just like little phrases or whatever. Even if they don’t speak Spanish, if I feel connection with them, even if they like speak Arabic, I’ll be like, you know, “¿Verdad?” And it’s not that I expect them to understand, it’s just that it’s my language of connection.

L: Yeah, yeah.

Elena: I think it’s a signal to them [...] that we’re among other bilinguals and that it’s something to be proud of and that it’s like a shared thing.

Like Claudia’s children,⁶⁴ Elena and her children will “sprinkle” Spanish into their conversations. According to Elena, her Spanish just comes out naturally in certain situations and around certain people. In the quote above, she provides the example of using Spanish to express *cariño* [care], to discipline her children, or when she simply feels a connection with others. She went on to say in her interview that her children will use Spanish with her to express *cariño* as well. Both Elena and her husband are bilingual; however, Elena feels it’s important for her children to see the practical benefits and uses of bilingualism. Using the language naturally to connect with others is one example of this.

⁶⁴ See section titled *They “sprinkle” Spanish* in Chapter 6.

Spanish is used with a particular parent

Maria C is one of three participants that is married to a non-Latino, native English speaker. From this group, however, Maria C is the only participant that is raising her daughters to speak Spanish with her and English with their dad. In the quote below, we see there is a clear expectation in the household that language use will change depending on the parent involved in the conversation. Using one language with one parent and another language with the other parent is often called the *one parent-one language approach* (Baker, 2014).

L: What language is spoken in your home?

Maria C: Predominantly Spanish. My daughters now translate our conversations to daddy. When he hears “dad,” he’s like “Oh, you’re talking about me,” and he’ll ask what we’re saying. Between dad and my daughters, it’s English. I’ve been trying to have them, especially the oldest, speak more Spanish with dad, but she just gets frustrated and she speaks to him in English.

L: Got it. So, your daughters with you, it’s Spanish?

Maria C: Uh-huh.

L: So, has it been this way since they were born?

Maria C: Yes.

Maria C’s husband does not speak Spanish, and according to Maria C he has very little receptive Spanish. There are certain words he understands, and a few simple words and phrases that he can say, but he has always been supportive of his daughters growing up bilingual. Maria C and her husband have faced a few challenges with maintaining this balance of English and Spanish between them, but she expressed that it was very rare for them to have to remind their daughters to switch languages, especially the oldest Maya.⁶⁵ Maria C feels that this use of both languages has worked for her family.

Enriqueciendo el español de nuestros hijos

No, it’s more about que es lo que les interesa a ellos [what interests them] in the mainstream? In the mainstream culture, the pop culture, sus amiguitos [their friends] and then create those bridges, or that bridge that kinda makes them come back, you know? Y desde ese otro extremo estoy yo jalando, jalando esa cuerda que los trae pa’ca de nuevo [And from that other end, I’m there pulling, pulling that rope that brings them back again]. Always reeling them in. – Lila

⁶⁵ See section titled *She can just switch from one to the other* in Chapter 6.

In the quote above Lila, a mother of five and bilingual educator, talks about building bridges between mainstream pop culture and her family's heritage. She does this so that her children can see connections between their mainstream interests, their Mexican heritage, and Latino pop culture. Lila builds bridges to enrich her children's experiences with bilingualism and biculturalism. Providing children linguistic and cultural enrichment opportunities is another way parents' in this study used their linguistic funds of knowledge to keep Spanish alive and present in the lives of their children.

Eight of the eleven participants, including Lila, spoke about the desire to enrich their children's Spanish by providing, or wanting to provide, authentic opportunities to use Spanish outside of the home, and school, for that matter. Often these opportunities were tied to cultural experiences. For instance, both Claudia and Leonardo aspire to their children having the opportunity to study abroad in Latin American countries. Maria B would like her children to live in Mexico so they can experience what it is like to live and go to school in Mexico. Olivia takes her boys to Mexico every summer for one month so they can visit family and learn to use Spanish in more colloquial and culturally authentic ways. Elena exposes her children to Latino cultural events near their home, such as bomba classes in the Puerto Rican community and Spanish read-aloud events at a local bookstore. In the proceeding sections, I present rich descriptions from Maria C and Lila on what they reported doing to provide linguistic and cultural enrichment opportunities for their children.

Maria C: Turning everyday activities into language enrichment opportunities

In example #1 below, Maria C describes in great detail how her oldest daughter, Maya, has a passion for cooking and creating cooking videos. Cooking, according to Maria C, is an activity that allows Maya to infuse her language into her culture. Maya cooks both American and Mexican recipes and refers to different ways of cooking something as the "American way" or the

“Mexican way.” She speaks Spanish as she cooks and explains her recipe and steps in great detail according to Maria C. Furthermore, Maria C notices that Maya speaks in 3rd person as she explains what she is cooking, and that she is very meticulous. She wants Maria C to capture everything on film. It is clearly evident that Maya enjoys engaging in this activity and that it gives her an opportunity to use her Spanish in fun, authentic ways.

Example #2 illustrates how Maria C turns trips to the Mexican grocery store or to restaurants into opportunities to enrich her children’s language and culture. During these trips, Maria C intentionally asks Maya for her assistance, thus providing Maya opportunities to interact with others in Spanish and learn how to use her Spanish in these types of settings. Furthermore, Maria C takes her daughters to the Mexican grocery store about once a week so they could experience food items from Mexico that are not readily available in the “American” grocery store. Lastly, it is important to highlight Maria C’s comment about Maya’s biracial identity. Maya is Mexican and African American. Maria C says that because of her daughter’s physical appearance, people will initially address her in English and then be surprised to hear Maya speak Spanish.

Example #1

Maria C: Well, she does videos. She says she wants me to put them in Pinterest, but I can't put them in Pinterest. She will do videos, and she will do them in Spanish of her cooking. She'll go, “Primero, [First,]” and she talks to me in 3rd person, she has me record her [...] I have videos of her when she cooks and she will do it in Spanish, of how she cooks and prepares meals. She talks a lot in 3rd person while she's cooking because she's teaching.

L: Give me an example. What does she say?

Maria C: Okay. “Paseme la cazuela por favor [Pass me the skillet, please].” Again, I'm the waiter. She wants to give me directions. I feel like the doctor and the nurse, I'm just passing her the stuff. “Ahora quiero que lo piques bien chiquito, bien finito. Ahora vamos hacer esto...pero, mi mamá me dice [Now I want you to finely dice it. Now, we're going to do this...by my mom tells me],” because I'm not her mom, “Mi mamá me dice que tenemos que ponerlo exacto. Cuando pones la sal, lo haces despacito [My mom tells me that we have to be exact. When you pour salt, you have to do it slowly],” and she's there stirring the pot. She'll go with every step. I recorded her making potato salad...it took me six videos to do just potato salad. She had to go detail by detail. “Ahora pela los huevos. Los vamos a picar. Ten cuidado cuando los piques porque el cuchillo...” [Now we have to peel the eggs. We're going to dice them. Be careful when you dice because of the knife].” Do you watch Food Network? She will do it like the Food Network. “Okay, mami, I'm getting

ready. Are you ready to record it?” Sometimes I don't want to record her, but I have to just listen and be a waiter and pass her the stuff.

Maria C: She cooks, like, breakfast. She'll do like sopitas [soup]. Esta semana hizo una sopita [This week she made soup]. “Haber mamá, prueba la sopita de fideo. ¿Necesita más puré? Lo tienes que probar, mamá, pruébalo [Okay, mom, taste the noodle soup. Does it need more puree? You have to taste it mom, taste it].” So she'll go through, very detailed, in Spanish in all her videos.

Maria C: She loves cooking. She's now doing gymnastics, so she will do like dances, but not as much as the cooking. Cooking is her thing and she'll go into lots of detail. If she goes to someone's house and they're cooking, she's like “Can I go help you?” and she just goes to the kitchen and helps them. She will tell Grandma, “Is that the American way? Because in the Mexican way...” So, we have Grandma, who is my husband's mom, and Abue is my mom. “Grandma, we do it this way. In the Mexican way, we put jamón [ham], we don't put that, so that's the American way.” So now she has the Mexican way we cook things and the American way.

Example #2

Maria C: So I try to take them every other week to the Mexican store [...]. “Okay, you can pick anything that we don't find in the American store.” So, guayaba [guava], she'll pick guayaba [guava], she'll pick los dulces [candies]. “¡Aquí venden el queso que me gusta [They sell the cheese I like]!” So they love going. There's not one by my house, so I try every other week, and I'll buy her like a raspado [shaved ice]. Just so they can both have that exposure.

Maria C: If we go to a Mexican store, I will make sure that she's the one paying or I will give her the money, or I say “Me pides una libra de carne” so ella va y me pide la carne, o va y les habla a las personas para que ella pueda hablar [“Ask for a pound of meat” so she goes and orders the meat, or she goes and speaks to people just so she can talk]. The people always get a kick out of this little African American girl, and they're like, “Yes?” but then she starts speaking in Spanish and they're like “Oh!” and then they start talking to her.

Maria C: So, I always send her to do it. If I get the opportunity in Spanish, I'm like “Oh, can you go do this for me?” I also make sure people know that she speaks Spanish. Estamos en el restaurante y ella pide su comida. “¿Qué quieres?” “Yo quiero una agua de horchata.” [We're at a restaurant and she orders her food. “What would you like?” “I'd like a rice water.”] She gets an agua de horchata [rice water].

In the following examples, Maria C describes her efforts to expose her daughters to cultural events and movies in Spanish (example #3). For Maria C, it is important that her daughter experience certain things in Spanish so that she makes connections to Spanish. For instance, she likes exposing her daughters to Disney cartoons in Spanish *first* so that the girls associate the film with Spanish. Watching the film in English then sounds “weird” to the girls because they know it in Spanish. Additionally, she describes the family's religious practices and states that the family attends church in Spanish, and that Maya says her prayers in Spanish.

Lastly, in example #4, Maria C discusses how the internet and YouTube also help to enrich Maya's Spanish because Maya frequently searches for informational videos in Spanish that teach her to make things (e.g. scarves), how to cook certain recipes, or how to make pretty

braids. Maria C points out that Maya insists on doing her own searches and that she enters her search in Spanish. Maria C likes that Maya uses sites like YouTube as a resource because of all the language she is exposed to. Maya finds the videos to be engaging because they are on topics she is interested in. She gets to listen to rich language and learns something new (e.g., recipe, hairstyle). Thus, these experiences help to enrich Maya's language.

Example #3

L: Is there anything else you can think of that you do to help her learn or further develop her Spanish?

Maria C: If I know there's a Spanish program, like, I'm always looking for free activities, and if there is something in Spanish, I'll take them. [...] like at the library, if they're having something for Día de los muertos [Day of the Dead], I'll take them. Last year I had my mom take them to the museum, el mexicano [Mexican museum].

Maria C: We watch the Disney movies in Spanish. I try to put them in Spanish first, like if we get a new one, I put it in Spanish so she can hear it in Spanish first. Because you know how if you watch it in English, then you only know it in English and then it doesn't feel the same when you watch it in Spanish? So I always put it in Spanish first...My husband is like, "Why are we watching this in Spanish?" I'm like, "You know what it's about. We're watching it in Spanish!"...So I always try to put everything in Spanish so she can hear it.

Maria C: We try to go on vacation. We used to go to Mexico because I want her to be around that culture. We always go to the Mexican store. Church, if we can, we go in Spanish. La Virgen de Guadalupe is very important to me. Super important, so she has to pray to her, like, the little kids oraciones que tienen en español [prayers that they have in Spanish]. Sus oraciones en español [Her prayers are in Spanish]. Just anything that I can get my hands on that I know is around in Spanish. Or anything that has to do with the culture. Like, for Día de los muertos they have a lot of things going on for Día de los muertos.

Example #4

Maria C: She's a fan of YouTube. So when she wants to cook something, she will put "como hacer" [how to make] and she will look it up...Y como esta hablando en español [And since she's speaking Spanish], she looks up videos in Spanish.

L: She searches for videos in Spanish?

Maria C: Uh-huh. Le encanta peinar. Hace trenzas. [She loves doing hair. She does braids.] I'm her little model. She's my little hairstylist. So she will go in and put como hacer trenzas faciles para niñas. Y alli lo pone, lo escribe en español. [how to make simple braids for girls. So she puts it there, she writes it in Spanish.] Which there's a lot of stuff in Spanish, I did not know. I was like, "Oh you're not gonna find that, let me type it in English." She's like, "Mami, I wanna do it." So she only writes in Spanish, but she has found a lot of stuff de como hacer cosas, como cocinar y hacer peinados [of how to make things, how to cook and do hair]. So she's always watching YouTube videos of kids. She has certain chefs in Spanish that are her favorites. So, she's always on YouTube watching in Spanish.

Maria C: So we got her a sewing machine. So she was searching como hacer bufandas [how to make scarves]. So she's always on YouTube looking up stuff in Spanish. Which I like because she's listening to all this stuff in Spanish.

Lila: Planting seeds to cultivate positive bilingual and bicultural identities

As previously mentioned, Lila is the mother of five children. At the time of the interview, only three of her children were enrolled in a dual language program. Her daughter, Elsa, was in 2nd grade at the time, and her twin boys, Emanuel and Tomás, were in 5th grade. Her oldest son, Miguel, was in 10th grade and had been through a TBE program in elementary school. Miguel continued to take Spanish at the high school because he wanted to continue to develop his Spanish. Ana is the youngest and was three years old at the time. Lila is a bilingual educator and determined to ensure that her children develop positive bilingual and bicultural identities. To achieve that, Lila feels she has to supplement the language her children learn in school, and provide them cultural experiences to keep them grounded in their roots and heritage. In the excerpts below, Lila describes a community-based program her and her children participate in that allows her to expose her children to rich language and cultural experiences. To Lila, this program not only provides cultural activities for children and families in Spanish, it plants seeds for a strong and empowered sense of self—something that Lila highly values. In addition, it is important to note that Lila went from being a parent participant in the program, to a volunteer, and now currently takes on a more active role where she helps with curriculum development and plans for extending the program to better meet the needs of the community. Given her experience as a bilingual educator, and her love for the program, Lila feels she has “something to offer” and assists the program director and staff in any way she can. In short, this program provides Lila’s children enrichment opportunities for their Spanish, exposes them to cultural activities, allows Lila to contribute, benefits the community, and fosters the development of positive bilingual and bicultural identities in Latino children and youth. It is no wonder why Lila states that she “fell in love” with the program.

L: So what about the twins?

Lila: Well, with them it's the same case. They also feel very, very proud of themselves. They're proud of their cultural background. They have a really strong sense of identity. They kind of grew up in this program, the Artes Tradicionales, or the Nuestros Bebés program?

L: Uh-huh.

Lila: This is one of the things I did intentionally to make sure that they were bilingual and bicultural, is that coming up next or...?

L: You just let it out, girl! Let it out! Don't worry!

Lila: So, okay, so, when they were little, I would say they were probably, well, this was in 2012, so that was about 4 or 5 years ago. So they were probably four. Like in kindergarten or first grade. I started taking them to these workshops, here in [the Hispanic community] at Mi Casa. They were holding them in Mi Casa and they were called Nuestros Bebés workshops, right? It started off as this project. These three founders of Nuestros Bebés wanted a place where they could take their little girl to where they could be like a mommy and me type of little workshop...

Lila: But during Nuestros Bebés, it wasn't just mommy and me. It was mommy, daddy, abuelita [grandma], abuelito [grandpa], tía [aunt], tío [uncle], you know, primos [cousins], everybody. The community and me. So, it was a cross-generation celebration. There was a lot of culture involved, everything in Spanish, también [as well]. Y este [And], books that were very culturally relevant that were used as read alouds. The music, las canciones, son canciones infantiles tradicionales de México [the songs, children's traditional songs from Mexico]...these songs are very respectful toward the people. Las mamás, los abuelos [The moms, the grandparents], they were very inclusive, también [as well]...So, I fell in love with this program. The leader of the workshops, it was obvious she needed somebody to help her, you know? Either hold the book while she was reading it, or whatever. The activities, like the art activities, she needed people to also help with those and stuff. So I felt like, okay, this is probably a space where I can offer something. I have something to offer.

Lila: And yeah, I volunteered to read aloud. The more I volunteered, the more involved I became. This is not just a place where I could bring my kids on a Saturday, this needs to be something bigger and I feel like I can contribute to that. And I thought to myself, "Well, if the Chinese, and the Greeks, and the Polish can have their little Saturday schools, I think that we can too." So, I thought, maybe I can help develop something like that, you know? So I joined Nuestros Bebés. [The director] saw that there was a lot of interest on the part of parents to make it something bigger, verdad [right]? She held a meeting and she convened all these parents that were interested in helping make it grow, and yeah, the summer program, Artes Tradicionales, came out of that. It grew out of that.

Lila: So it wasn't just like un taller de canciones y cuentos y música y arte para los niños pequeños [a workshop on songs, stories, music, and art for young children] on Saturdays, si no que se convirtió en este programa de verano para niños de otras edades [instead, it became a program for children of other ages], you know? For the older ones. For the little ones that were graduating out of Nuestros Bebés.

L: What are the ages?

Lila: Nuestros Bebés was targeted to kids zero to five, and then Artes Tradicionales, I guess, it was targeted for the older ones. Because you know, I was thinking to myself, you know when my kids are not that little, you know my boys, they're moving on. So I kinda want something similar but for their age. So that's when Artes Tradicionales was born. So, let's do this pilot program in the summer and see if we can use that to do a Saturday school, you know?

L: So, the ages for Artes Tradicionales is how old?

Lila: Um, we start at four and then go all the way to like teenagers. The teenagers participate as like volunteers and staff, but like the group ages go all the way to like four year olds to twelve. Twelve or thirteen, yeah. And we're always flexible there.

L: And four weeks, in the summer?

Lila: Yeah. Four weeks in the summer. We started off with three weeks, but now it's been four weeks and we wanna make it grow. We haven't gotten to the point where we make it like a Saturday school. It was supposed to be like this pilot curriculum that we would experiment with during the summer and then eventually use it during the fall and throughout the school year. But, um, that hasn't happened yet, verdad,

porque pues, hay mucho, ¿verdad [right, because well, it's a lot, right]? Que considerar, ¿no? [To consider, no?] Pero este, durante el verano siempre se ha hecho bien bonito. Bien bonito. Todo bien cultural. [But, during the summer it's always been really nice. Really nice. Everything cultural.] Art, hands on, movement is always an essential part there. We don't want the kids sitting down, you know? We want them doing all these hands on projects and activities.

Lila: Oh my God, they love it. The kids love it. Some of the kids that vienen que los papás los mandan, en la casa no necesariamente hablan en español, pero cuando estaban chiquitos, si les hablaban más en español o los abuelos les hablaban en español [come because their parents send them, at home they don't necessarily speak Spanish, but when they were younger they did speak Spanish to them or their grandparents spoke Spanish to them]. So they have some receptive language, verdad [right], some receptive Spanish. Once they come out of there, it's like they have recovered some of it, you know? I mean it's four weeks only, but in those four weeks they have experienced so much language, and through the music and through las palabras, las letras de las canciones y la cultura, la experiencia que sacan de allí es tremenda porque no solamente te ayuda a hablar de nuevo el español sino que también te ayuda a recuperar una parte de ti tan esencial [the words, the songs, the culture, the experience they gain there is tremendous because it not only helps you speak Spanish again, it also helps you recover an essential part of yourself]. You know? It's so essential, this sense of, this strong sense of identity. Just associating that positive feeling, this empowerment, you know, with Spanish. That could lead to you wanting to learn more. So we plant a lot of seeds in them during the summer.

Pedagogía casera: Teaching and Learning Spanish at Home

In this section, I continue to promote an asset-based view of Latino parent presence by illustrating how parents explicitly teach features of Spanish to their children and/or correct their children's use of Spanish at home.

Teaching Features of Spanish at Home

Five of the eleven participants spoke about ways they explicitly teach or explain features of the Spanish language (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, cognates) to their children. In some cases, this took place during everyday interactions or conversations, and sometimes it was directly related to children's homework in Spanish. The excerpts below illustrate examples of how parents engaged in pedagogía casera to teach features of the Spanish language to their children.

Example #1

Isabel: Por ejemplo me dijo el otro día, "Mami, hoy estuve embarazado en la escuela." Yo me le quede viendo, "¿Estuviste embarazado? Okay." Yo no me reí porque yo sé que es embarazado. Le digo, "¿Y qué significa para ti embarazado? Explícamelo todo. Explícame a mí en otras palabras lo que es para ti embarazado." Dice, "Pues, cuando haces algo que luego te da...te

Example #1

Isabel: For example, the other day he said to me, "Mami, today I felt embarazado at school." I just stared at him and said, "You were embarazado? Okay." I didn't laugh because I know what embarazado means. So I said, "What does embarazado mean to you? Explain it to me. Explain what embarazado means to you using other words." He said, "Well, when you do something and then you

sientes como que no debiste hacer eso....” “¿Cómo se dice en inglés?” Dice, “Embarrassed.” “Embarrassed? O sí. En español no se dice embarazado, se dice estuve avergonzado.” Le digo, “Embarazado solo le pasa a las mujeres cuando van a tener un bebe.” “Oh!” Entonces, es un ejemplo que yo les digo cuando ellos me dicen una palabra así.

feel like you shouldn't have done it...” I ask, “How do you say it in English?” He said, “Embarrassed.” I say, “Embarrassed? Oh, yes. In Spanish you don't say embarazado, you say you felt avergonzado.” I said to him, “Embarazado is something that only happens to women, it's when they're pregnant.” He said, “Oh!” So, that's one example of what I say to them when they use words like that.

Example #2

Angelica: ¿Pues como que haría? Será como cuando estoy aquí en la cocina. Bueno mi lugar es la cocina. Y cuando yo estoy cocinando, ellas vienen y conocen como palabras que a la mejor ellas de aquí de la casa no son muy comunes para ellas. Como de la cocina o cosas que ellas no pueden usar mucho pero yo pienso que sí. O sea todas las palabras y cosas así que ellas no pueden usar mucho pues yo se las digo. Algunas se les hacen raras, pero no me acuerdo que palabra no podían pronunciar pero la estuvimos repitiendo, repitiendo hasta que lo pronuncien bien.

Angelica: Cuando yo voy a preparar algo, ellas vienen, según me ayudan. Pero decimos todas las palabras así como son. Como, que el sartén o que abre el ornó, cosas así o pon los ingredientes donde van, mézclalo, cosas así. Ellas me entienden todo. No hay así como, “¿Qué es eso?”

Example #2

Angelica: *What would I do? Well, it could be like when I'm in the kitchen. My place is in the kitchen. When I'm cooking, they come and they learn words here at the house that are probably not too common for them. Words from the kitchen or things that they don't use often but I think they should. Like, I like to tell them all the words and things that they don't get to use often. They think some of them are weird, but I can't remember which word they couldn't pronounce. We repeated the word until they could pronounce it.*

Angelica: *When I'm going to prepare something, they come because supposedly they are going to help me. But we say all the words as they should be said. For example, the pan or open the oven, things like that. Or put the ingredients where they go, mix it, things like that. They understand everything. They never ask, “What is that?”*

Example #3

Elena: So, we're very meta in talking about languages, because I'm just kind of a weird nerd. Anyway, my mom used to do that to me...She would always be like “Fijate [look], think about what that word sounds like if you say it as if it were in Spanish. What does that make you think of?” She was tuning me into cognates just, like, because she thought it was cool. Eventually, it made me rock those Iowa Tests that I had to take, you know what I mean?

L: Do you do the same with your kids?

Elena: I do the same with my kids, and again, not because I'm...yes, because I'm trying to get them to be more metalinguistically aware, but also because I just think it's cool. You know what I mean? It's not all completely strategic, it's just who I am.

Example #4

L: How do you chime in to help her?

Maria C: Sometimes she'll say a word in English, and I will be like, “Oh you mean el tenedor o la spatula [the fork or the spatula]?” And she's like, “O sí, ¿me pasas la spatula? [Oh, yeah. Can you pass the spatula?]” So I don't have to tell her “You have to say this,” I just say “Oh, me quieres decir la spatula, ¿verdad? [Oh, you meant to say the spatula, right?]” “Sí, mamá, la spatula [Yes, mom. The spatula]” and she just knows it. If I say it in Spanish, I want her to use the word.

Maria C: So she knows that when I say it in Spanish for her to do it in Spanish, she knows that she has to use that word again in the sentence.

Example #5

Leonardo: Si quiero enseñarles una palabra, se las enseño pero cuando ellos hablan, sí, vocabulario a

Example #5

Leonardo: *When I want to teach them a word, I teach it to them, but when they speak, yes, sometimes it's the*

veces, cuando están traduciéndolo a veces se demoran y se quedan pensando en cómo se dice la palabra o la conjugación de los verbos más que todo. Los verbos son complicados. O a veces traducen la palabra literalmente la palabra en inglés al español y no suena. No tiene sentido.

vocabulary, or it takes them awhile to translate something and they think about how you say something, or more than anything it's the verb conjugations. The verbs are complicated. Or sometimes they translate a word literally from English to Spanish and it doesn't make sense. It just doesn't make sense.

From the five examples above, we see that parents approach teaching features of the Spanish language in a variety of ways. Isabel uses a very direct approach in example #1 with her oldest son, Alexander. When he mistakenly confuses “embarazado,” which means pregnant, for “avergonzado,” which means embarrassed, Isabel asks him to explain what he means and then asks him to translate the word to English. She then clarifies the meaning and explains how “avergonzado” is the word he meant to use. Angelica and Maria C, in examples #2 and #4, model the use of Spanish vocabulary that may be new to their children. For instance, Angelica uses her time cooking to teach her daughters the vocabulary needed to navigate the kitchen and assist in preparing a meal. Angelica states that her daughters may not know certain words, so she exposes them to the words and if they have trouble with the pronunciation, they repeat the words until the girls can pronounce them correctly.

On the other hand, Maria C, in example #4, will model words in Spanish that her daughter said in English (e.g., spatula). She does it in an indirect way, and once Maya hears the word in Spanish, she is able to repeat it in Spanish. In example #3, Elena talks about teaching her children metalinguistic awareness, something that her mother taught her. Elena believes this helped her identify cognates between English and Spanish, and that this helped her do well on standardized tests at school. According to Elena, teaching her children to be metalinguistically aware is not something that she explicitly sets out to do—it is just something she does because it is a part of her own identity as a bilingual individual. Finally, in example #5, Leonardo was talking about Spanish homework time with his children. During this time, he helps to teach

vocabulary in Spanish as needed and identifies areas his children need help in, such as translations and verb conjugations.

Corrigiendo el español: Correcting Children's Use of Spanish

Para mí, mantener el idioma español es sumamente importante y yo voy a tratar que el español siga, ósea que ellos no olviden su español. Voy a seguir apoyando en todo lo que sea necesario. Palabras que ellos no digan bien, las corrijo. Hasta que ellos tengan un poco más perfección en el idioma español. -- Olivia

For me, maintaining Spanish is very important and I will do what it takes to keep it going, so that they don't forget their Spanish. I'm going to continue providing support in every way possible. I will correct words that they don't say right. I will do this until they perfect their Spanish a bit more. -- Olivia

As previously discussed in this chapter, linguistic funds of knowledge includes knowledge of how language is used. Parents frequently reported examples of what they consider to be “incorrect” uses of Spanish. Often it was their children that were incorrectly using the language. During the interviews, parents often commented about these incidents as they described how their children used language at home, or as they discussed helping their children with homework. It became evident that “correcting” Spanish occurred in the homes of several parent participants. Thus, another example of parents engaging in pedagogía casera centers on correcting children's use of Spanish.

Correcting Vocabulary

The excerpts below provide examples of how Isabel (#1), Olivia (#2), and Angelica (#3) address their children's use of incorrect vocabulary.

Example #1

Isabel: Como por ejemplo, otra palabra que ellos se inventaron, para mi ellos se lo inventan, cuando alguien estaciona un carro mi hijo dice “Él se estaba parkando.” Entonces yo le dije, “¿Parkando? Tu sabes lo que quiere...explícame la palabra parkando.” “Pues cuando pones el carro allí afuera.” Le digo, “Eso se dice lo estaba estacionando, ¿verdad? Estacionar es la palabra correcta.” “Okay. ¿Entonces se dice estacionar?” Le digo, “Sí, estacionar.”

Example #1

Isabel: For example, another word they invented, a word I think they invented, is for when someone is parking a car. My son will say, “Él se estaba parkando.” So, I say, “Parkando? Do you know what that...explain parkando to me.” “Well, it's when you leave the car outside.” I say to him, “You're supposed to say estacionando, right? Estacionar is the correct word.” “Okay. So you're supposed to say estacionar?” I say to him, “Yes, estacionar.”

Example #2

Olivia: Sí, cuando me dicen alguna palabra que, “Mami, es que estamos salvando dinero.” ¿Salvando dinero? Yo le digo, “Deberían decir que están ahorrando dinero.” Ósea, son así muchas palabras y yo si las corrijo. Hay muchas frases que me dan ellos con palabras que se asocian en el inglés y ellos como que me la convierten como si fuera español. Yo si se las corrijo.

L: ¿Cómo qué?

Olivia: Como, ¿cuál otra? Ayer me estaba diciendo el más grande algo pero no recuerdo la frase. Le digo, “¿Qué?” ¡No le entendía! “O no,” le digo, “esa palabra en español no existe.” Pero no recuerdo, no recuerdo. La que se me viene a la mente más es esa que están salvando dinero. Te digo. O, el tercero también usa mucho una palabra. “O, yo estaba expectando, te estaba expectando aquí mami.” Mira, me estabas esperando, que es diferente, ¿verdad? Y él la usa mucha. “Es que yo estaba expectando que esto iba pasar.” El la usa mucho. Esa de la expectando. O, le digo, “Esperando. Es esperando, mijo.” Y así son. Usan así muchas palabras, ¿si me entiendes? Pero yo si trato de corregir.

Example #3

Angelica: Pero yo les digo así como son [las palabras] para que ellas sepan cómo son las palabras.

L: So, en una situación así, si ellas dicen “troca” y tú les dices “camioneta,” ¿ellas repiten “camioneta?”

Angelica: Sí, repiten. Ellas lo dicen, “camioneta.” Y ya cuando esta otra vez, que sale en la plática, ya ellas dicen la palabra “camioneta.”

Example #2

Olivia: Yes, when they say a word to me like, “Mami, we’re salvando money.” Salvando money? I say to him, “You should say that you are ahorrando money.” That is, it’s a lot of words like that and I correct them. They use lots of phrases with words that they associate with English and it’s like they try to convert them to Spanish. I do correct them.

L: Like what?

Olivia: Like what else? Last night my oldest was saying something to me but I can’t remember the phrase he used. I said to him, “What?” I didn’t understand him! “Oh no,” I said to him, “That word doesn’t exist in Spanish.” But I can’t remember, I can’t remember. The one that comes to mind is the one about salvando money. I tell you. Oh, my third son also uses a word a lot. “Oh, I was expectando, I was expectando you here, Mami.” Look, you were esperando which is very different, right? And he uses it a lot. “It’s just that I was expectando that this would happen.” He uses the word expectando a lot. Oh, I say to him, “Esperando. It’s esperando, son.” And that’s how they are. They use a lot of words like that, you know? But yes, I try to correct them.

Example #3

Angelica: But I tell them the words so that they know how the words are.

L: So, in a situation like that, if they say “troca” and you say “camioneta,” do they repeat “camioneta”?

Angelica: Yes, they repeat it. They say “camioneta.” And when the word comes up again in conversation, they will say the word “camioneta.”

When her son uses the word “parkando” instead of the correct form of the verb “estacionar,” Isabel, in example #1, asks him to explain what “parkando” means. Through this exchange, she hears her son explain what he is trying to communicate (someone parking a car outside), and she corrects his use of “parkando,” a word that Isabel does not consider to be correct Spanish. Isabel points out that “estacionar” is the correct verb and she even models the proper conjugation of the verb (“Eso se dice lo estaba estacionando”). Her son clarifies what she

explained (“¿Entonces se dice estacionar?”) and Isabel confirms that “estacionar” is the correct verb he should have used.

Like Isabel, Olivia also reported instances she has had to correct her sons’ vocabulary in Spanish. In example #2, Olivia describes how one of her sons used the word “salvando” instead of “ahorrando.” Salvando is a word, that according to Oliva, her boys created by taking the English word “save” (as in “we’re saving money”) and “converting” it to Spanish—hence, “salvando.” In the second example she provides, one of her sons used the word “expectando,” the “converted” word for “expecting,” instead of “esperando.” Olivia states that her sons frequently engage in “converting” English words to Spanish and that when they do this, she corrects them and even tells them that the word or words they use “do not exist” in Spanish.

Finally, in example #3, Angelica also reports how she uses words in Spanish as they should be used (“así como son”) so that her daughters can learn them. Angelica states that when her daughters use an incorrect word in Spanish, such as “troca,” Angelica will use the correct word, in this case “camioneta,” and her daughters will repeat what they said but use the correct word. She goes on to say that her daughters will recall the correct words Angelica points out to them and use them properly in future conversations.

Isabel, Olivia, and Angelica, as previously mentioned, are native Spanish speakers. They consider themselves to be very proficient in Spanish and prefer to communicate in Spanish. All three women frequently reported examples of their children using what they consider to be incorrect words or phrases in Spanish. It was often the case that the words and phrases their children were using, and the women were correcting, were examples of words and phrases commonly used in U.S. Spanish, a variety of Spanish that is different from the Spanish the women were raised with in Mexico (Anzaldúa, 1987; García, 2014).

Correcting Grammar: “Spanish a la English”

Along with correcting vocabulary, parents also reported that they often have to correct their children’s grammar in Spanish. English and Spanish are two distinct languages and each has their own set of grammatical rules. However, parents noticed that their children would often use English grammatical rules when they spoke in Spanish. I refer to the practice of communicating in Spanish with English grammatical rules as “Spanish a la English.” Here, I highlight an excerpt from Diana (#4) where she discusses how her youngest daughter, Ana, frequently engages in this practice of Spanish a la English. In the excerpt, Diana states that with Ana she has to be very explicit in how she corrects her use of grammar. She cannot do the “natural way” of modeling the correct grammatical form in hopes that Ana will repeat it. She has to point out the error to Ana and then tell her how it should be said. However, it is also worth noting Diana’s comment about Ana’s resourcefulness with her two languages. Diana states that this use of Spanish a la English is one way that Ana uses her abilities in English to “make up for her Spanish.” Thus, one could argue that Ana is simply drawing from all of her linguistic repertoires to communicate, a practice that research shows is common amongst emergent bilinguals (García, 2009).

Example #4

Diana: English interference in grammar and structure is very notorious in the youngest one, this is the way that she speaks, "¿Quien vas a ir tu con?" So, as you see, that's a word-by-word translation from the English. *¿Quién vas a ir tú con?* Who are you going to go with? And I correct, "Honey, *¿Con quién vas a ir tú?*" But then it comes back, *¿Quién vas a ir tú con?* She does a lot of that. It comes so natural to her, and then I have to be telling her...I tried the natural form of just repeat it for them, and they will catch it. No, that doesn't work with her. You really have to tell her, "That's not the way you say it, you say it this way..." And have her repeat it, and then the next time she says it wrong again and it's one more time, "Remember?" She doesn't say *¿Quién vas a ir tú con?* anymore, but, *she did it for a long time*. Or, "*yo voy con tú.*"

L: Yo voy con tu! Aww!

Diana: So, she has so many things in which she is using her English to make up for her Spanish, and it's just really correcting it.

L: Yeah.

Diana: Correcting her, and telling her, "No, you don't say it that way, you say it this way..." But, she's stubborn, and she's been stubborn since she was very little.

L: Yeah. And the way you approach it is, you model it. You ask her to repeat it. But with her, in particular, you really have to point it out that what she said is out of order, or incorrect, and you show her...model...

Diana: And again, and again, and again. Because she keeps doing the same. You know? Just last week she said something like that. And I thought, "Oh, when is this going to end?"

Similar to Diana, Leonardo (#5) also reported that he has to explicitly correct his children's use of grammar and vocabulary. In the excerpt below, Leonardo states that although his children understand Spanish, that they make frequent grammatical mistakes or often use incorrect words (vocabulary). Leonardo is a TBE teacher in a neighboring district, so he primarily assists his children with their homework. It is during homework time that he notices the mistakes that his children make when they try to speak and/or write in Spanish. In the excerpt below, he states that he has to explicitly draw their attention to the mistake by letting them know that what they said is incorrect ("Así no se dice"), or by sternly telling them that they need to speak Spanish more often because that is why they are starting to forget it ("Ay que hablar español por eso se les está olvidando el español").

Example #5

L: ¿Cuando hablan español que has notado?

Leonardo: Que a veces la gramática o el vocabulario no saben. Nos toca corregir la gramática en español, vocabulario y gramática. O sea, ellos entienden todo. Entienden todo en español...

L: Okay. Cuando escuchas que tus hijos no pronuncian algo bien o se les olvida una palabra, ¿cómo respondes?

Leonardo: Corrección. A veces digo que hablen en español. Los regañamos pero no, bueno si, se les regaña, “Ay que hablar español por eso se les está olvidando el español,” o “Así no se dice.”

Example #5

L: *What have you noticed when they speak Spanish?*

Leonardo: *That sometimes they don't know the grammar or vocabulary. We have to correct the Spanish grammar, the vocabulary and the grammar. That is, they understand everything. They understand everything in Spanish...*

L: *Okay. How do you respond when you hear your children mispronounce something or when they forget a word?*

Leonardo: *Correcting. Sometimes I tell them to speak in Spanish. We scold them, but no, well yes, we scold them by saying, “We need to speak Spanish because that's why you're forgetting it,” or “That's not how you say it.”*

Finally, in the excerpt below, I present an example that shows that Latino parents themselves can also be subjected to having their Spanish corrected by others. Maria C reported that when she visits family in Mexico, her cousins will correct her Spanish. Although Maria C identifies herself as a native Spanish speaker, she reported in her interview that she sometimes struggles with verb tenses in Spanish and accent marks. Thus, she feels that her Spanish is not at the same level as that of her relatives in Mexico. Further, she points out that her cousins catch her mistakes and correct her because they “have an education” and “know more than one language.” The excerpt also shows how Maria C believes her Spanish, with errors and all, would be good enough to communicate with people “en los pueblos” [the small towns], meaning people from small towns in Mexico.

L: When you've gone to Mexico, and people hear you speak in Spanish, do they say...?

Maria C: Because it's the capital, so it's very professional and they can tell with my verb tense, my cousin's always correct me. Like, “O quisiste decir esto por esto,” [Oh, you said this, but you meant to say this] just because my family has an education, so it's a little bit, like, with anybody else en los pueblos [the small towns], I can. But since my family lives in the capital, they know more than one language so they correct me.

A Final Thought on Teaching and Learning Spanish at Home

I cannot conclude the discussion on parents engaging in teaching features of Spanish and/or correcting children's use of Spanish without mentioning a comment shared by Maria C on

the challenges of having to be responsible for teaching children Spanish at home simply because one is a Spanish-speaking parent. As discussed in earlier sections of this chapter, Maria C engages in her daughter Maya's language education in a variety of ways. Maria C navigates both languages with ease, but at home she assumes the responsibility of being a Spanish resource for her daughters. She speaks to them in Spanish and is raising her daughters to speak to her in Spanish. Additionally, she seeks opportunities to enrich their Spanish. Furthermore, given her profession as a TBE educator in a neighboring district, Maria C felt confident that she could "teach" Spanish at home if her daughters were enrolled in all-English classes. However, we see in the quote below that Maria C realized she may not be enough to help her daughters grow up to be bilingual:

Maria C: Because I thought I could just teach her the Spanish. I'm like, "I'll be okay. She can just go in the English program." And then I have a coworker who has his kids in the same program. He's like, "You know what? It helps. We have very busy lives. You're not going to be able to keep up with the writing and the reading." And I'm like, "Are you sure? I don't know if I want her in the dual program. She has to qualify and what if she doesn't?" In my head I knew I wanted her to go into the English program, I was gonna do the Spanish. I always thought, when me and my husband were trying to have kids, I was going to teach the Spanish. I'm a teacher, I should be able to do it. I don't need help from nobody! But then, as she was getting older, I realized I couldn't keep up. Especially, when I saw her in preschool, and how much she didn't want to speak Spanish, that's when I realized that she needs to see that Spanish is valued.

When Maya was in preschool, according to Maria C, she began to internalize messages about the value—or lack thereof—of Spanish. Maya came home one day and asked why she had to speak Spanish since the only two people in her life that spoke Spanish were Maria C and her grandmother, everyone else spoke English. Plus, Maya was enrolled in an all English preschool program and exposed to English most of the day. This resistance to Spanish at such a young age really troubled Maria C and helped her realize that teaching the language at home may not be enough. She wanted Maya to see that Spanish is valuable. Enrolling Maya in a TWI program is how Maria C addressed this issue.

Bilingual families face a variety of challenges, often unexpected, in trying to help their children maintain the home language and develop bilingualism (Kennedy & Romo, 2013; King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008). It is beyond the scope of this section, or chapter for that matter, to address this topic in-depth. I raise this point because Maria C was not alone in feeling this way. Other parents reported similar circumstances, or feeling that they lacked the time, knowledge, and/or skills to “teach” their children the use of Spanish at home. In fact, many parents initially did not recognize the things they did at home as “teaching” or “supporting.” To them, it was all a part of communicating with their children and being a parent. However, despite competing priorities or feeling that they cannot or do not teach language, parents did in fact engage in *pedagogía casera* to transmit their knowledge of Spanish to their children. It may be enacted in informal ways and spaces, but it is still a process of teaching and learning that can be very powerful for children and families.

Summary

The findings discussed in this chapter clearly show that a key form of Latino parent presence in the language education of their children is to engage in *pedagogía casera* at home. To engage in *pedagogía casera*, parents drew from their linguistic funds of knowledge (Smith, 2001). Furthermore, based on information presented in the previous two chapters, it is clear that the actions parents take to teach language at home reflect Latino parent voice. Participants expressed that they highly value Spanish and believe it is important for their children to maintain the language. In this chapter, we saw examples of what participants reported they do to support their children’s language education at home.

The richness of the experiences participants reported is lost when the focus of family engagement is solely on school-based practices to support academic achievement. As discussed in Chapter 4, the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education in

Illinois clearly places an emphasis on parents being “active participants in supporting student learning.” However, the issue is that such discourse is rather vague and does not explicitly mention emergent bilinguals’ language learning, nor does it explicitly recognize that parents can be active participants outside of school. Thus, a common interpretation of such discourse is for parents to support their children’s academic achievement at home using traditional forms of engagement. Furthermore, as presented in Chapter 4, federal mandates around accountability of ELs help to fuel a focus on English attainment and academic achievement.

However, as we saw in this chapter, participants are indeed “active participants” in their children’s Spanish language education at home. But, as the saying goes, out of sight, out of mind. For far too long, the ways in which Latino parents of emergent bilinguals engage in *pedagogía casera* has been done out of sight from the schools. Therefore, it is not recognized as a valid form of engagement. Thus, the findings presented in this chapter echo the calls from scholars to recognize the diverse ways Latino families, and families from other non-dominant groups, engage in their children’s education as valid (Auerbach, 2011; Baquedano-López et al., 2013; López, 2001; Pérez Carreón et al., 2005). In addition, the findings presented in this chapter also make a contribution to the field of family engagement in that they present clear evidence of what active participation in supporting students’ language education at home can look like. There is a critical need to understand what parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals do to support their children’s language education.

The Latino parents in this study possess a wealth of linguistic capital and linguistic funds of knowledge that allow them to engage in their children’s language education in a variety of ways. Parents are careful observers of children’s language use, and here we saw how parents use these informal observations in conjunction with their knowledge of Spanish to form perceptions

of their children's ability to use Spanish. Parents also spoke about their knowledge of different ways Spanish is spoken in their community and in their children's school. The key point here is that living in the United States has exposed these Latino families to Spanish varieties and diverse language practices. Parents expressed strong opinions about these varieties and practices, and some, like Maria A and Angelica, even expressed strong disapproval of certain practices. This chapter also highlighted ways in which parents keep Spanish alive and present in the lives of their children and family. The chapter also discussed ways parents explicitly teach features of Spanish and/or correct their children's use of Spanish. Such findings provide evidence of a strong Latino parent presence in the language education of emergent bilinguals. By engaging in *pedagogía casera* at home, Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals support their children's language learning and development.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was twofold. First, I wanted to understand how Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals engage in their children's language education. Second, I wanted to examine how parent-reported perspectives, beliefs, and experiences are reflected within institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education. Given the history of marginalization that Latino communities have been subjected to within U.S. schools, and continue to experience today, I felt it was critical to honor Latino parent voice and presence in my research. Thus, I used *parent voice* and *parent presence*, two components from my theoretical framework (McKenna and Millen, 2013), as a lens for my research.

Given the high number of Latino students enrolled in language education programs, or identified as emergent bilinguals or ELs, in U.S. schools, it is critical to understand family engagement practices focused on the language education of Latino emergent bilinguals. Across the country, the Latino population has consistently grown since 2000 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). This growth is reflected within the nation's student population as well. Roughly 24% of school-aged children are Latino (*Excelencia in Education*, 2015; Gándara & Contreras, 2009). In regard to the nation's population of ELs, Latinos represent about 70% of that student population (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015). In addition, there is a growth of English/Spanish bilingual education programs nationwide⁶⁶ (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2005; Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006; OELA, 2015; Ramos, 2007). Thus, Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals are a population of parents that merit attention.

⁶⁶ The Seal of Biliteracy movement (www.sealofbiliteracy.com) is also important to note.

La voz de padres Latinos

La voz de padres Latinos,⁶⁷ as defined in Chapter 4, is essentially the right and opportunity for Latino parents and caregivers of emergent bilinguals to express their thinking, understandings, beliefs, hopes, dreams, fears, concerns, anger, and/or frustrations related to their children's language learning and language use, both at home and at school. In short, Latino parent voice refers to what parents have to say about their children's language use and language education. In this research, la voz de padres Latinos emerges prominently throughout and shows that when it comes to their children's use of Spanish, and their children's learning of Spanish, Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals have a lot to say. In addition, however, this research also shows that Latino parent voice is not acknowledged or reflected in the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education.

In Chapter 4, I present evidence that shows that Latino parent voice is silenced in the policies that constitute institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education. In my discussion, I highlight examples of Latino parent voice from the interview data, discuss the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education in Illinois, and present examples of Latino parent needs and wants in regard to school-based family engagement practices. When given the opportunity to discuss their dreams, hopes, fears, and concerns about their children's language education, the participants in this study expressed that Spanish is (a) an essential tool for maintaining family ties; (b) inextricably tied to family histories and heritage; (c) an asset that will open doors in the future and allow children to provide service to others; and (d) essential to maintain not just for this generation, but for future generations as well. In addition,

⁶⁷ Latino parent voice.

parents also expressed concern over a perceived lack of Spanish within instruction and teachers' lack of Spanish proficiency.

Now, in regard to the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education, the evidence presented shows that Latino parent voice is not acknowledged, recognized, or included. In other words, Latino parent voice is silenced within the discourse. This was evident because the policies that constitute such discourse do not explicitly make references to family engagement practices that support students' language education or students' learning of languages other than English. The institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education in Illinois places a focus on students' academic achievement and English attainment. According to these eleven participants, their children's schools did very little when it comes to school-based family engagement practices that focus on emergent bilinguals' language education. In fact, when given the opportunity to discuss ways in which their children's schools engage families in language education, the participants articulated several needs and wants. These include: information, continuity of services, access to Spanish resources, support in helping with homework and establishing cross-cultural relationships, cultural recognition, Spanish to be afforded the same status as English, and their voice to be heard. In short, participants felt that the family engagement practices used by schools fell short when it came to family engagement within language education. Thus, the findings discussed in Chapter 4 are significant because they show that the voice of Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals is silenced within the institutionalized family engagement discourse that has the power to influence school-based family engagement practices.

In Chapter 5, I also presented data on Latino parent voice. However, in this chapter, I show how the silencing of Latino parent voice results in various challenges for parents as their

children navigate K-12 language education programs. I do this by highlighting the stories of Maria B, Isabel, Olivia, Maria A, and Diana. These five Latina mothers of emergent bilinguals who hold strong beliefs, dreams, goals, fears, and/or concerns for their children's language education and future language use. Yet, programmatic decisions impacting their children's language education, decisions that can have detrimental effects on their children's future language use and family dynamics, are often made by educators with little to no consideration or inclusion of Latino parent voice. Thus, to make their voices heard, these five mothers assumed the role of advocate to ensure that their children's and families' language needs are being met. Thus, Chapter 5 highlights how advocates emerge when Latino parent voice is silenced.

Furthermore, the five stories in Chapter 5 were selected because they represent challenges families of emergent bilinguals may face within language education programs at different points of the K-12 trajectory. For instance, Maria B advocated for her son to be placed in the kindergarten TBE program. Isabel spoke out on behalf of her son when she received a notice that he was transitioning out of the TBE program for 4th grade. Olivia advocated for a Spanish-speaking ESL teacher to help her son when he was transitioned to an all-English special education classroom with ESL services. On the other hand, Maria A was so displeased with the dual language program that she advocated to have her daughters removed from the program. Lastly, Diana advocated for her daughter to have an appropriate Spanish class at the high school. Diana's account reflects the challenges Latino parents of emergent bilinguals can face when their children transition to high schools that do not offer the same type of language education programs. The stories presented show that these five mothers did not agree with the decisions made in regard to their children's language education. When Latino parent voice is silenced in programmatic decision-making, the participants believe it is their children that pay the

consequences and they will not stand for that. Thus, they advocate for their children's language education.

La presencia de padres Latinos

In Chapter 6, I focused specifically on Latino parent presence, or la presencia de padres Latinos. I define Latino parent presence⁶⁸ as the actions parents take, or the practices they engage in, to support their children's language education. Latino parent presence can occur in both formal and informal settings (e.g., school or home) and it can include actions or practices that are considered traditional and/or non-traditional forms of engagement. What the data presented in Chapter 6 show is that a key form of Latino parent presence in support of children's language education is to engage in *pedagogía casera*, or the communication and practices for teaching and learning that transpire specifically within the homes of Latino families.⁶⁹ Acknowledging that Latino parents engage in *pedagogía casera*, promotes an asset-based view of Latino family engagement. Furthermore, in Chapter 6, I argue that the Latino parents in this study possess a wealth of linguistic capital and linguistic funds of knowledge that allow them to engage in their children's language education in a variety of ways. Thus, this further promotes an asset-based view of Latino parents.

I present a variety of examples of Latino parent presence in Chapter 6. For instance, I present data that show that Latino parents of emergent bilinguals are careful observers of children's language use and that they use these informal observations in conjunction with their knowledge of Spanish to form perceptions of their children's ability to use Spanish. Moreover, parents are also careful observers of the language used within their community, thus parents also spoke about their knowledge of different ways Spanish is spoken in their community and in their

⁶⁸ See Chapter 6 for the full definition of Latino parent presence.

⁶⁹ See Chapter 6 for the full definition of *pedagogía casera*.

children's school (e.g., "Mexican" Spanish vs. "Colombian" Spanish). Parents expressed strong opinions about these varieties and practices, and some, like Maria A and Angelica, even expressed strong disapproval of certain practices (e.g., mixing English and Spanish). This chapter also highlighted ways in which parents keep Spanish alive and present in the lives of their children and family. For example, Lila volunteers at a summer program her children participate in that immerses children in Spanish and Latino culture. Furthermore, the chapter also discussed ways parents explicitly teach features of Spanish and/or correct their children's use of Spanish (e.g., vocabulary or grammatical mistakes).

The data presented in Chapter 6 present strong evidence of Latino parent presence in the language education of their children. By engaging in *pedagogía casera* at home, Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals support their children's language learning and development at home. The issue is that the practices and actions described in Chapter 6 are not reflected, recognized as valid, or included in the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education. For example, such discourse places an emphasis on parents being "active participants" in "supporting student learning." The issue with this is that "active participants" is easily interpreted to mean school-based, traditional forms of engagement (e.g., classroom volunteer). "Student learning" is also problematic because it can easily be interpreted to mean academic achievement. Emergent bilinguals are students learning both academic content and language. Definitions of "student learning" for them must include their language education. Thus, the findings presented in Chapter 6 challenge narrow views of parent presence and deficit views of Latino family engagement.

Significance and Implications

First and foremost, this study reveals a strong Latino parent voice and presence in the language education of K-12 emergent bilinguals. The eleven Latino parents that participated in

this study shared their beliefs and perspectives, as well as examples of what they do at home to support their children's Spanish language learning and use. As presented and discussed, the findings on Latino parent voice and presence promote an asset-based view of Latino parents and thus contribute to the literature base that challenges deficit-based views of Latino families. In addition, these findings contribute to the literature base on K-12 bilingual education as they showcase ways parents support children's Spanish language learning at home. Last, but not least, the findings on Latino parent voice and presence in supporting children's language education make a significant contribution to the literature base on family engagement by illuminating family engagement practices that explicitly target children's language education.

Secondly, this study reveals that the voice and presence of Latino parents of K-12 emergent bilinguals is not acknowledged within institutionalized family engagement discourse. For example, such discourse ignores or fails to acknowledge *pedagogía casera*. This becomes problematic for Latino parents of emergent bilinguals because institutionalized family engagement discourse, which is deeply rooted in policy, has the power to perpetuate school-based family engagement practices that are not inclusive of, nor responsive to, the ways Latino parents of emergent bilinguals support their children's language education. The participants in this study have all been subjected to such practices, and as such, were able to articulate ways the schools could improve their approach to family engagement within language education. By silencing the voice and ignoring the presence of Latino parents, the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education does a disservice to emergent bilinguals, their parents, and to the educators that support them. If at the core of family engagement are partnerships between parents and schools, then those partnerships must make space for the

language education of emergent bilinguals and the various ways parents support language learning at home.

Lastly, the significance of this research and its findings is that it is situated at the intersection of the fields of family engagement, Latino education, and K-12 language education for emergent bilinguals. As a Latina and educator with experience in K-12 language education programs, I was struck at how difficult it was to find literature on family engagement practices that support students' language learning. While I was able to locate an abundance of literature on Latino families, I found very few that clearly identified the subjects as Latino parents of emergent bilinguals or ELs within the realm of family engagement. Too often, phrases such as "linguistic minorities," "linguistically diverse," or "limited English proficient parents" are used to describe parents within the literature, but this does not necessarily mean that they are parents of students formally enrolled in a language education program. For example, my parents could be described as "linguistic minorities" but since I was never in a K-12 language education program, their experiences would not qualify for the subject of my research. Furthermore, several of the articles I found on Latino parents of emergent bilinguals fell within the realm of bilingual education, or language education, and not family engagement. For instance, these articles explored parents' perspectives on the language education program of their children, but they did not explore family engagement practices to support language learning. Thus, to me, it became evident early on that a gap exists within the literature. Therefore, my research brings together the fields of Latino education, language education, and family engagement.

This study also reveals implications for the various stakeholders invested in the education of K-12 Latino emergent bilinguals. First and foremost, policymakers must learn to "walk the walk" and not just "talk the talk" (Auerbach, 2009). I say this because there is a lot of

rhetoric spouted by national policymakers about the need to value and promote student's multilingualism (see Duncan & Gil, 2014), but yet policy around family engagement within language education continues to promote English attainment and remains silent around languages other than English. This was true under NCLB (2002), and based on my initial understandings of ESSA (2015-2016), it appears that not much has changed. The new law also calls for accountability measures for ELs to show progress toward *English* attainment.

Similarly, school leaders at both the district and school level must ensure that they work collaboratively with a team of educators and parents to establish a vision for family engagement within language education. School leaders must also “walk the walk” (Auerbach, 2009). While the institutionalized family engagement discourse within language education is rooted in policy, it does not mean that they must stop there. School leaders can help to promote and support practices for partnerships with families of emergent bilinguals that go beyond compliance. As a former educator, I know how challenging it can be to try to strengthen family engagement practices without leadership support. No teacher should be asked to go through that. The role of a school leader is a non-negotiable in the implementation of systemic and sustainable family engagement approaches that promote dual-capacity building and authentic relationships.

Educators, and school leaders for that matter, must create spaces for parent voice to be heard, respected, and acknowledged. The data in this study revealed that parents of emergent bilinguals have many concerns about instructional practices and their children's language use, thus parents must be given opportunities to express these concerns and discuss them with educators. As an educator in the field of language education, the message about language instruction is loud and clear: language instruction must be explicit and intentional (Bunch, 2013; Valdés et al., 2014). Based on the findings in this study, I argue that so must family engagement

practices that target families of emergent bilinguals. Such practices must explicitly include language learning and be intentional about understanding parent voice and presence. Educators witness and experience emergent bilinguals' language use for academic purposes, but families witness and experience their language use beyond the classroom walls. Shouldn't partnerships between these two groups also focus on students' language learning and use?

Study Limitations

I recognize that the small sample size (N=11) in my research is a limitation. I used snowball sampling until a point of saturation was reached (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and I believe that I hit that point with the eleventh participant. However, the participant sample represents the rich diversity that lies beneath the pan-ethnic label of Latino. Participants represented a mix of U.S.-born and foreign-born individuals, they varied in their ethnic backgrounds, ages, geographic location, professions, children's language education program (e.g., Dual, TBE, ESL), and their own personal use of Spanish. Another limitation in regard to my sample is the fact that the eleven participants possess a certain level of experience and/or familiarity with language education programs and/or engaging with schools. Six of the participants are bilingual educators and the remaining five participate in their district's bilingual parent advisory council. However, despite their knowledge and experiences, the data show that the participants' experiences engaging with schools often focused solely on academic achievement and not their children's language education.

Another limitation of the study is that it primarily used one method to collect data from the participants. This study was designed as a basic qualitative study, and I used semi-structured interviews as the sole method of data collection with participants. In addition, I only conducted one interview per participant. Although, I only used one data collection method with participants, I did collect other sources of data that helped to contextualize the parent interview data (e.g.,

website artifacts, researcher memos). However, due to the sample size and the primary use of interviews as a data collection method, I would caution against generalizing these findings.

While they are descriptive findings of parent voice and presence, they are contextualized within Illinois communities with unique histories and large Latino populations.

Future Research

More research is needed that brings together the fields of family engagement and language education. The nation's population of K-12 emergent bilinguals is not showing any signs of decreasing, and with the reauthorization of the ESSA (2015-2016), it will become critical to understand the changes in family engagement policy and EL accountability. Changes in policy at the federal level will have a trickledown effect to school-based family engagement practices that will impact families of emergent bilinguals. Furthermore, future research should explore the voice and presence of diverse groups of parents. Here, my focus was on Latino parents, but I recognize that there are some school communities where Latinos are not a significantly large population. Through my line of work at WIDA, I know of several districts experiencing an influx of refugee populations with very diverse language backgrounds. Hence, future research could examine the beliefs, perspectives, and experiences of parents of ELs and/or emergent bilinguals from diverse ethnic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds.

Future studies could also take a more robust approach and include ethnographic methods and the voice and presence of educators, along with parents, to more fully understand school-based family engagement practices that support students' language education. I purposefully chose to focus on parents to honor parent voice and presence, but a more robust study with both educator and parent participants, coupled with observations, could prove to be very insightful. Another area to explore in future research could be the perspectives of Latino fathers. Thus study only included one Latino father. The perspectives and experiences of Latino fathers could make

a valuable contribution to the field. Lastly, since several participants in the study revealed that their children's language education program changed over time, a more robust approach could be to conduct longitudinal studies that follow families of emergent bilinguals from identification to program exit in order to understand how family engagement practices evolve over time as children's language proficiency grows and as they navigate the K-12 trajectory of their program.

Final Reflection

At the time of this writing, it has been one year since my Internal Revenue Board (IRB) application for this research was approved. Over the course of this year, I have often reflected on who I was when I started this project in comparison to who I am today. A year ago, I was anxious to start and to dive into interviews. All I wanted to do was "collect my data." Today, I am saddened to see the process coming to an end as I complete this final section. When I was selecting a topic for my dissertation, several professors and colleagues told me to select a topic that I was passionate about. They said that this would help keep me motivated to the very end of this journey. As I discussed in the section where I presented my positionality, I am definitely passionate about Latino families. But what kept me motivated were the participants themselves. For instance, during a severe case of writer's block, I happened to bump into a participant and she asked how my research was coming along. After chatting with her about my progress, and seeing her enthusiasm for the work, I was able to come home and continue writing. The eleven Latino parents who participated in my research shared coffee with me, opened their homes to me, laughed with me, shared stories about their children with me, and some cried as they spoke with me. I thought about these moments and experiences every day for the last year. I thought about them even more as I typed my findings and revisited their words.

This research has changed me—of that there is no doubt. I am humbled by the knowledge that was shared with me. I am in awe of what the parents do to support their children's language

education at home. I feel more confident in talking about my work in Spanish because I have had opportunities to discuss it with a few of the participants that prefer to speak in Spanish. As a side note, I am impressed with my texting abilities in Spanish as a result of this work. I stay in contact with several of the participants via text and when they text me in Spanish, I have no choice but to respond in Spanish. Thus, my own language learning has been impacted by this work. These eleven parents engaged in my own language learning.

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Appendix 1: Research Timeline

Date	Task/Activity
July 2015	Proposal Submission
September 2015	IRB completed and submitted
October 2015	IRB approved
November 2015 - March 2016	Participant recruitment and data collection (parent interviews)
November 2015 - July 2016	Ongoing data analysis
December 2015 - April 2016	Transcription of interview data
January - April 2016	Member checks on interview transcripts
March - April 2016	Data collection (website artifacts)
July - October 2016	Drafted chapters
November - December 2016	Revisions and final draft

Appendix 2: Interview Protocol (English)

Thanks again for making the time to meet with me and for participating in this study. Before we begin the interview, I'd like to remind you that it will take two hours or less, I will be recording it and taking notes, you can choose to not answer a question, and you can end the interview at any time. Also, please remember that I will protect your identity and keep all of the information you share with me confidential and securely stored. Do you have any questions before we begin?

[STRUCTURED FORMAT]

First, I'm going to ask you a few questions to collect demographic information.

1. [RECORD SEX AS MALE OR FEMALE]
2. How old are you?
3. Where were you born?
 - a. [IF FOREIGN-BORN] How long have you lived in the U.S.?
 - b. [IF U.S.-BORN] Where are your family's roots from?
4. How long have you lived in Illinois?
5. What is your educational background?
6. Are you married, single, or divorced?
7. How many children do you have?
8. How many of your children are enrolled in a language learning program for grades K-12?
9. What grades are your children in?
10. What type of language program are they in?

[SEMI-STRUCTURED FORMAT]

1. Tell me about your family. What is your family like? Can you describe your family?
2. What language is spoken in your home?
 - a. What language do you use to speak to your children?
 - b. What language do your children use to speak to you?
 - c. Have you noticed any changes in how language is used in your home?
 - i. What have you noticed?
 - ii. How do you feel about these changes?
3. Do you believe it is important for your children to speak more than one language? Why or why not? How do you envision your children using their home language in the future?
4. Can you tell me about your children's school?
 - a. What do you know about the school? How do you know this?
 - b. What do you know about your children's teachers? How do you know this?
5. Can you tell me what you know about the language program your children are enrolled in? How do you know this?
6. How do you feel you help your children learn language?
 - a. What do you do to help your children? Why do you do these things?
 - b. What do you wish you could do? Why do you think that is necessary?
 - c. Do you get any help from the school or the teachers? What kind of help? Do you feel it is enough?
7. In your opinion, what could the school or teachers do to help you support your children's language learning? Why do you think this would help?

Appendix 3: Interview Protocol (Spanish)

Gracias de nuevo por hacer el tiempo para reunirse conmigo y por participar en este estudio. Antes de comenzar la entrevista, me gustaría recordarle que la entrevista tomará dos horas o menos, la voy a grabar y estaré tomando notas durante la entrevista, usted puede optar por no responder a una pregunta, y usted puede terminar la entrevista en cualquier momento. También, por favor recuerde que yo voy a proteger su identidad y mantener toda la información que comparta conmigo confidencial y guardare todo de forma segura. ¿Tiene alguna pregunta antes de empezar?

[STRUCTURED FORMAT]

En primer lugar, voy a hacerle algunas preguntas para recopilar información demográfica.

1. [RECORD SEX AS MALE OR FEMALE]
2. ¿Cuántos años tiene?
3. ¿Dónde nació?
 - a. [IF FOREIGN-BORN] ¿Cuánto tiempo ha vivido en los EE.UU.?
 - b. [IF U.S.-BORN] ¿De dónde son las raíces de su familia?
4. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha vivido en Illinois?
5. ¿Cuál es su formación académica?
6. ¿Está usted casado/a, soltero/a o divorciado/a?
7. ¿Cuántos hijos tiene?
8. ¿Cuántos de sus hijos están inscritos en un programa de aprendizaje de idiomas para los grados K-12?
9. ¿En qué grados van sus hijos?
10. ¿En qué tipo de programa de aprendizaje de idiomas están sus hijos?

[SEMI-STRUCTURED FORMAT]

1. Hábleme de su familia. ¿Cómo es su familia? ¿Puede describir su familia?
2. ¿Qué idioma se habla en su casa?
 - a. ¿Qué idioma utiliza para hablar con sus hijos?
 - b. ¿Qué idioma usan sus hijos para hablar con usted?
 - c. ¿Ha notado algún cambio en cómo se utiliza el lenguaje en su casa?
 - i. ¿Qué ha notado?
 - ii. ¿Cómo se siente acerca de estos cambios?
3. ¿Cree usted que es importante que sus hijos hablen más de un idioma? ¿Por qué o por qué no? ¿Cómo ve a sus hijos el uso de su lengua materna en el futuro?
4. ¿Puede usted decirme acerca de la escuela de sus hijos?
 - a. ¿Qué sabe usted acerca de la escuela? ¿Cómo sabe esto?
 - b. ¿Qué sabe usted acerca de los maestros de sus hijos? ¿Cómo sabe esto?
5. ¿Puede usted decirme lo que sabe sobre el programa de aprendizaje de idiomas en el cual sus hijos están inscritos? ¿Cómo sabe esto?
6. ¿Cómo siente que usted ayuda a sus hijos en el aprendizaje de idiomas?
 - a. ¿Qué hace para ayudar a sus hijos? ¿Por qué hace estas cosas?
 - b. ¿Qué le gustaría hacer? ¿Por qué siente que eso sería necesario?
 - c. ¿Recibe alguna ayuda de la escuela o de los maestros? ¿Qué tipo de ayuda? ¿Siente que es suficiente?
7. En su opinión, ¿qué podría la escuela o maestros hacer para ayudarle a apoyar el aprendizaje de idiomas de sus hijos? ¿Por qué crees que esto ayudaría?

Appendix 4: Parent Contact Form Used at WIDA Parent Events



Atención padres de familia:

Si le gustaría ser informado sobre nuevos productos de WIDA para padres o de oportunidades para participar en eventos o proyectos para padres, por favor llene esta forma y nos pondremos en contacto con usted. ¡Gracias!

Nombre: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Dirección de casa: _____

Correo electrónico: _____

Distrito escolar de sus hijos: _____



Attention Parents:

If you would like to be informed about new products for parents, or opportunities to participate in future WIDA events and projects for parents, please complete this form and we will contact you. Thank you!

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Name of your child's school district: _____

Appendix 5: Illinois School Districts with the Highest Number of ELLs

Data from this chart is from the 2012-2013 school year.

District/Entity Name	Language				Total	
	Spanish		Non-English Other Than Spanish			
	No. of EL who speak Spanish	% EL who speak Spanish	No. of EL who speak other	% of EL who speak other	No. of EL in the district	District % of EL in the state
City of Chicago SD 299	60,310	86.5	9,379	13.5	69,689	33.60
SD U-46	9,186	90.7	941	9.3	10,127	4.88
Cicero SD 99	7,667	99.5	38	0.5	7,705	3.71
Aurora East USD 131	5,722	99.4	37	0.6	5,759	2.78
Waukegan CUSD 60	5,032	98.1	98	1.9	5,130	2.47
Rockford SD 205	2,773	78.1	777	21.9	3,550	1.71
Schaumburg CCSD 54	1,487	49.6	1,508	50.4	2,995	1.44
Palatine CCSD 15	2,055	76.3	637	23.7	2,692	1.30
Wheeling CCSD 21	2,116	79.7	540	20.3	2,656	1.28
CUSD 300	2,333	88.6	301	11.4	2,634	1.27
West Chicago ESD 33	2,535	97.4	69	2.6	2,604	1.26
Valley View CUSD 365U	1,964	85.1	343	14.9	2,307	1.11
Comm Cons SD 59	1,641	73.6	588	26.4	2,229	1.07
Joliet PSD 86	2,171	98.6	31	1.4	2,202	1.06
Plainfield SD 202	1,491	70.6	622	29.4	2,113	1.02
Aurora West USD 129	1,862	89.8	211	10.2	2,073	1.00
Round Lake CUSD 116	1,929	98.3	33	1.7	1,962	0.95
Indian Prairie CUSD 204	705	40.0	1,056	60.0	1,761	0.85
CCSD 62	1,043	65.2	556	34.8	1,599	0.77
Maywood-Melrose Park-Broadview 8	1,554	99.4	10	0.6	1,564	0.75
Addison SD 4	1,293	92.4	106	7.6	1,399	0.67
East Maine SD 63	450	34.2	867	65.8	1,317	0.63
CUSD 200	692	55.9	547	44.1	1,239	0.60
Cook County SD 130	1,001	97.5	26	2.5	1,027	0.50
Berwyn South SD 100	982	96.8	32	3.2	1,014	0.49

Source: <http://www.isbe.net/news/2014/sept2.htm>

Appendix 6: Oral Consent Script (English)

Hello, [PARTICIPANT NAME]. My name is Lorena Mancilla. We met at the [NAME OF EVENT RECORDED IN CONTACT SHEET] in [CITY], Illinois (*if applicable*). I am working on a research study focused on Latino parents in Illinois. I am interested in learning how Latino parents support their child(ren)'s language education at school.

For my study, I am looking for Latino parents whose roots are from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central America or South America. They must be the parents or primary caregiver of a student in grades K-12 who is enrolled in a program where he/she is learning English and/or Spanish in school. The parents must also have some knowledge about their child being enrolled in such a program. I believe you qualify to participate, and I'd like to tell you more about the project to see if you are interested in participating.

Would you like to learn more about my research study? (*IF YES, CONTINUE. IF NO, THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME AND ASK IF THEY KNOW SOMEONE WHO MAY BE INTERESTED: "Thank you for your time. Would you happen to know of anyone that may be interested in participating? If so, can you help me get in contact with them?"*)

I want to interview Latino parents for this study and ask them about their views and experiences in supporting their child(ren)'s language education. The interviews will be two hours or less and if you participate, we will work together to schedule a date, time, and location that is convenient for the both of us. During the interview, I will ask you a few demographic questions, and then ask you questions about your views and experiences in supporting your child(ren)'s language education. We can do the interview in Spanish, English, or both languages if you prefer.

I will be taking notes during the interview and I will also audio record the interview. The reason I will audio record the interview is to make sure I do not miss any information that you share with me. All of the information I collect during the interview will be securely stored. **Do you have any questions so far?**

I will protect the information you share with me, and keep your identity confidential, but please know that there is always a risk that others may find out you participated in this project or what you said during the interview. To help protect your identity and keep your information secure, you will not have to identify yourself or your child during the interview. In my research report, I will use a pseudonym to protect your identity.

There are no direct benefits for participating in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose to not answer questions during the interview, or you may end the interview at any time. If you decide not to participate or to withdraw from the study, your decision will have no effect on you or your child(ren).

If you have questions about the research, you can call me at 630-430-6206 or email me at lorena.mancilla@wisc.edu. **Do you have any questions about your participation in this research?**

Do you voluntarily consent to participate in this research? Is it okay if I audio record your interview? When are you available for the interview?

Appendix 7: Oral Consent Script (Spanish)

Hola [NOMBRE DEL PARTICIPANTE]. Mi nombre es Lorena Mancilla. Nos conocimos en el [NOMBRE DEL EVENTO GRABADO EN HOJA DE CONTACTO] en [CIUDAD], Illinois (*si corresponde*). Estoy trabajando en un estudio de investigación centrado en los padres latinos en Illinois. Estoy interesada en aprender cómo los padres latinos apoyan el aprendizaje de idiomas de sus hijos en la escuela.

Para mi estudio, estoy en busca de padres latinos cuyas raíces provienen de México, Puerto Rico, Cuba, América Central o América del Sur. Deben ser los padres o cuidador principal de un estudiante en los grados K-12 que está inscrito en un programa en el que él / ella está aprendiendo inglés y / o español en la escuela. Los padres también deben tener algún conocimiento acerca de su hijo siendo inscrito en un programa de este tipo. Creo que usted califica para participar, y me gustaría darle más información sobre el proyecto para ver si usted está interesado/a en participar.

¿Le gustaría aprender más acerca de mi estudio de investigación? (*SI ES ASÍ, CONTINUE. SI NO, DA LAS GRACIAS POR SU TIEMPO Y PREGUNTA SI CONOCEN A ALGUIEN QUE PUEDA ESTAR INTERESADO EN PARTICIPAR: "Gracias por su tiempo ¿Por casualidad conoce a alguien que pueda estar interesado en participar? Si es así, ¿puede usted ayudar a ponerme en contacto con ellos?"*)

Quiero entrevistar a los padres latinos para este estudio y preguntar acerca de sus puntos de vista y experiencias en apoyar el aprendizaje de idiomas de sus hijos en la escuela. Las entrevistas duraran dos horas o menos y si usted participa, haremos la cita para la entrevista en una fecha, hora y lugar que sea conveniente para nosotros. Durante la entrevista, voy a hacerle algunas preguntas demográficas, y luego le hare preguntas acerca de sus puntos de vista y experiencias en apoyar el aprendizaje de idioma de su hijo/a. Podemos hacer la entrevista en español, inglés, o en ambos idiomas, si lo prefiere.

Voy a tomar notas durante la entrevista y también lo grabare con audio. La razón por la que voy a grabar la entrevista es para asegurarme de que no se pierda ninguna información que comparta conmigo. Toda la información adquirida durante la entrevista se guardará de forma segura. **¿Tiene alguna pregunta hasta ahora?**

Voy a proteger la información que comparta conmigo, y mantener su identidad confidencial, pero reconozca que hay un riesgo de que otras personas se den cuenta que usted participó en este estudio de investigación o lo que dijo durante la entrevista. Para ayudar a proteger su identidad y mantener su información segura, usted no tendrá que identificarse o a su hijo/a durante la entrevista. En mi informe de investigación, voy a utilizar un seudónimo para proteger su identidad.

No hay beneficios directos para participar en este estudio. Su participación es completamente voluntaria. Usted puede optar por no responder a las preguntas durante la entrevista, o puede terminar la entrevista en cualquier momento. Si usted decide no participar o retirarse del estudio, su decisión no tendrá ningún efecto sobre usted o su hijo/a.

Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de la investigación, puede llamarme al 630-430-6206 o comunicarse por correo electrónico a lorena.mancilla@wisc.edu. **¿Tiene alguna pregunta sobre su participación en esta investigación?**

¿Da su consentimiento voluntario para participar en este estudio de investigación? ¿Está bien si grabo la entrevista? ¿Cuándo está disponible para la entrevista?

Appendix 8: Artifacts Collected

Some district artifact titles were changed to protect the identity of the participants and districts.

Evidence Source	Description	Spanish Available
U.S. Department of Education (www.ed.gov)	No Child Left Behind Act (2002)	
Illinois State Board of Education (www.isbe.net)	Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/)	
	23 Illinois Administrative Code 228	
	FY 17 Compliance Monitoring District Self-Assessment Checklist	
	FY 17 Listing of Documents Requested Prior to Monitor Visit	
	List of the top 10 languages spoken by EL students in IL in 2013 (data table includes number of speakers)	
	2014 District EL counts: Spanish vs. Non-Spanish (spreadsheet also includes data for 2011, 2012, 2013)	
	Announcement to school districts on updates for 2015-2016 Title III AMAO calculations	
	<i>Bilingual education programs and English learners in Illinois: 2012-2013 Statistical Report</i>	
	<i>Equitable Access to Educational Excellence: Framing Services for English Learners in Illinois</i> (resource for school districts)	
	<i>Family Engagement Framework: A Guide for Illinois School Districts, Schools and Families</i> (resource for school districts)	
	Family Engagement Fact Sheet (resource for school districts)	
	List of state-sponsored family engagement webinars and workshops available for school districts	
	<i>Bilingual Education Rules and Parent Advisory Committee Responsibilities</i> (resource for school districts and parents)	Y
	<i>How BPACs Review the District Application for Funding</i> (resource for school districts and parents)	Y
	<i>Parent Notification of Enrollment Letters</i> (provided as templates that school districts may use to fulfill federal and state requirements) - Enrolled 1-3 Years (letter) - Enrolled Beyond 3 Years (letter) - Program descriptions for parents: - Developmental Bilingual - Dual Language - Transitional Bilingual Education - Transitional Program of Instruction	Y
	<i>2014 Report Card Definitions and Sources of Data</i> (resource explaining the Illinois School Report Cards)	
	<i>2015 Illinois Report Card Fact Sheet</i>	

	2015 Illinois District Report Cards for: • District A • District B • District C • District D District report cards were not available for District E and District F	
Illinois Report Card (illinoisreportcard.com)	Fast Facts 2014-2015 for Illinois (spreadsheet)	
	Illinois 5 Year Enrollment Trend for ELs (chart)	
	Illinois 5 Year Enrollment Trend for Racial/Ethnic Diversity (chart)	
	Illinois 5 Year Trend for Teacher Demographics (chart)	
	At-A-Glance District Reports for: • District A • District B • District C • District D • District E • District F	
District A web site	Language education department home page	
	Parent Resources (link available through department home page)	Y
	English Language Proficiency Exam (link available through department home page)	Y
	Spanish Language Resources for Parents (link available through department home page)	
	Two-Way Immersion Program (link available through department home page)	Y
	Magnet Program Enrollment (link available through TWI program page)	Y
	Student Registration (link available through magnet program enrollment page)	
	Two-Way Immersion Program Flyer (link available through TWI program page)	Y
District B web site	Language education department home page	Y
	Parent Resources for ACCESS (link available under district's Parents menu)	
District C web site	Language education department home page	
	English Learner Programs (link available through department home page)	
	EL Assessment Center (link available through department home page)	
	Dual Language and Immersion Programs (link available through department home page)	

District D web site	Language education department home page	
	Bilingual Parents Advisory Council (BPAC) (link available from ELL home page)	Y
	Dual Language Overview (program home page)	Y
	Dual Language Information (link available from Dual Language Overview)	
	Dual Language FAQ (link available from Dual Language Overview)	Y
	Dual Language Parent Advisory Group (link available from Dual Language Information)	Y
District E web site	Language education department home page	
	State Seal of Biliteracy (link available from department home page)	
	Resources for Parents (link available from department home page)	
	Resources for Schools (link available from department home page)	
	Parent Advisory Councils (link available from department home page)	
	Bilingual Advisory Committees (link available from Parent Advisory Councils page)	Y
	Multilingual Parent Council (link available from Parent Advisory Councils page)	Y
	English Learner Programs (link available from department home page)	
	Dual Language Programs (link available from department home page)	
District F web site	Seal of Biliteracy Program (link available through World Languages department under Teaching & Learning)	
	List of district-level EL staff (available under Finance department)	
	Announcement for Dual Language information sessions for 2016 (available by searching district site for Dual Language)	
	Dual Language page (available on school's site)	
	Dual Language Parent Handbook (available only on the school's website—only one school offers Dual Language in the district)	Y