

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: THE DEVELOPMENTAL NICHEs OF
YOUNG CHILDREN FROM CENTRAL
AMERICAN FAMILIES: LINKS BETWEEN
THEIR EARLY SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS
AND SOCIAL SKILLS

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Methodology

National studies reveal early gaps in the language and literacy skills of children from low-income Central American (CA) immigrant families, yet also indicate strengths in the social development of these children (Galindo & Fuller, 2010). Using the framework of the developmental niche, the aim of this mixed-methods study was to explore how cultural goals, the physical and social settings, and customs of childrearing conspire to affect the social skills of children from CA immigrant families. I sought to learn about the “developmental niches” of children from CA immigrant families by 1) exploring themes in mothers’ goals for their children; 2) exploring the persons and activities available to children; and 3) exploring the types of activities that parents engage in with their children. The next goal was to analyze the quantitative connections between children’s developmental niches and their social

skills. Forty-eight mothers who had emigrated from a CA country and whose children were enrolled in Head Start classrooms participated in this study. Most children's early environments were characterized by mothers goals' for *bien educado* (e.g., proper comportment) and *buenas relaciones* (sociability, getting along with family), multi-family households, and free play with other children. Salient parenting activities included purposeful conversations, children's co- participation in household tasks, and "going out" as a family. These aspects of children's developmental niches were largely unrelated to maternal characteristics or child gender. Further, there were few relations between mothers' parenting goals, the persons present in the household and parenting activities. Mothers' and teachers' reports of children's social skills were unrelated. Parental participation in play, conversation, and household tasks were positive predictors of children's social cooperation according to mothers but not teachers. This study reveals a potential disconnect between skills and types of activities valued in children's homes versus at school. The findings also highlight the challenges that immigrant families face in structuring children's environments to be consistent with their childrearing norms and goals. Future research should explore parenting and education practices that help promote social skills valued in the multiple contexts of CA children's lives.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL NICHEs OF CHILDREN FROM CENTRAL
AMERICAN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES: LINKS BETWEEN THEIR EARLY
SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS AND SOCIAL SKILLS

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Foreword

This dissertation contains excerpts from a previously published article that was based on the second research question in this dissertation project. The article is cited below.

For further information see Appendix J.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, Karen and Steven Denmark, and my sister Jennifer Denmark. I also dedicate this to my partner in life, Zubin Adrianvala.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Children of Latino immigrants represent the largest growing segment of the United States population (Capps, Fix, Ost, Reardon-Anderson, & Passel, 2005; Hernandez, Denton, & McCartney, 2008). Unfortunately, large gaps have been documented in school readiness and academic achievement between these children and their European-American counterparts (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Leventhal, Xue, & Brooks-Gunn, 2006). Much research has been devoted to understanding factors that account for this gap, such as cultural and sociodemographic differences (Barreco, Lopez, & Miles, 2007; Fuller & Galindo, 2010; Leventhal et al., 2006). Some scholars have taken a culturally-sensitive approach to understanding how cultural goals, aspects of children's social and physical settings, and customs of childrearing conspire to affect the home language and literacy environments of children from Latino immigrant families (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Harkness, Hughes, Muller, & Super, 2005; Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995). Such researchers have also attended to community contexts (e.g., neighborhood safety, quality of preschool-family partnerships) and family contexts (e.g., low education and income levels of Latino immigrants) that may influence parents' abilities to create literacy-rich environments (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993).

However, with few exceptions, researchers have not utilized cultural and contextual approaches to account for the development of social skills in children of Latino immigrant families (Chase-Landsdale, D'Angelo, & Palacios, 2007). Children's social skills (e.g., cooperation, prosocial behavior, and assertiveness) are

an essential component of school readiness (McWayne, Fantuzzo, & McDermott, 2004). Further, teachers' perceptions of children's social skills have been linked to teacher-child relationship quality, as well as to later school performance (Miles & Stipek, 2006) and social emotional adjustment (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000).

The lack of research into the social environments and social development of young children of Latino immigrants is particularly striking given documented trends in Latino parents' reported goals for their children's behavior (Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006; Harwood, Leyendecker, Carlson, Arscencio, & Miller, 2002; Chase-Lansdale et al., 2007). Researchers point to a strong cultural emphasis in Latino immigrant families on particular social skills, such as cooperation and respect (Calzada, Fernandez, & Cortz, 2010; Gonzalez-Ramos, Zayas, & Cohen, 1998; Harwood et al., 2002). Additionally, demographic and ethnographic research suggests that, on average, Latino immigrant families have fewer socioeconomic resources (Capps, Fix, Murray, Ost, Passel, & Herwantro, 2005; Pew Hispanic Center, 2011) and face more contextual constraints (i.e., neighborhood danger, experiences of discrimination) than European-Americans (Reese, 2002; Syed & Azmitia, 2008).

Given these findings, it could be expected that young children in Latino immigrant families might experience very different home environments than their middle-class European-American peers. Yet few scholars have extended their investigations beyond parenting goals to describe the proximal environments of young Latino immigrant children (for exception see Leyendecker, Lamb, Scholmerich, & Fracasso, 1995; Howes, Wishard Guerra, Zucker, 2008). In particular, we know little about the activities available, the persons present, and the

parenting activities which characterize the daily lives of children of Latino immigrant families. These elements of the child's environment constitute children's "developmental niches" (Harkness, & Super, 2006, Super & Harkness, 2002). Further, researchers have not examined how these aspects of children's environments (i.e., their developmental niches) support their development of culturally-valued social skills.

In this chapter, I address the importance of empirical inquiry relative to children of Central American immigrants. Following a brief rationale for research on the early social environments and social skills of this group of children, I will introduce a theoretical framework that will guide the current study, namely, the framework of the developmental niche. Within this framework, I will discuss a long-standing tradition for examining cultural differences and their influence on childrearing (i.e., cultural orientations towards interdependence/ independence), and identify the strengths and weaknesses of this perspective as it applies to a within-group investigation of this group of children. Next, I provide an overview of the literature on Central American immigrants' (and other Latino immigrants') parenting goals, the physical and social settings of their children's lives, and customs of childrearing. I also review aspects of the niche that have been associated with young Central American children's social skills. Within this review, I note several gaps in our knowledge base stemming either from a lack of research or methodological problems in the current research. Finally, I introduce goals and aims of the current study, and pose the research questions. For a definition of the terms used in this chapter, see Table 1.

The Importance of Research on Central American Children

Research on Latino immigrants has been focused almost exclusively on families of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent, or has employed heterogeneous samples of Latino families from different countries of origin (Harwood et al., 2002; Knight, Roosa, Umana-Taylor, 2009). Given the cultural and sociopolitical heterogeneity among different Latino populations, scholars have argued for research to examine Latino groups separately, if not by country of origin at least by regions that share a similar cultural and political heritage (Garcia Coll & Pachtor, 2002; Harwood et al., 2002; Knight et al., Roosa, Morgan-Lopez, Cree, & Specter, 2002). In regard to parenting research, only one known research team has explored goals and parenting activities in Central American immigrant families (Leyendecker et al., 1995; Leyendecker, Harwood, Lamb & Scholmerich, 2002), despite the fact that their children represent the second largest group of children of Latino immigrants, after Mexican-American children (Hernandez, Denton, & McCartney, 2007; Pew Hispanic Center, 2010).

It is critical for research and practice to focus on Central American (CA) children. We cannot assume that findings from the small research base on the developmental environments of children from Mexican and Puerto Rican families can generalize to children from Central American families. CA immigrant families have immigration and settlement experiences which differ historically from those of other Latino groups such as Mexican Americans and Cuban Americans (Cordova, 2005; Garcia, 2006). In particular, popular emigration from CA began recently with the refugee crisis, from 1977-1996, when individuals from the common CA “sending

nations” of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua left in mass to escape violent political conflict and extreme poverty (Garcia, 2006). With this sociopolitical history, the current cohort of CA immigrants leave countries with the lowest levels of development (i.e., health, education, and living standards) in all of Latin America (Garcia, 2006), have little exposure to U.S. majority culture norms (Leyendecker et al., 2002), and join newer communities than their Mexican or Cuban counterparts (Cordova, 2005). Thus, investigations should take a culture-specific approach to understanding aspects of parenting, and the physical and social settings of children’s lives *within* Central American immigrant families.

Given the documented gap in school readiness between Latino and European-American children (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Galindo & Fuller, 2010; Leventhal et al., 2006), there is a particular need to understand the social environments and developmental outcomes among preschool children of Latino immigrants. In the context of the extant data on Latino young children, there has been a momentous policy push from the academic community to expand young Latino children’s access to high-quality preschool programs such as Head Start (Capps et al., 2005; Garcia, & Jensen, 2009; Takanishi, 2004) and state-administered pre-kindergarten programs. Within Head Start, Central American children and their families represent an understudied, yet growing segment of the families served by the program. These numbers can only be expected to grow with the expansion of Head Start and pre-K programs under the current Obama administration (Garcia & Jensen, 2009).

Head Start and free Pre-K programs are prime venues for studying developmental phenomena in young children, as they provide access to immigrant families who might otherwise be difficult to recruit (Leslie, 1993). Additionally, we know that the quality of children's social and academic experiences in these programs, especially for children from low-income, ethnic minority families, is associated with their future social adjustment and achievement in school (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2003, Votruba-Drzal, Coley, & Chase-Lansdale, 2004). The social skills that children of Central American immigrants bring to the Head Start or pre-K classroom will likely affect the quality of these early "school-like" experiences, through the interactions and relationships formed with teachers and peers (Rimm-Kauman, & Pianta, 2000, Doucet & Tudge). As this context becomes more common among our target population, it is important to investigate teachers' perceptions of the social skills of children from Central American immigrant families.

Scholars have made bold claims concerning the social skills of children in Latino immigrant families. In two seminal works, Greenfield (1997) and Okagaki & Sternberg (1993) argued that children of Latino immigrants may experience discontinuity between social skills emphasized at home and social skills valued at school that puts these children at a disadvantage academically and socially. Other researchers hypothesize that typical values and goals of Latino immigrant parents are assets for the development of cooperative and prosocial behavior in children (Fuligni & Yoshikawa, 2004; Halgunseth et al., 2006). Given the lack of empirical data, investigations are in order to understand how Latino immigrants' parenting goals, the

activities and persons available to their children, and their parenting activities contribute to young children's development of a variety of social skills.

Theoretical Rationale

Developmentalists are increasingly attending to the role of culture and context in both parenting and child development (Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010). The framework of the "developmental niche", as presented by Super and Harkness (2002), is useful for understanding child development as an interaction between the child's characteristics (e.g., age, gender, temperament), parental influences, and cultural (and contextual) influences. In this model, the child's proximal environment, or developmental niche, is constructed by three dynamically interacting subsystems, each of which is influenced by culture but enacted through the parent (Harkness & Super, 2006). The first subsystem contains the *physical and social settings* of the child's daily life, including the persons present and the organization of the environment (Super & Harkness, 2002). Second are the *customs of childrearing* that the child experiences in such settings, such as norms regarding parenting practices, parent-child interactions, and family routines/rituals (Super & Harkness, 2002). The last subsystem is the *psychology of the parent*, which includes parental beliefs regarding the child, the family, and goals for the child's development (Super & Harkness, 2002). The subsystems are independent but interact with each other. The systems also interact with child characteristics such as temperament, and adapt as the child ages (Super & Harkness, 2002). The larger culture influences the subsystems through norms for living arrangements, physical environments of the home,

childrearing practices, parenting goals and beliefs about development. For a graphical depiction of this theoretical framework, see Figure 1.

The *physical and social settings* of the developmental niche refer to patterns in the way children's daily lives are organized (Super & Harkness, 2006). The physical aspects refer to the organization and characteristics of the home environment and other microsystem environments (e.g. relative's homes), such as the child's access to materials and activities. The social settings include the persons present in the child's daily lives, interactions within different settings, and social tasks (Super & Harkness, 2002). The physical and social settings reflect cultural and ecological influences on the settings of children's daily lives. Given the breadth of this construct, cultural psychologists often narrow their focus to analyzing aspects of the *physical and social settings* that are of particular interest for the development of certain skills. In this study, I focus on the persons present and available activities in children's daily lives, as they relate to the development of their social skills.

Customs of childrearing include behavioral sequences, style of parent-child interactions, and arrangements of care that occur within the *physical and social settings* of the child's life. Customs of childrearing involve deeply engrained notions of the kinds of activities, practices, rituals, routines, and level of parent involvement that are "right" for childrearing. These customs are "common sense solutions to everyday problems" (Super & Harkness, 2006, p. 65), in particular to the task of parenting. Such customs convey cultural messages, and provide systematic socialization experiences for the developing child. As in the *physical and social settings*, inquiries into *customs of childrearing* are typically constrained to caregivers'

behaviors regarding a particular domain. In this investigation, I focus on parenting activities, namely parents' behavior with their children and family rituals that characterize children's daily lives. Family rituals are defined as instrumental time commitments to different actions (i.e., routines) that have a symbolic and affective component for the family (Fiese, Tomach, Douglas, Josephs, Poltrock, & Baker, 2002).

Of the three subsystems of the developmental niche, special consideration is given to the *psychology of the parent*, as parents typically attempt to arrange the physical and social settings, and engage children in activities that are consistent with their parenting beliefs and goals concerning child development (Harkness, & Super, 2006; Rowe, 2008; Weisner, 2002). Goals give meaning to parental actions (Bornstein & Cheah, 2005; Goodnow, 2005). Additionally, parenting beliefs and goals guide interpretations of children's behavior (Rubin et al., 2006), which has implications for the interactions between parent and child. Although parenting goals are assumed to influence actions, a direct *causal* relationship between parenting goals and the other subsystems of the developmental niche would not always be expected as each subsystem interacts with and is shaped by the larger culture and ecology of the family, as well as child characteristics (Goodnow & Collins, 1990; Harkness & Super, 2006). For example, certain culturally-based childrearing practices may be so implicit or automatic, that a change in parenting goals would not predict a change in action (Goodnow, 2005). Furthermore, intervening variables, such as the demands and resources of individual families, may shape the way parenting goals are instantiated into the organization of the physical and social settings and childrearing

practices (Harkness & Super, 2006; Weisner, 2002). Lastly, from an anthropological perspective, the cultural values (or goals) and childrearing norms are embedded within and resonate with the physical and social settings of daily life. However, in the context of immigration when the physical and social settings change, parents may adapt new customs of childrearing and goals that fit within this new context (Harkness & Super, 2005).

One tradition for understanding cultural influences on child development has been to characterize cultural orientations as varying across two separate dimensions of interdependence and independence (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Tamis-LeMonda, Way, Hughes, Yoshikawa, Kalma, & Niwa, 2008). Similarly, the corresponding parenting goals vary across separate emphases on “relatedness” and emphases on “autonomy”. Relatedness goals involve parents’ desire for children to develop traits such as respect for elders, proper demeanor, family loyalty, and belongingness (Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007). Autonomous goals involve parents’ desires for their children to achieve or develop self-maximization, self-esteem, assertiveness, and the ability to independently problem-solve and make decisions (Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007). Latin American countries, particularly more disadvantaged countries, are depicted as being strongly oriented toward relatedness, with a dual emphasis on autonomy in countries that have experienced major socioeconomic growth (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Keller, 2007). Majority culture in the United States, on the other hand, is considered to be strongly oriented towards autonomy, with little emphasis on relatedness (Kagitcibasi, 2005).

Combining the above tradition with Super and Harkness' (2002) conceptualization of the developmental niche, the third subsystem, namely the *psychology of the parent*, would include parents' emphases on relatedness and autonomous goals. It would be expected, especially at the cross-cultural level, that disparate patterns would exist in the developmental niches of children being raised in cultures that differ in emphases in relatedness and autonomy. Indeed, cross-cultural researchers have identified general variations in the physical and social settings and customs of childrearing across cultures, variations that are believed to reflect differences in cultural orientation toward autonomy and relatedness (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Leyendecker, Harwood, Lamb, & Scholmerich, 2002; Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007).

Although this general framework of distinguishing between cultural emphases on relatedness and autonomy has been useful in understanding differences in children's developmental niches across a variety of different cultures, it is unclear how these classification systems and their methodologies (e.g., surveys) can aid in the understanding of more nuanced aspects of parenting within cultures, within different ecological contexts, and within the context of immigration (Bornstein & Cote, 2001). For example, select aspects of both autonomy and relatedness have been endorsed by so-called interdependent groups (i.e., Mexican parents and Mexican immigrants: Rogoff, 2003; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008) and Western independent groups (e.g., low-income European-Americans: Kussinow, 1999; French parents: Suizzo, 2004). Moreover, although broad differences in parenting have been distinguished between interdependent and independent cultures (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Rothbaum &

Tromsdorff, 2007), more in-depth studies suggest that relatedness and autonomy may be emphasized differently in childrearing practices across different cultures and contexts (Bornstein & Cote, 2001; Rogoff, 2003; Harkness, & Super, 2006).

Accordingly, the extensive cross-cultural literature on relatedness and autonomy provides a general framework for understanding how salient parenting goals around relatedness and autonomy may be linked with other subsystems of the child's developmental niche. However, an *emic* perspective which seeks to understand the meanings and patterns of parenting goals, activities, and organization of the physical and social settings *within* a cultural group may ultimately shed more light on the developmental niches of children of Central American immigrants.

Although "culture", which is oftentimes equated with country, is thought to have a homogenizing influence on the developmental niche (Super & Harkness, 2002), there is considerable variability within cultural groups, particularly within the context of immigration (Clark, Glick, & Bures, 2009; Harwood et al., 2002). Ecological perspectives (Garcia Coll & Pachter, 2002; Clark et al.) are particularly appropriate for understanding the developmental niches of children whose parents have immigrated to the United States and who become members of an ethnic minority group. Garcia Coll and Pachter (2002) identify characteristics of families' sending countries, reasons for immigration, families' immigration experiences, parental education or social class, and experiences in the "receiving context" as key influences on immigrant families. The "receiving contexts" for Latino immigrant groups are oftentimes characterized by unequal access to resources and experiences of prejudice. Immigrant groups adapt to these realities through adopting goals, strategies, and

behaviors that fit with pre-existing goals, but also maximize group and individual well-being within the receiving contexts. As immigrant parents strive to interact with their children and organize the environment in ways that fit with new and preexisting goals, they must also attend to current demands (i.e., low socioeconomic resources, neighborhood danger, immigration-related stressors) while attempting to maximize resources (i.e., family networks, community resources, etc.) (Garcia Coll & Pachter, 2002; Weisner, 2002). Thus, children's developmental niches (i.e., the physical and social settings, parents' childrearing, and parenting goals) reflect a complex interaction between parents' shifting goals and norms for behavior, and their attempts to organize their children's environment to fit the demands and resources of the context (Harkness & Super, 2005).

Within the framework of the developmental niche, consistency or coherence across subsystems forge the strongest effects on child development (Super & Harkness, 2002). Children are likely to develop valued traits when parents and others involved in the child's care are able to organize the physical and social settings and interact with the child in ways that match their beliefs about how the child develops those valued traits (Super & Harkness, 2002). Although the subsystems change with development, continuities in messages or themes across ages also contribute to the development of culturally-valued skills (Doucet & Tudge, 2005). Researchers have not systematically examined subsystems of developmental niches of young children from low-income Central American immigrant families. There is a need for descriptive information concerning these subsystems. Moreover, there has been little focus on how patterns in these developmental niches are linked to the development of

valued social skills in their young children. In order to understand these associations, it will also be important to explore sources of variation within the subsystems of children's developmental niches

In the next sections, I highlight available literature on the parenting goals, physical and social settings of children's daily lives, and customs of childrearing of Central American immigrant families. Given the small research base, I draw on studies with other Latino populations with the caveat that these findings may not generalize to Central American families. I review the three subsystems of developmental niche separately as few studies have been designed to examine these concurrently.

Parenting Goals in Central American Immigrant Families

The *psychology of the parent*, in particular caregivers' goals, is of interest because they may motivate parental action, give meaning to actions, and guide interpretation of children's behavior (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006; Rubin et al. 2006). Although there is a growing literature base on parenting goals of Latino families, both native and foreign-born, there is little descriptive work on the parenting goals of Central American immigrant families. In one exception, Central American mothers of infants emphasized proper demeanor (e.g., being respectful, responsible, and moral), a concept closely matched with relatedness, as a long-term goal (Leyendecker et al., 2002). However, these mothers also stressed the importance of instrumental independence (e.g., being able to solve problems independently) and academic and career success as important goals for their children, goals that involve autonomy.

The study of parenting goals in Central American immigrant and other Latino families has been limited in that investigations have not targeted parents of preschoolers and most studies have focused on parents' long-term goals for their children. Early childhood may be a time when Central American children first transition into spending time in a school-like setting. As Tamis-LeMonda and colleagues (2008) have suggested, developmental transitions may prompt certain goals to become more salient. In this vein, it may be important to investigate parents' short-term goals for their children. Further, parenting goals are apt to vary with the context: parents' goals for their children's skills and behaviors at home likely differ from their goals for their children's skills and behaviors at school (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). Short-term goals and contextually-specific goals may be as salient as long-term goals for parents' organization of the physical and social settings, and their actions throughout children's daily lives (Goodnow & Collins, 1990).

Physical and Social Settings in Central American Immigrant Families

The *physical and social settings* of children's daily lives set the parameters for the kinds of activities and interactions in which children will engage. In the current investigation, I focus particularly on the activities and persons available to young Central American children. Cross-cultural researchers have identified some aspects of the physical and social settings believed to be consistent with cultural emphases on relatedness and autonomy. In cultures thought to strongly emphasize relatedness, children spend much time with extended family members and often engage in multi-party interactions (Keller, 2007; Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007). In cultures thought to strongly emphasize autonomy, children spend most of their time with immediate

family members, and engage in mostly dyadic interactions (Keller, 2007; Rothbaum & Tromsdorf, 2007). Potential differences in the types of activities available to children living in cultures that vary in emphasis on relatedness and autonomy have not been the focus of the extant literature.

Few researchers have investigated the physical and social settings of young children from Central American immigrant families' lives. Whereas we have little information on the activities available, we have a small body of preliminary evidence about their social settings. For example, Census data suggest children of Central American immigrants are likely to live in two-parent families, have relatives living in the house, and live under crowding conditions (i.e., more than one person per room) (Hernandez et al., 2007). In regard to the physical setting, studies with other Latino groups suggest young children have less access to educational materials and activities (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005) and spend more at home and indoors (Floyd, Gramann, Saenz, 1993) than children from other ethnic groups.

More in-depth studies that can trace the kinds of activities and persons available to children of Central American immigrants are needed to advance our understanding of developmental processes within this population. To provide a more complete account of children's experiences, studies should explore activities and persons available on both weekdays and weekends

Customs of Childrearing in Central American Immigrant Families

In Super and Harkness' (2002) developmental niche framework, one key subsystem is the *customs of childrearing*. Within this broad domain, I focus

particularly on parenting activities, construed as parents' behavior with children and family rituals.

The cross-cultural literature provides a blueprint for types of parenting behaviors that may occur at different rates in cultures and individuals who vary in their emphases on relatedness and autonomy. In brief, high emphasis on relatedness has been associated with more hierarchical control, greater indulgence, more physical contact, more symbolic or socially-oriented play, and more frequent use of directives with young children (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003, Keller, 2007; Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007). A high emphasis on autonomy, on the other hand, has been linked with less control, more object-oriented play, more frequent use of suggestions, and more rewards for exploration and independence with young children (Bornstein & Cote, 2001).

In observational studies, Central American mothers have engaged in more of the behaviors thought to emphasize relatedness (e.g., more physical holding, more directives, more social-oriented play interactions) compared to European-American mothers (Fracasso, Lamb, Scholmerich, & Leyendecker 1997; Melzi, 2000). Research with Latina mothers has highlighted the salience of physical control, directives, and modeling in free-play situations or teaching tasks (Eisenberg, 2002; Ispa et al. 2004). However, scholars suggest that Latinas may use more autonomy-promoting techniques (e.g., suggestions, praise, etc.) in the context of tasks that reflect activities that occur at home (e.g., making biscuits) (Eisenberg, 2002; Kermani, & Janes, 1999; Moreno, 1997). Other parenting activities of interest to this study are family rituals. To my knowledge, cross-cultural researchers have not

identified differences in types of family rituals, or degree of emphasis on family rituals, among cultures differing in emphases on relatedness and autonomy. Further, no known studies have examined family rituals in Central American immigrant families with young children.

A limitation of many studies of Latino childrearing is the use of measures and coding schemes developed with other populations. Without asking parents themselves about their activities, we know little about the cultural relevance of parenting activities that are typically studied within the mainstream developmental literature (Delgado & Ford, 1998, Garcia Coll & Pachter, 2002). In doing so, we weaken our abilities to understand empirical links between Central American children's developmental niches and their development of important skills, such as social skills.

Sources of Variation in the Subsystems of Children's Developmental Niches

To my knowledge, no researchers have examined how CA immigrant mothers' characteristics might relate to their parenting goals, the activities and persons available to their children, or their parenting activities. However, there is a body of work with Latino immigrant parents, in general, that would suggest that mothers' country of origin, education level, and age at migration to the United States would be reflected in differences in children's developmental niches. I discuss these below.

Country of origin.

A strong motivation of this study is to explore heterogeneity within the Latino population, by focusing on mothers who hail from countries that are expected to have

more in common with each other than other Latin American countries, such as Mexico or Cuba. Despite similarities in the sociopolitical histories and socioeconomic conditions of Central American countries, there may be differences by country in mothers' goals or customs of childrearing, and this is worth exploring. Two known studies have found differences in Latinas' parenting activities with young children by mothers' countries of origin (Figueroa-Moseley, Ramey, Keltner, & Lanzi, 2006; Schmitz, 2005).

Education level.

Across cultures, differences in parental education have been linked with parents' general goals for their children (Kohn, Slomczynski, & Schoenbach, 1988; Levine, Levine, & Schnell, 2001). Latinas of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to emphasize obedience, respect for authority, and cooperation as valued traits for children (Harwood et al. 1996). Latinas' education level has also been linked with the provision of different levels of stimulation in the home (Barrueco et al., 2005), and teaching/interaction styles (Eisenberg, 2002; Rogoff, 2003).

Age at migration.

Age of migration, or more specifically developmental stage at migration is an important predictor of individuals' adaptation and acculturation to the U.S. (Rumbaut, 2004). In one study, mothers who migrated as children, as adolescents, or as adults differed in terms of their parenting beliefs, interaction styles and the home activities they made available to their young children (Glick & White, 2009). Those who migrated at young ages tended to have beliefs and practices that were more

“Americanized” compared to those who arrived as adults. Mothers who arrived in adolescence had a mid-level pattern , but their children were at higher risk for poor outcomes than the other two groups (Glick & White, 2009). These three groups may differ in terms of their reasons for migration and resources for migration. These generations also differ in terms of their schooling and the extent to which they were socialized in Mexico versus the United States (Clark, Glick, & Bures, 2009; Rumbaut, 2004). As such, developmental stage at migration is a maternal characteristic that likely affects the subsystems of the developmental niche.

Associations between Subsystems of Children’s Developmental Niches

There is a robust cross-cultural literature that has examined the cohesion between goals, physical and social settings, and parenting activities when one cultural group is compared to another (Keller, 2007). However, few studies have examined associations between parenting goals and the other subsystems of the developmental niche *within* groups, no less within specific Latino groups. I found no studies examining links between parenting goals and aspects of the social setting (such as persons present). Some associations have been noted in parents’ endorsement of goals related to *familismo* and obedience and more directive parenting styles and behaviors (Savage, 2000; Vargas Busch-Rossnagel, 2003). In one classic study, parents’ value of *educacion* was endorsed so highly by Latina immigrants that it did not predict parenting behaviors (Reese et al., 1995). Further research is needed to understand how parenting goals, the physical and social settings of daily life, and parenting activities are interconnected in CA immigrant families.

Social Skills

Little is known about the social skills of children of Central American immigrants. The definition and interpretation of social skills is arguably culturally-constructed (Greenfield et al., 2003; Keller, 2007; Rubin et al., 2006). However, early childhood researchers and practitioners interpret social skills from their own cultural lenses, which usually reflect middle-class European American backgrounds (Howes, James, & Ritchie, 2003).

Social skills, as defined in this study, include the ability to cooperate with others (particularly adults), engage in positive peer social interactions, and assert one's self (Merrell, 2002). These skills and behaviors have been linked with school achievement (Malecki, & Elliot, 2002; Miles & Stipek, 2006).

The ways in which relatedness and autonomy are emphasized in the child's developmental niche might be expected to differentially predict these three components of social skills as defined above. A strong emphasis on relatedness might result in greater cooperative behavior in children (Keller, 2007). Children raised with a strong emphasis on autonomy might be expected to show more independent and assertive behavior (Greenfield et al., 2003; Keller, 2007). It is unclear whether differences would be expected in peer social interactions. Lastly, children whose developmental niches support aspects of autonomy and relatedness might display medium or high levels of all three aspects of social skills (Keller, 2007). However, these hypotheses remain untested with Central American and other Latino immigrant families.

Children's Developmental Niches and their Social Skills

The knowledge base concerning how the subsystems of the developmental niche (i.e., parenting goals, physical and social setting, and customs of childrearing) are related to the social skills of children from Central American immigrant families, and even Latino families more generally, is sparse. Researchers have not examined how all three subsystems of the developmental niche are related to Latino children's social skills. In fact, few scholars have related any of the subsystems to Latino children's social skills.

Only two known studies have been designed to assess links between parenting goals and children's social skills among immigrant families from any Latin American country of origin, and the findings were inconsistent. One study revealed a relation between parental emphasis on conformity and more compromised child social skills (Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993), whereas the other documented that beliefs regarding family loyalty and respect moderated the association between mother-child relationships and preschoolers' social adjustment (Gamble & Modry-Mandell, 2007).

The connection between the physical and social settings, in particular between the activities available and the persons present, has not been systematically studied in Central American or Latino immigrant families more generally. In one national study, Hispanic children's participation in educational activities was unassociated with children's social outcomes (Mariner, Zazlow, & Sugland, 1998). Regarding persons present, household overcrowding has been linked with psychological stress (Evans, Lepore, & Mata Allen, 2000). However, living in multigenerational households, as opposed to other family arrangements, was associated with better social outcomes for

Latino children, although this effect became insignificant with control variables in the model (Foster & Kalil, 2007).

In terms of childrearing practices, researchers have studied a narrow range of parenting behaviors and found few associations with children's social outcomes. Observations of parental control have been unassociated with children's aggression amongst Latino families from various countries of origin (Brown, Arnold, Dobbs, & Doctoroff, 2007; Lindahl & Malik, 1999; Rodriguez, Davis, Rodriguez, & Bates, 2006). Observations of maternal warmth, however, have been linked with more positive social outcomes (Brown et al., 2007; Lindahl & Malik, 1999; Tonyan, 2005). On the other hand, questionnaires tapping warmth have not predicted better social outcomes in children from Latino families (Bradley, Corwyn, Burchinal, McAdoo, & Garcia Coll, 2001). It is unclear whether these null findings, and the null findings for observed control, reflect problems with construct validity, measurement, and/or limited variation in parental behaviors.

Family rituals, including the types of rituals in which families engage and the extent to which they emphasize rituals, and their association with children's social skills in Central American immigrant families and Latino immigrant families is a completely unexplored area, to my knowledge.

Summary

The developmental niche framework (Super & Harkness, 2002) posits that the physical and social settings of children's daily lives, the customs of childrearing (e.g., parenting activities), and the psychology of the parent (e.g., parental goals) conspire to frame the niche that fuels children's development of socially valued skills. The

cultural group of interest in this study is families who have emigrated from Central America and their young children. Based on cross-cultural work regarding cultural differences in emphases on relatedness and autonomy, we might expect Central American immigrant parents, who come from cultures thought to strongly endorse relatedness, to manifest this orientation in their parenting goals, their creation of physical and social settings, and their parenting activities. However, based on the ecological framework, we also know that immigrant parents' goals change and their behaviors adapt to fit their receiving contexts in the United States. Further, parents' goals for their children may differ according to their children's age and the context (e.g., home versus school).

This brief review has revealed a lack of research on parenting goals, physical and social settings, and customs of childrearing in Central American immigrant families. Whereas there is a growing research base on parenting goals and parenting activities in Latino families, it is unclear how this work will generalize to Central American families new to the United States. Further, as questions arise from observational and survey studies of parenting in Latino families regarding the cultural validity of these methods, it becomes clearer that investigations with understudied populations, such as Central American immigrant families, may benefit from more culturally specific, *emic* approaches. Through *emic* approaches, researchers can learn from parents themselves what activities and persons are salient within the daily lives of their children. With this information on children's developmental niches, researchers may be better positioned to learn about their association with the

developing social skills of young children of Central American immigrants. In the following section, I present the rationale and overview of the proposed study.

Study Rationale and Overview

The current study was designed to fill multiple gaps in our understanding of the social environments in which young children of Central American immigrant families develop. These children are an understudied population, despite data that they represent the second largest group of children of Latino immigrants (Hernandez, et al., 2007). Using the framework of the developmental niche, I explore the parenting goals of Central American immigrant mothers, the activities and persons available, and the parenting activities (e.g., parenting behaviors and family routines) that characterize children's daily lives. To my knowledge, this is the first study to document these fundamental aspects of young CA children lives. This study will also examine sources of variation within the children's developmental niches. Finally, no known projects have been designed to explore patterns between the subsystems of these children's developmental niches and children's different social skills (e.g., cooperation, positive social interactions, and social independence).

Although researchers have explored the parenting goals of other Latino immigrant groups, or explored links between parenting behaviors and children's social skills among these groups, researchers have not appeared to merge these aspects of parenting (e.g., goals, activities) with information about the activities and persons available to children in order to understand the proximal environments that affect children's social skills. Documenting these patterns is of utmost importance given that successful transition into school depends, in part, on the social skills that

children possess and teachers' perceptions of these skills (Greenfield, Quiroz, & Raeff, 2000; Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000).

With these considerations in mind, the first goal of the current study was to examine the developmental niches of Central American immigrant children. Specifically, I analyzed CA immigrant long-term goals for their children, as well as short-term goals for desired skills and behaviors in the context of home and school. Further, I documented themes in mothers' reports of the activities and persons available and parenting activities (activities mothers and/or fathers engaged in with children) that characterize children's daily lives. The second goal was to explore variation in children's developmental niches and the implications of this variation for children's social skills at home and at school. This goal involved the examination of sources of variation (e.g., maternal characteristics and child gender) in the subsystems of children's developmental niches. One aspect of this goal was to examine sources of variation in mothers' parenting goals, activities and persons present, and parenting activities. Another way to explore variation in children's developmental niches was to examine the predictive relations between subsystems, such as the relation between parenting goals and parenting activities. Finally, I explored how children's developmental niches are associated with their cooperation, positive social interactions with peers, and social independence.

To meet these two goals, I used a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative methods were used as they allow for the discovery of culturally-relevant goals, activities, and behaviors that may not be represented in mainstream developmental measures (Hanson et al., 2001; Harkness & Super, 2006; Yoshikawa, Weisner, Kalil,

& Way, 2008). I explored common themes in mothers' parenting goals, activities and persons available, and parenting activities. I also inquired into the meanings of certain goals and activities as found in mothers' narratives. To meet the second goal of exploring variation in children's developmental niches, I quantified the qualitative data by coding frequencies to provide an assessment of the prevalence of participant-provided goals, activities, and persons present (Yoshikawa et al., 2008). Quantitative measures that have been previously used with Latino immigrant populations, and which overlapped with the aspects of the developmental niche of interest, were also included. I then drew associations between aspects of Central American children's developmental niches and different types of social skills they demonstrate at home and in the classroom.

The overarching aim of the current study was to inform the early childhood research and practice community of aspects of the early social environments of children from Central-American families and their relation to children's social skills (as an aspect of school readiness). In this vein, the following four broad research questions were identified, including the specific research questions subsumed within each overarching question.

Research Questions

1. What are the predominant parenting goals of low-income Central American immigrant mothers of young children?
 1. a. What are the predominant long-term parenting goals of low-income Central American immigrant mothers of young children?

1. b. What are the predominant short-term parenting goals of low-income Central American immigrant mothers for their young children's behavior at home?
1. c. What are the predominant short-term parenting goals of low-income Central American immigrant mothers for their young children's behavior at school?
2. What activities and persons are available in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families?
 2. a. What activities and persons are available in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families on weekdays?
 2. b. What activities and persons are available in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families on weekends?
3. What are the predominant parenting activities (i.e., parenting behaviors with children, family rituals) in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families?
 3. a. What are the predominant parenting activities in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families on weekdays?
 3. b. What are the predominant parenting activities in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families on weekends?
4. What patterns of variation can be found in the subsystems of children's developmental niches (i.e., within parenting goals, persons and activities available, and parenting activities) and how are they associated with maternal and child characteristics and with children's social skills (i.e., social cooperation, social interaction, and social independence)?

4a. What are the associations between maternal characteristics (i.e., country of origin, education level, age at migration), child gender and the subsystems of Central American children's developmental niches (i.e., parenting goals, persons and activities available, and parenting activities)?

4b. What are the associations between the subsystems of children's developmental niches (i.e., parenting goals, persons and activities available, and parenting activities?)

4c. What are the associations between the subsystems of Central American children's developmental niches and mothers' ratings of children's social skills?

4d. What are the associations between the subsystems of Central American children's developmental niches and teachers' ratings of children's social skills?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Children of Latino immigrants are the fastest growing population within the United States (Capps et al., 2005; Hernandez, et al., 2008, Pew Hispanic Center, 2010). Unfortunately, young Latino children have been dubbed an “urgent demographic imperative” (Garcia & Jensen, 2009) due to the large gaps in school readiness and school achievement between this rapidly growing population and their European-American counterparts. Socioeconomic factors, including higher rates of poverty, household crowding, and lower education levels of Latino immigrant parents, do not fully explain this gap (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Leventhal et al., 2006). After controlling for these factors, Latino families still appear to provide fewer of the early learning experiences associated with cognitive aspects of school readiness (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Capps et al., 2005; Barreco et al., 2007).

The cognitive and academic differences between Latino children and their peers are thought to reflect distinct parenting goals and customs of childrearing in Latino families (Barreco et al., 2007; Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Harkness et al., 2005). Alternatively, regarding social development, when structural factors are taken into account, children of Mexican immigrants have shown pronounced social developmental advantages over their peers (Crosnoe, 2005). Unlike the research base on Latino immigrant parents’ provision of early learning environments, our understanding of the early social environment among Latino immigrant families and its links to children’s social skills is severely limited (Chase-Lansdale et al., 2007; Halgunseth et al., 2006).

The purpose of this review is to examine what is known about the early social environments and social skills of an understudied group of children of Latino immigrants, namely children from Central American families. To examine salient aspects of these children's early social environments, I use the framework of the developmental niche (Harkness & Super, 2006; Super & Harkness, 2002). This framework parses the child's social environment (i.e., his/her developmental niche) into three subsystems, including the physical and social settings of children's lives, customs of childrearing, and the psychology of the parent. These three subsystems work in tandem to promote children's development of culturally-valued skills. The first goal of this review, then, is to explore existing literature on the three subsystems of developmental niches of young children from Central American immigrant families. The second goal is to examine associations between these aspects of children's developmental niches and their development of social skills.

As an introduction to this review, I provide a brief rationale for focusing on early social environments and social skills of children of Central American immigrants. Following this introduction, I provide a brief explanation of the methodological approaches to my literature search. I then provide a more thorough explanation of the framework of the developmental niche (Harkness & Super, 2006; Super & Harkness, 2002). Within this discussion, I examine how cross-cultural research pertaining to cultural differences in emphases on interdependence and independence (Kagitcibasi, 2005) provides a general template for the study of developmental niches of children from Central American immigrant families. Further, I highlight important contextual factors associated with immigration that influence

these developmental niches. Next, I turn to a discussion of the developmental niches as seen in research with Central American and other Latino immigrant families. I examine what is known about Central American immigrant families, and then turn to Latino immigrant families more broadly. To address the second goal of this paper, I examine links between the aspects of the developmental niche and children's social skills in Central American immigrant and in other Latino immigrant families.

Following the review, I turn to limitations of the current literature base with a focus on the lack of research and the methodological problems in extant studies on Latino immigrant families. Finally, I provide an outline for future research to further delineate salient aspects of the developmental niches of young Central American children, and the implications for children's social skills.

Importance of Research on Central American Children

Children from Central American immigrant families represent the second largest group of children of Latino immigrants (Hernandez, et al., 2007). Yet, the small research literature on early social environments of children from Latino immigrant families consists mainly of studies with children of Mexican immigrants, or mixed samples of "Latino" immigrants. Few investigators have examined processes that promote the development of social skills in children whose parents have migrated from Central American countries.

Scholars have emphasized the heterogeneity of Latino immigrant groups and challenged researchers to examine groups from different countries of origin, or at least regions of origin separately (Harwood et al., 2002, Roosa et al., 2002). Such researchers emphasize that there are cultural, socioeconomic, and political differences

amongst Latino “sending countries”, variation in the motivations and sociodemographic characteristics of peoples who migrate from different “sending countries”, and differences in the receiving contexts for peoples from different “sending countries” (Garcia, 2006; Harwood et al., 2002, Roosa et al., 2002). Central American countries are generally the poorest in Latin America, have recent histories of civil war (including military dictatorships and socialist regimes), and have strained relations with the United States due to the American government’s sponsorship of military dictatorships in some of these countries (Cordova, 2005; Garcia, 2006). Further, Central American immigrants, who have migrated in the past thirty years, have generally come to escape political persecution, to escape the dangers of war, and to seek employment opportunities not available in their home countries (Cordova, 2005; Garcia, 2006). As compared to Mexican Americans and Cuban Americans, Central American immigrants face more instability as they settle into the US as they have less well-established communities (Leslie, 1993; Garcia, 2006; Weiss, Goebel, Page, Wilson, & Warda, 1998) and are more likely to be undocumented (Cordova, 2005). In this vein, the specific childrearing contexts for Central American immigrants are likely to differ from other Latino groups. Research is needed to explore the early social environments in these families, and to link these with aspects of children’s social skills.

As a developmental outcome, social skills are of interest as they provide the foundation for early learning and are associated with other developmental outcomes across domains (DiPerna, Lei, & Reid, 2007; Hair, Halle, Terry-Humen, Lavelle, & Calkins, 2006; McWayne, Fantuzzo, & McDermott, 2004; Miles & Stipek, 2006). In

particular, social skills facilitate better student-teacher relationships and peer friendships, which may support mental health and educational outcomes (Miles & Stipek, 2006; Pianta & Steinberg, 2002). Given the centrality of early social skills to later social-emotional and academic outcomes, it is important to broaden investigations from a disproportionate focus on early language and literacy outcomes to investigations of social outcomes of children from Latino immigrant families.

Methodological Approaches

This review synthesizes research from the last two decades (i.e., 1988-2012) on the developmental niches and social outcomes of young children from Latino immigrant families. Three approaches were taken to review the research literature on developmental niches (i.e., physical and social settings, parenting, and parenting goals) and children's social outcomes (i.e., social skills) in Latino immigrant families. The first approach involved keyword internet searches using the following databases: Academic Search Premiere, ERIC, Family and Society Studies Worldwide, Medline, PsychArticles, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, Social Work Abstracts, and SocIndex with Full Text. The second approach was to search the reference sections of any relevant articles that had been found, and to use PsychInfo's Time Cited function to find more recent studies that had cited said article. The third approach was to search for more recent articles written by authors of past relevant studies. The last approach was to do a hand search through key journals including *Child Development*, *Developmental Psychology*, *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, and *Parenting: Science and Practice*.

Although the topic under review was relatively specific, very broad keywords were used in order to maximize hits. These keywords included parenting goals, socialization goals, childrearing goals, parenting beliefs, parenting attitudes, childrearing beliefs, relatedness, autonomy, respect, obedience, socialization, daily routines, family routines, activities, time, and crowding. The keywords were entered independently and also in combination with each of population keywords of Latino, Hispanic, immigrant, Chicano, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central American, South American. More general parenting keywords such as parent, parenting, childrearing, parent-child relations, parent-child relationships were entered in combination with each of the different population keywords above. Lastly, specific child outcome keywords (i.e., social development, child development, development, social skills, social competence, and cooperation) were examined in combination with the population keywords and the content keywords, respectively.

Although efforts were made to include only studies that were methodologically rigorous in terms of sampling and measurement, this proved to be difficult given the paucity of research on this topic. All studies in peer-reviewed journals were included; the major limitations of these studies will be discussed in the final sections of this chapter.

Theoretical and Conceptual Considerations

In this section, I discuss the framework that guides this review, namely the developmental niche (Harkness & Super, 2006) This framework divides the child's immediate environment into different subsystems. The authors of this framework have focused their research on how cultural influences become instantiated in the

child's environment. After the discussion of the framework, I introduce the paradigm of interdependent/independent cultural emphases, and address the implications of this research base for Central American immigrant children's developmental niches. Finally, I explore an ecological framework (Garcia Coll et al.1996) for understanding how experiences related to immigration may impact children's developmental niches.

The Developmental Niche

As the United States population becomes increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse, the need to understand developmental processes amongst diverse groups becomes essential (Garcia Coll & Pachter, 2002; Raver, Gershoff, & Aber, 2007). Super and Harkness' (2002) notion of the developmental niche offers a useful framework for parsing the child's proximal environment into subsystems. The immediate environment, namely the developmental niche, is formed through the child's interactions with three culturally-mediated subsystems, each of which involve the parent (Super & Harkness, 2002). These subsystems include the *physical and social settings* of children's lives, *culturally- regulated customs of childrearing* within those settings, and the *psychology of the parent*. These subsystems influence each other but also interact independently with the greater cultural environment, creating the dynamic developmental niche of the child (Super & Harkness, 2002). I define each subsystem below.

The first subsystem includes the *physical and social settings* of the child's daily life. This construct is quite broad, but might refer to the physical organization of the child's home environment, available activities, tasked to be performed, and persons present with the child. The physical and social settings provide the structure

for possible activities and interactions. In this review, I will focus on the activities available and persons present in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families.

The second subsystem, *customs of childrearing*, refers to cultural patterns in parenting behavior that occur within the physical and social settings of daily life. These customs may include parenting activities, family rituals, styles of interactions, and other aspects of parenting considered important for childrearing. They may be implicit, taken-for-granted behaviors and activities that are part of the fabric of childrearing. This review will cover research on parent-child interactions, parenting styles, parenting behaviors/ practices, and family routines and rituals in Central American and other Latino families. Family routines involve instrumental time commitments to different actions, repeated over time (Fiese et al., 2002). Rituals are those routines that have a symbolic and affective component. They are purposive and promote a sense of belonging among family members.

Finally, the third subsystem is the *psychology of the parents*. Harkness and Super (2006) highlight the importance of parenting beliefs and goals in this subsystem. One way in which culture is transmitted is through parenting goals, which influence action within the other two subsystems. Parenting goals become instantiated in the ways caregivers organize the physical and social environment. For example, parents who want their children to value the importance of family may make efforts to organize frequent family get-togethers in which children can be exposed to extended family members. Likewise, parenting goals are reflected in parenting behaviors, family routines, and rituals. Continuing with the example above, parents

who want their children to value family may also emphasize family rituals such as eating dinners together, playing card games together, and other family activities.

In terms of child development, redundancy across the subsystems of the developmental niche in message and redundancy across time forge the strongest effects on development. Thus, according to Super and Harkness (2002), young children develop culturally- valued social skills, when parenting goals, the physical and social setting, and parenting behavior achieve consistency and continuity over time.

One perspective for understanding cultural differences in parenting goals, the physical and social settings of children's lives, and childrearing behavior can be found in the rich cross-cultural literature on cultural orientations towards interdependence and independence. As Latino immigrants are thought to come from countries that have a history of orientation towards interdependence, the cross-cultural work may aid in understanding the developmental niches of young children from Central American families. In the section below, I summarize this cross-cultural work. Following this, I turn to one other ecological perspective, which highlights the role that the immigration context may have on the developmental niche (Garcia Coll et al. 1996).

Cross-cultural perspectives on the developmental niche

One framework for examining the role of culture on parents' goals and behaviors has been to characterize cultural orientations as varying across two separate dimensions of interdependence and independence (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008) and the corresponding parenting goals as varying across

emphasis on “relatedness” and emphasis on “autonomy”. Parents’ goals concerning their child’s relatedness and autonomy have been found to vary by culture, but also to vary within cultures by socioeconomic status and other contextual factors (Keller, 2007). In theory, these goals are independent of one another (Kagitcibasi, 2005). However, in typical interdependent cultures, relatedness is strongly valued, and autonomy is devalued. The opposite pattern is typical of more independent cultures (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Research suggests a third model “psychological interdependence”, whereby both relatedness and autonomy are emphasized (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Keller et al, 2006). This model is prevalent in non-Western cultures and countries that have experienced economic growth but have an interdependent cultural heritage such as some Latin American and Asian countries (Keller, 2007; Rothbaum & Trommsdorff, 2007). At the cross-cultural level, parents’ goals for children’s relatedness and autonomy appear to be linked with other subsystems of the developmental niche, namely the physical and social setting, and parents’ behavior (Keller, 2007; Rothbaum & Trommsdorff, 2007). In this section I define these goals, and examine their links with the developmental niche.

Parents’ goals concerning their children’s relatedness, hereto called *relatedness goals*, refer to parents’ desires for their children to develop or learn obedience, belongingness, respect for elders, and family loyalty. Parents’ *autonomous goals* involve parents’ desires for their children to achieve or develop self-maximization, self-esteem, and the ability to independently problem-solve and make decisions. The cross-cultural literature has focused on parents’ goals as they are one

way in which culture is believed to influence the environments and interactions that parents create for children.

In terms of the *physical and social settings* of children's daily lives, there are specific contextual characteristics that have been documented in cultures with an emphasis on relatedness. Specifically, multiple generation households are common, children spend a considerable proportion of their time with extended relatives and in multiparty interactions, and children spend less time alone than their counterparts in cultures which place less emphasis on relatedness (Keller, 2007; Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007). Greater emphasis on autonomy has been linked with nuclear family households, less time spent with relatives, and more time spent playing alone or with one social partner. Few researchers have distinguished between the kinds of activities available to children in cultures that emphasize relatedness and/or autonomy.

In terms of *customs of childrearing*, parents' relatedness goals have been linked with parenting behaviors that emphasize the child's orientation to others, interpersonal intimacy, maintenance of hierarchical social roles, and child's learning from the observation of more-skilled others, rather than independent exploration (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Rogoff, 2003). In terms of parenting styles, high emphasis on relatedness has been associated with high levels of parental control over their young children through restrictiveness and physical directiveness (Greenfield et al., 2003; Kagitciabsi, 2005). In such cultures, high levels of warmth, particularly in caregiving and responding to children's distress, may also serve to socialize relatedness (Keller, 2007; Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007). Parents' autonomous goals, on the other

hand, have been linked with behaviors that emphasize the child's individuality and choice, the interaction of mother and child as playmates, and the child's learning through active engagement with objects and the external world (Keller, 2007; Rogoff, 2003). Parents use moderate control, and reward and encourage independent behavior (Kacitcibasi, 2005; Keller, 2007; Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007). Warmth may take the form of praise and high levels of responsiveness to child's verbalizations and actions (Keller, 2007; Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007).

One final aspect of *customs of childrearing* that has differed between cultures with strong emphases on relatedness or autonomy is family routines. In more interdependent cultures, family activities are less "child-centered,"; routines are based on family needs rather than individualized for the young child (Rogoff, 2003; Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007) and activities involve the whole family rather than parents spending one-on-one time with children (Chavajay & Rogoff, 2002; Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007). The opposite pattern is found in cultures that emphasize autonomy. Here, family routines are catered to the young child's needs (Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007), and special one-on-one time between each parent and child is considered paramount for the young child's well-being (Rogoff, 2003; Harkness & Super, 2006). Few researchers have investigated differences in the family emphasis on rituals, or differences in the types of rituals among cultures that vary in emphases on relatedness and autonomy.

Cross-cultural researchers have theorized that parents' greater emphases on relatedness and autonomy, respectively, may promote different social skills amongst their children. In particular, a strong emphasis on relatedness has been associated with

more cooperative and compliant behavior (Greenfield, 1996; Keller, 2007). A strong emphasis on autonomy has been hypothesized to promote more assertive, independent behavior (Keller, 2007).

The cross-cultural literature just reviewed offers a preview for aspects of young children's early experience that might be common among Central American immigrant families. It could be expected that relatedness goals would be emphasized in these families, and that some of the relatedness-oriented trends in the physical and social settings and in the customs of childrearing might also be found in Central American immigrant families. However, autonomy might also be emphasized in parents' goals and behaviors (Leyendecker et al., 2002). Most comparative studies of parenting in Latino families and European-American families in the US have interpreted differences in parenting as reflecting the groups' emphases on relatedness and autonomy, respectively (Harwood, Scholmerich, Ventura-Cook, Schulze, & Wilson, 1996; Ispa et al. 2004; Lindahl & Malik, 1999).

Although this general framework of distinguishing between cultural emphases on relatedness and autonomy has been useful in understanding differences in children's developmental niches across a variety of different cultures, it is unclear how these typologies will contribute to our understanding of the developmental niches of children within subcultures of the United States (i.e., Central American immigrants). First, scholars argue that the constructs of "autonomy" and "relatedness" are very broad, and that the meanings attributed to these goals may be culturally-relative, or differ according to groups (Killen & Wainraub, 2000; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). Second, although there may be *general* trends in the ways in which these

cultural goals are associated with social settings and childrearing behaviors, there is likely wide variation across cultures in activities made available to children, parenting activities, family routines, and family rituals (Rogoff, 2003). Such variation may be based on cultural and contextual-specific factors such as socioeconomic conditions, political issues, and religious characteristics (Keller, 2007; Harkness & Super, 2006). Third, the framework does not help specify how immigrants who move from cultures with a strong emphasis on relatedness (e.g., Latin American countries) to a country with strong emphasis on autonomy will fashion the early social environments of their American-born children. In the next section, I offer a few concepts from an ecological perspective to help guide the investigation of the developmental niche of children in the context of immigration.

Ecological Considerations

In their ecological model for understanding minority child development, Garcia Coll et al. (1996) highlighted the central roles that minority status and immigrant status play in shaping the immediate contexts faced by newcomer families. Macrosystem factors such as social stratification and segregation by race and ethnicity result in unequal access to resources and experiences of discrimination (Garcia Coll et al. 1996). Unfortunately the “receiving contexts” for Latino immigrants oftentimes are nested within low-income and low-resource neighborhoods, areas with higher rates of crime, and districts with lower quality schools (Crosnoe, 2005, Torney-Purta, Barber, & Wilkenfeld, 2007). However, immigrants are also likely to join immigrant communities, oftentimes joining family members and people originating from the same country or region (Leslie, 1993).

Within the demands and resources of their new lives, immigrant groups develop goals, strategies, and behaviors that serve to maximize individual and community well-being (Garcia Coll et al. 1996; Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, Buriel, 1990; Ogbu, 1981).

These adaptive strategies are influenced by the values and traditions of the groups' countries of origin, economic and political histories, experiences within the receiving context, and the groups' current demands (Garcia Coll & Pachter, 2002). In turn, the family context is affected directly by the family's own contextual demands and resources, as well as the adaptive strategies and goals of local immigrant groups (Garcia Coll et al. 1996). These factors may influence parents' socioeconomic status, family structure, and the developmental niches of their children (Chase-Lansdale et al., 2007; Garcia Coll et al., 1996).

As such, this ecological perspective highlights the role that minority status, immigration experiences, and social position factors may have in influencing the child's developmental niche. In addition, this perspective speaks to the importance of examining subgroups and understanding ecological influences on parenting subgroups. Further, it highlights potential variation in parenting goals and patterns of parenting goals based on context.

Summary

In sum, the developmental niche framework offers a conceptualization of the systems which create children's immediate, daily environments. In this framework, the physical and social settings, customs of childrearing, and the psychology of the parent (particularly parenting goals) provide the organization, the activities, and the

meaning to children's daily lives in a way that enculturates valued skills. Culture interacts with each of these systems; one particular mechanism for this is through parenting goals. Cross-cultural researchers highlight that cultures differ in the extent of their orientations towards interdependence and independence. In different cultures, members differ in their emphases on relatedness and autonomy, respectively, in their children. The emphasis on interdependence versus independence can also be seen in the physical and social settings, with the former related to more exposure to relatives, more multi-party interactions, and less alone and one-on-one time, and the opposite pattern in the latter. The two cultural orientations have also been linked with parental behaviors, styles, and family routines. The findings from this cross-cultural work help guide this review. At the same time, limitations in this perspective are noted: broad generalizations may not be as helpful for understanding developmental niches within one group. Further, when the group involves immigrants who are members of an ethnic minority group, it is important to consider how these particular contexts affect parenting goals, their organization of the physical and social settings, and their parenting.

In the following sections, I consider research on each subsystem of the developmental niche in Latino immigrant families. I begin with what is known about Central American immigrant families, and then turn to Latino immigrant families more generally.. Finally, I examine links between the developmental niche and children's social skills.

Developmental Niches of Children from Central American and other Latino Immigrant Families

Psychology of the parent (i.e., Parenting goals).

The *psychology of the parent*, in particular caregivers' goals, are of interest because they may motivate parental actions and provision of activities, give meaning to actions, and guide interpretation of children's behavior (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006). Our knowledge of parenting goals of Latino immigrant parents is built almost entirely from studies with parents of Mexican and Puerto-Rican origin, including both native and foreign-born participants. Only one known research team has examined the parenting goals of Central American immigrant parents (Leyendecker et al., 2002). In describing their long-term goals, mothers of infants emphasized proper demeanor (e.g., being respectful, responsible, and moral), a concept closely matched with relatedness. At the same time, Central American immigrant mothers also stressed the importance of instrumental independence (e.g., being able to solve problems independently) and academic and career success as important goals for their children, goals that involve autonomy.

In general, researchers of Latino parenting have focused on findings concerning Latino immigrants' emphases on goals associated with relatedness (e.g., Harwood et al., 2002). Indeed, Mexican-American and Puerto Rican mothers, both foreign-born and US-born, have tended to describe respect, family loyalty, proper conduct, and morality as goals that guide their parenting of their children (Achhpal, Goldman, & Rohner, 2007; Arcia & Johnson, 1998; Azmitia, Cooper, Garcia, & Dunbar, 1996; Delgado & Ford, 1998; Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Gonzalez-Ramos et al.,

1998; Harwood, et al., 1996; Parra-Cardona, Cordova, Holtrop, Villarruel, & Wieling, 2008; Reese, 2002). At the same time, as in the study with Central American mothers, Latino mothers have discussed the importance of goals that involve autonomy such as instrumental independence (Delgado & Ford, 1998); personal success (Achhpal et al., 2007; Reese et al., 1995), responsibility (Buriel, 1993; Gonzalez Ramos, et al., 1998), and motivation (Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993) for their children. Notably, in survey formats, Latino parents have rated both relatedness and autonomous goals as very important and oftentimes more important than other groups (Okagaki & Frensch, 1998; Suizzo, 2007).

One limitation of the research base is that very few researchers have examined the goals of parents whose children are of preschool age (for exception see Achbal et al., 2007; Delgado, & Ford, 1998; Gonzalez-Ramos, et al., 1998). For many Latino children, this may be a time when they first transition into spending time away from the home in a school-like setting. As Tamis-LeMonda and colleagues (2008) have suggested developmental transitions may prompt certain goals to become more salient.

An additional limitation in most studies of parenting goals is that mothers were asked broadly about their long-term goals for their children (Delgado & Ford, 1998; Leyendecker et al. 2002,). Mothers' short-term goals may be more specific and more likely to influence current actions (Goodnow & Collins, 1990). In a similar vein, mothers may have different goals for children in different contexts. Goals for the traits and behaviors that children show at home may be quite different than goals for children's traits and behaviors at school or in public (Halgunseth et al., 2006).

Parental goals are of interest because they may be reflected, to some degree, in other subsystems of the developmental niche. For example, the physical and social settings which children experience may be influenced by parental goals. In the following paragraphs, I explore the available research on the physical and social settings of children from Central American immigrant families.

Physical and social settings.

The *physical and social settings* of children's daily lives set the parameters for the kinds of activities and interactions children will engage in. In the current investigation, I focus particularly on the persons present and activities available to young Central American children.

Not surprisingly, documentation of the physical and social settings of Central American immigrant children's daily lives is rare. According to the 2000 Census, 79.5% of children of Central American immigrants lived in two-parent families, 15.8% had four or more siblings, 46.4% had a grandparent or other relative in home, and 59.1% lived under conditions of crowding (i.e., more than one person per room) (Hernandez, et al., 2007). Whereas these estimates do not address the physical and social settings from the perspective of the child's daily lives, they are suggestive that children of Central American immigrants may have more persons available, but also live in crowded living situations that may shape their access to activities. In a time-diary study with low-income Central American immigrant families, it was documented that infants spent more time in the presence of multiple relatives than in dyadic time with their mothers or fathers (Leyendecker et al., 1995). Interestingly, however, the infants' access to activities (e.g., dyadic play, nonsocial play, receiving

caregiving, and eating) did not differ from the comparison sample of European-American counterparts (Leyendecker et al., 1995). Research is needed to assess the persons and activities available in the daily lives of preschool-age children from Central American immigrant families.

Researchers of other Latino groups have found that young children in these families spend more time at home and indoors (Floyd et al., 1993), sleep less on the weekends (Adam, Snell, & Pendry, 2007), and have access to fewer educational materials (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005) than children from other ethnic groups. These studies used large national datasets and controlled for a variety of sociodemographic variables (such as household crowding). More in-depth studies that assess multiple aspects of physical and social settings together will shed more light on this subsystem of the developmental niche in children of Central American immigrants.

Several qualitative studies with Latino immigrant mothers have explored the role of neighborhood settings in shaping the physical and social settings of children's daily lives. In such studies, low-income mothers reported keeping their children indoors due to neighborhood danger (Lindsay, Sussner, Greaney, & Peterson, 2009; Reese, 2002, Super & Harkness, 2005). In many cases, this restricted children's access to peer play partners, lessened their involvement in outdoor activities and play, and increased their time spent watching television.

In another set of qualitative studies, Mexican mothers discussed the presence of extended family members as an asset for teaching children about the cultural values and the importance of family (Delgado & Ford, 1998; Parra-Cardona et al.,

2008). Unfortunately, these studies did not quantify the frequency of extended family contact. Further research is needed to describe trends in the activities available and persons present in young Central American children's daily lives. In addition, studies should explore these aspects of the physical and social settings on typical weekdays and weekends, as this may provide a more holistic view of the activities and persons available to children.

Customs of childrearing.

In Super and Harkness' (2002) developmental niche framework, one key subsystem is the *customs of childrearing*. Within this broad domain, I focus particularly on parenting activities, construed as parents' behavior with children and family routines and rituals. These parenting activities occur within children's daily routines, and may reflect, at least to some degree, parents' beliefs about experiences that support children's development of valued skills (Harkness & Super, 2006).

In the one research program comparing Central American and European-American mothers of infants, very few ethnic differences were found by parenting behaviors observed in the home or during teaching tasks, with the exception that Central American mothers spent more time holding and physically directing their infants (Fracasso et al., 1997; Leyendecker et al., 1995; Scholmerich, Lamb, Leyendecker, & Fracasso, 1997). However, in one comparative study of preschool child-mother narratives about past events, Central American mothers focused more on helping their children maintain a conversation, whereas European American mothers focused more on helping to organize a coherent story (Melzi, 2000). These observational studies seem to highlight the role of activities that emphasize

relatedness among Central American immigrant mothers. However, further research is needed with preschool-age children that can assess a wider range of parenting activities.

Drawing on parenting studies with other Latino populations, observational studies with Latina mothers of toddlers and preschoolers have generally mirrored some of the cross-cultural predictions concerning behaviors that might reflect parents' greater orientation toward relatedness. In observations of parent-child interactions in free play situations with educational toys, Mexican immigrant mothers exerted more physical control and used more directives than European-American families (Ispa et al, 2004). In school-like structured teaching tasks (e.g., reading, building objects with blocks) with preschoolers, Latina mothers have been found to use directives, modeling, and visual cues as predominant forms of teaching (Eisenberg, 2002; Vargas & Busch-Rossnagel, 2003).

However, researchers have noted that in more home-like teaching tasks (e.g., making biscuits), Latinas have used fewer directives, made more suggestions, and engaged their children in more conversation than in more school-like tasks (Eisenberg, 2002; Kermani, & Janes, 1999; Moreno, 1997). Such results highlight the need for more knowledge about routine parenting activities in Latino immigrant families: if cooking tasks more closely approximate natural parent-child activities that occur within children's developmental niches, then parenting behaviors during such observations will yield a greater understanding of their associations with children's development of social skills.

The other aspects of parenting activities of interest to this study are family rituals. No known studies have examined family rituals in Latino immigrant families with young children. However, Suizzo and Stapleton (2007) found that Latin American parents of kindergarteners engaged in family discussions about culture and religion nearly every day of the week, and more so than any other ethnic group. Again, investigations are in order to examine the family rituals that are incorporated into young Central American children's daily lives.

There are several limitations to the comparative approaches cited above. First, most studies have focused on differences in parenting behaviors between Latino immigrant and European-American mothers, rather than focusing on the relative amount of a given behavior their children may experience. Second, without further qualitative investigation, we know little about whether the meanings of parenting activities being investigated hold for Central American immigrant parents (Super & Harkness, 2006). The particular meanings are important in linking behaviors with culture or "what's right for parenting", and for foreshadowing how parenting will be related to child outcomes (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006, Rubin et al., 2006). Related to this last point, in such comparative studies, we impose Western concepts of parenting and organization of settings onto different groups, without knowing about culturally-specific parenting constructs from their point of view (Delgado & Ford, 1998; Garcia Coll et al., 1996).

A few qualitative studies have examined low-income Mexican immigrant mothers' parenting goals for their school-age children and self-reported activities to help children attain these goals. Mothers identified practices such as the following:

consejos (moral storytelling) (Reese, 2002); providing encouragement (Delgado & Ford, 1998); verbal instruction/guidance about proper behavior (Arcia & Johnson; Azmitia et al, 1996; Delgado & Form, 1998); and teaching cultural values (Delgado & Ford, 1998; Parra-Cardona, 2008). Unfortunately, these qualitative studies are of limited use for examining patterns in the developmental niche as we do not know how often the self-reported activities occur. In future work, researchers might elicit information about daily parenting activities, but then quantify the expressed parenting activities and family rituals. As such, researchers would be better equipped to examine patterns with the other subsystems and with children's developing social skills.

Children's Developmental Niches and their Social Skills

The knowledge base concerning how the subsystems of the developmental niche (i.e., parenting goals, the physical and social setting, and parenting activities) are related to social skills of children from Central American immigrant families, and even Latino families more generally, is sparse. Researchers have not examined how all three subsystems of the developmental niche are related to Latino children's social skills. Few scholars have related any of the subsystems to Latino children's social skills, or examined anything beyond behavior problems. In light of these gaps, I review available research linking parenting goals, the physical and social settings, and/or parenting activities with Latino children's social development, broadly.

Commencing with parenting goals, two known studies were designed to assess links between parenting goals and children's classroom social skills in

Mexican immigrant families. In one classic study, parents' emphases on conformity in their children, which might reflect relatedness goals, predicted lower classroom-related social skills as rated by teachers (Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993). However, the measures in this study had low internal reliabilities and low face validity. In a more recent study, Gamble and Modry-Mandell (2008) found that maternal reports of *familism* (which included concepts of family loyalty and respect) moderated the positive association between the closeness of mother-child relationships and preschoolers' social adjustment. Specifically, the closeness of the mother-child relationship was a stronger predictor of preschoolers' social adjustment in the context of high *familism*. The idea was that congruence between parents' cultural values of *familism* and having a close relationship with their preschooler would promote more positive outcomes for preschoolers than either condition alone, a concept similar to Super & Harkness' (2002) notion of consistency in the developmental niche. There have been few other examinations of the links between Latino immigrant parents' goals and children's social outcomes according to parents or teachers.

The physical and social settings in the child's life, in particular the activities available and the persons present, are believed to influence the development of socially valued skills. Unfortunately, this connection has not been systematically studied in Central American or Latino immigrant families. The limited extant research is somewhat ambiguous. For example, in terms of available activities, the presence of developmentally appropriate toys bore no association with children's behavior problems in Hispanic children in the National Longitudinal Study of Youth-Child Supplement study (Mariner, Zazlow, & Sugland, 1998).

In terms of persons present, household overcrowding has been linked with psychological stress (Evans et al., 2000). On the other hand, Foster & Kalil (2007) found in a low-income sample that Latino children living in multigenerational homes had higher levels of adaptive social behavior (i.e., expressiveness, compliance) as reported by mothers than children living in single or nuclear family homes. Among Latino immigrant families, young children's reports of the frequency of receiving social support predicted fewer externalizing behaviors (Gamble & Dalla, 1997). Additionally, maternal report of sibling relationship quality (i.e., frequent, positive interactions) predicted children's emotional adjustment and peer adjustment in the classroom (Gamble & Modry-Mandell, 2008).

Whereas we can conclude from this research that the availability of quality interactions are assets for Latino children's social development, each study has focused on just one aspect of the physical and social settings. We gain little understanding of overall patterns of relationships and patterns of activities in the children's daily lives, and the implications that such patterns have for development of different types of social skills.

Childrearing practices, or more specifically parenting activities, of Latino immigrants have been explored in conjunction with children's outcomes more than any other aspect of the developmental niche. Global ratings of maternal authoritarianism (Lindahl & Malik, 1999; Rodriguez et al., 2006) and overreactivity (Brown et al., 2007) in observed parent-child interactions were unassociated with child aggression in young elementary age children. In the former two studies, mothers and children were asked to discuss recent conflicts; in the latter study, mothers were

instructed to have children clean up toys after a play session. The findings from these studies have prompted some authors to suggest more directive, hierarchical parenting behaviors are positive for the outcomes of Latino immigrants. This conclusion, however, may be unwarranted. These null findings, rather, may reflect the lack of cultural validity of the observational tasks, measurement error introduced with global coding schemes, and/or limited variation in parental behaviors.

Warm parenting behaviors are expected to help children develop valued social skills (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Observations of maternal responsiveness/warmth predicted toddlers' emotion regulation in a low-income Mexican and Central American immigrant sample (Tonyan, 2005) and were negatively associated with children's aggression in Cuban and Puerto Rican families, respectively (Lindahl & Malik, 1999; Brown et al., 2007). Interestingly, questionnaires tapping warmth and responsivity have not been as predictive of positive social outcomes. In a national study, maternal responsiveness among Hispanic mothers as measured by the HOME-Short Form (Bradley & Caldwell, 1984) predicted greater child behavior problems (Bradley et al., 2001). It seems the construct of parental warmth should be linked with children's social skills in Latino immigrant families, however, the manner and contexts in which it is expressed needs to be explored further.

The influence of family routines and rituals on children's social skills in Latino immigrant families is a relatively unexplored area. In one study with Latino adolescents, parental report of the number of routines followed (e.g., regular mealtimes and shared activities) predicted more positive social competence as reported by peers (Prelow, Jordan, Green, 2007). In another study, Latino immigrant

parents' literacy routines predicted their preschoolers' social skills as reported by Head Start teachers (Farver, Xu, Eppe, Lonigan, 2006). Whereas frequency of reading may not intuitively be linked with children's social outcomes, routine involvement of the parent and the chance for dyadic responsivity and warmth during book reading may explain this effect (Farver et al., 2006). Research on family rituals and their association with children's social outcomes within Latino families is virtually non-existent.

Little is known about other parenting behaviors or activities in Latino immigrants and associations with social skills. Although many qualitative studies have uncovered activities of great significance to parents (e.g., *consejos*, teaching about cultural values, etc.), these activities have not been linked with children's development. In one exception, Knight, Cota, and Bernal (1993) found that school age children, whose Mexican-identified mothers engaged in more teaching about cultural values, demonstrated more pro-social and cooperative behaviors than their peers who were not exposed to these cultural teachings and who exhibited more competitive behavior. This classic study highlights the importance of looking at different types of social skills in relation to different practices. Further work should be geared towards understanding how parent-identified activities are associated with young children's social skills.

Summary.

The research linking the different subsystems of the developmental niche to the social skills of children from Central American or other Latino immigrant families is limited in scope. There is conflicting evidence on the relationship between

relatedness goals and children's social skills. Quality interactions, including more social support and close sibling relationships, are linked with more positive outcomes. It is unclear how the social settings (including multigenerational households and household crowding) and activities available are associated with children's social skills. Observed parental warmth is linked with better child outcomes, however, questionnaire measures find little association. On the other hand, high levels of observed control have been unassociated with children's social outcomes. Finally, we know little about the role of family routines and rituals in the social skills of children from Central American and other Latino immigrant families.

Limitations

In this review of the developmental niches of children from Central American immigrant families, and links between these early social environments and their social outcomes, many limitations in the extant literature were uncovered that obscured my ability to draw conclusions about these main review topics. The limitations fall under two categories: empirical gaps and measurement issues. These two categories of limitations are explored below.

Empirical gaps.

In this review of the developmental niches and social outcomes of children from Central American immigrant families, the most pressing limitation was the lack of research on this population. As stated in the introduction, these children represent the second largest group of children of Latino immigrants, second only to Mexican American children (Hernandez et al., 2007). Given that this is a quickly growing

young population that is entering preschool and school, researchers and practitioners need more information on the early social environments of this group.

In addition, inappropriate sampling methods limit the conclusions that can be drawn from existing studies on children's developmental niches and outcomes in Latino immigrant families. The use of "Hispanic" or "Latino" samples with parents that differ on generational status and country of origin is problematic as it masks heterogeneity in parenting goals and provision of activities among these different Latino groups (Chase-Lansdale et al., 2007; Harwood et al., 2002; Roosa et al., 2002). The shortage of studies examining children's developmental niches within immigrant groups from particular Latin American countries precludes us from drawing a portrait of the early social experiences of children from any of the major Latino immigrant groups in the United States.

Sampling methods aside, the extant literature does not provide systematic information about the developmental niches of children from any Latino immigrant group (Harwood et al., 1996; Leyendecker et al., 1995, 2002). Comparative studies of children of Latino immigrants and European Americans generally assess just one of the subsystems (i.e., physical and social settings, parenting activities, and parenting goals). Yet cultural frameworks, such as Super and Harkness' (2002) developmental niche and even Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, contend that cultural influences on parenting and on the activities and social interactions that color children's daily lives need to be examined holistically as proximal environments that drive development.

Although there is a growing body of research on parenting goals in Latino families, most researchers have asked parents about their long-term goals for their children (e.g., what they want their children to be like as they grow up). Some studies have asked about more short-term periods of time like one year. Parental goals for Latino children in current contexts have been virtually unexplored. Another gap in the literature is whether parents have different goals for their children's skills and characteristics in different settings, such as at home and in public. It is an empirical question whether these goals may differ.

Parallel to the lack of information on children's developmental niches in Central American and other Latino immigrant families, there is a shortage of empirical work focused on these children's development of social skills. Most studies of Latino parenting have focused on children's cognitive school readiness. Research involving social outcomes has generally been limited to behavior problems in children of Latino immigrants. It is arguably of equal theoretical and practical interest to explore social competencies as outcomes (Farver et al., 2006; Halgunseth et al., 2006). Conceptually, many of the goals that researchers have found to be salient for Latino immigrant mothers involve their children's social skills, such as respect for elders, cooperation, and proper and moral behavior. Yet we know very little about the social skills that young children of Latino immigrant families develop, nor do we know about the connections between these skills and patterns in children's developmental niches. On the practical side, social skills are an important element of school readiness and subsequent development across domains (Miles & Stipek, 2006; Pianta,

& Steinberg, 1992). As such, empirical investigations of processes associated with better social skills in Latino immigrant families are needed.

Measurement issues.

Researchers interested in the parenting goals, parenting behaviors and provision of activities within Latino immigrant groups have generally used either purely qualitative measures and methods (Delgado & Ford, 1998) or purely quantitative measures (Prelow et al., 2007; Raver et al., 2007). The quantitative measures typically used were developed and validated with European-American middle class families. There are limitations to both approaches. Below, I describe the limitations with regard to quantitative measurement relative to the subsystems of the developmental niche.

Measurement of parenting goals generally takes one of three forms: ranking task/ card sort; Likert-type rating task; or structured interview. In ranking and ratings tasks, relatedness goals such as “respects elders”, autonomous goals such as “to be self reliant”, and sometimes others goals are listed together; participants either rank or rate the importance of each. The argument for forced ranking tasks is that parents may have a tendency to think all goals are important, but in childrearing they necessarily have to prioritize some goals over others (Gonzalez-Ramos et al., 1998). In several studies using rating scales, Latino families have endorsed the highest ratings possible for goals on relatedness and autonomy scales (Okagaki & French, 1998; Suizzo, 2008). This poses a very practical problem in that ceiling effects on goals will limit the measure’s ability to assess variation in the importance of goals. Ranking tasks, although they solve the problem of ceiling effects, introduce two new

problems. It is not clear what the intervals are in terms of the importance of items ranked in different spots on a list. Secondly, it creates a linear dependency in the data that is problematic for analyses.

Further, both ranking tasks and rating scales may have problems with cultural validity and measurement equivalence of the items. For example, Gonzalez-Ramos and colleagues (1998) found that the goal “independence” was ranked highly among Puerto Rican mothers. When mothers were asked to define what this meant, they referred to children’s ability to do things on their own, whereas the researchers had interpreted the item as akin to assertiveness. Qualitative methods provide an opportunity to learn about the meanings parents attach to certain parenting goals. However, if qualitative interviews are analyzed and presented in pure narratives, it is difficult for scholars to gather the importance or prevalence of these goals for parents (Yoshikawa, et al., 2008).

The semi-structured interview task is probably the most ecologically valid task, in that parents’ themselves provide the goals or values. In Harwood’s (1992) paradigm, parents are asked to describe characteristics and traits that they want their children to possess as adults, as well as to describe undesired traits. The traits are then coded, and the percentage of each individual’s responses that pertained to that code is recorded. The obvious challenges to this task are time, cost, and burden of interviewing as well as coding responses.

The cultural validity of common parenting measures is a major problem in the study of Latino immigrant parenting. It is not clear whether the interview items on measures such as the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment

(HOME: Bradley & Caldwell, 1984), Parent Behavior Checklist (PBC: Fox, 1994), Parenting Dimensions Inventory (PDI: Slater & Thomas, 1987), Parental Modernity Scale (PMS: Schaefer & Edgerton, 1985), all of which have been used with Latino immigrants, have the same meaning across ethnic groups and across languages (Raver et al., 2006; Wong, Stewart, & Gregorich, 2004).

For example, one item on the PBC and the HOME that is supposed to reflect nurturance/ acceptance is “allows messy play”. However, within a Latino immigrant household, allowing messy play may be considered negligent parenting. Interestingly, Latino families have scored much lower on this item than European-American families (Cardona, et al., 2000). Researchers who have studied the psychometric adequacy of the HOME and PBC for Latino families have had to drop items, and re-scale items in order to achieve adequate reliability (Mariner, Zaslow, & Sugland, 1998; Wong et al., 2004).

Similarly, an item on the nurturance scale of the Parenting Dimensions Inventory (Slater & Thomas, 1981) is “I encourage my child to express his/her opinions”. However, given the tendency to value children’s display of respect toward others, this item may not be a good indicator of nurturance in Latino immigrant families. Interestingly, associations between measures of warmth or related dimensions, and children’s adjustment, have been much weaker in Latino samples compared to European-American samples (Bradley et al, 2001; Figueroa-Moseley, Ramey, Keltner, & Lanzi, 2006). As discussed, in some studies, warmth has predicted more negative child outcomes (Bradley et al., 2001). Hence, the validity of these

parenting measures is questionable, which undermines our ability to understand whether and how parental warmth is associated with children's outcomes.

Similar problems of cultural validity are found in global observational rating scales. Many of the large-scale studies, such as the NICHD Study of Early Child Care, the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Study, and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study- Birth cohort (REF), use versions of the same rating scale for parent-child interactions (i.e., Mother-Child Interaction Rating Scales; created by Margaret Tresch Owen and Deborah Lowe Vandell for NICHD Study of Early Child Care, 1999). In these scales, codes for maternal sensitivity, supportiveness, and intrusiveness focus heavily on the degree to which the parent grants autonomy and follows the child's lead in play.

Again, these definitions may not reflect sensitive caregiving in different contexts. For example, Carlson and Harwood (2003) found that maternal sensitivity with infants, measured in a similar way, predicted insecure mother-toddler attachment relationships. As they state, "Sensitive caregiving behaviors may be culturally constructed, incorporating the socialization goals, values, and beliefs of the family and community." (Carlson & Harwood, 2003, p. 66). In this vein, research is needed to understand how important parenting constructs like warmth, control, and sensitivity are manifested in different Latino immigrant groups.

Additionally, as global rating scales require a degree of judgment regarding the meaning of certain behaviors, bicultural coders should be used. Further, bicultural persons should be centrally involved in the creation of coding schemes (Greenfield, 1997). Bicultural research team members have a greater understanding of the

meaning of behaviors, communication patterns, and affective displays between parent and child. As such the involvement of bicultural research team members is imperative for accurate assessments of parenting constructs (Greenfield, 1997; Roosa, Liu, Torres, Gonzalez, Knight, & Saenz, 2008).

Conclusions and Future Research Directions

As it stands, our understanding of the early social environments of children from Central American immigrant families is elementary (Harwood et al., 2002). We know that different subcultures within the United States make different activities and social partners available to their young children. We also theorize that parental goals become instantiated in these activities, which then provide children with practice and information concerning valued behaviors (Harkness & Super, 2006; Tudge, 2004). Currently, however, we lack information on the typical activities in which children of Central American families engage, the persons that are available to them, the typical parenting activities they experience, and their parents' parenting goals. Not surprisingly, there is no known research linking these aspects of the developmental niche to young children's development of social skills.

The cross-cultural emphasis on relatedness and autonomy provides a blueprint for expectations regarding the developmental niches of young children from Central American families. A strong emphasis on respect and family loyalty might be expected given that Latin American cultures have historically emphasized relatedness. However, the one research program that has focused on Central American immigrants found that mothers, in addition to emphasizing the importance of proper demeanor, emphasized the importance of their infants' eventual academic

and career success. Additionally, the cross-cultural research on cultural differences in relatedness and autonomy offers broad expectations about the presence of extended family and styles of parent-child interactions (e.g., behaviors emphasizing mutuality, hierarchical relationships). However, this literature provides little in the way of predicting children's everyday activities, parenting activities, and family rituals. Whereas the cross-cultural literature may provide the background for studies of so-called interdependent groups, future investigations of immigrant groups may benefit from taking a more holistic, culturally-specific approach to studying and describing the developmental niches of young children from Central American immigrant families.

Future studies should be directed toward systematically describing the developmental niches of children from Central American immigrant families. Given that we know so little about the childrearing contexts of this group, information should be gathered on all aspects of children's daily lives. Key areas involve the activities in which children can engage, the persons who are present, the time that different persons (especially parents) are present, parenting behaviors, family rituals, and social conditions such as household crowding. Parents should also be asked about their long-term goals for their children, but also about their more immediate goals for their children's skills and behaviors at home and at school. These more immediate goals may be more relevant to parents' current behaviors and organization of their children's environments.

Such studies, involving detailed information on aspects of children's daily lives, should examine potential associations between patterns in children's daily lives

and their social skills. Although social skills are an essential aspect of school readiness, few researchers have examined the social skills of children from Central American immigrant families or other Latino families. More refined examination of Central American children's social skills would contribute to the growing literature on their development.

Future research involving Central American immigrant families should capitalize on mixed-method approaches. Few measures exist to tap aspects of children's developmental niches, with the exception of parenting measures. However, there is little evidence for the cultural validity of commonly used parenting measures such as the PBC and PDI. In the absence of valid quantitative measures, open-ended interviews with Central American immigrant parents may provide the most accurate information regarding their children's developmental niches. Data garnered from such interviews can ultimately be used to create more culturally-valid quantitative measures.

Following preliminary studies to examine group-level trends in the developmental niches of young children from Central American families, further research should be geared towards understanding variation in children's early social environments. There are likely to be patterns in the physical and social settings, parenting activities, and parenting goals. Cluster analyses or latent class modeling could identify groups of children with similar patterns in their developmental niches. It would be of theoretical and practical interest to understand how these different patterns come about (e.g., ecological predictors) and implications for children's social skills. However, such work logically follows more descriptive work on group level

trends, as well as research examining associations between single aspects of the developmental niche and children's social skills.

In sum, a research program targeted at understanding the early social environments and social outcomes of Central American immigrant children has the potential to address a major social concern. The social adjustment and educational readiness of young children of Latino immigrants is of great import to practitioners, researchers, and policy makers (Hernandez et al., 2008; Leventhal et al., 2006). The evidence is clear that many children from Latino immigrant groups, including Central Americans (KewelRamani, Gilbertson, & Fox, 2007) enter school behind their agemates in terms of cognitive and language skills, and are at increased risk for poor academic outcomes (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Leventhal et al., 2006). However, using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort, a nationally representative study, Crosnoe (2005) and Galindo and Fuller (2010) suggested that children of Latino immigrants manifest resilience in terms of their lack of behavior problems at the time of school entry. It is crucial that educational and other child-serving systems are responsive both in recognizing unique social development of young Latino immigrant children, and in helping parents to support their children's early school adjustment. Through knowledge of children's physical and social settings, parenting activities, and parenting goals in Central American immigrant families, researchers and practitioners will be in a better position to create effective programs to address gaps in these children's early school adjustment and to support these parents' efforts to raise socially competent children.

Chapter 3: Method

It is well known that different cultural groups provide different early experiences for their young children, and hold different ideas about the skills and competencies they want their children to develop. In particular, groups make different activities available to their children, and through the persons present and the interactions within these activities, different messages are conveyed to children about what behaviors are valued and not valued (Tudge, 2004; Greenfield et al., 2003). In studying new cultural groups, or subcultures, such as immigrants in the United States, it quickly becomes clear that the activities and behaviors deemed positive and essential for child development in the mainstream developmental literature may not apply to other groups (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006; Greenfield, 1997). Such activities and behaviors may not be typical solutions to the challenge of childrearing in these groups, and/or the measurement of these constructs may not function properly with newly studied groups. As such, investigations with understudied populations should utilize designs that capture children's activities and social interactions that are salient *within* that cultural group or context of interest.

The search for activities and social interactions that reflect cultural goals in this understudied population was necessarily exploratory and descriptive. There was little empirical evidence of the kinds of activities are typically made available to children in this group, and types of persons who might be present these activities (e.g., mother, sibling, grandmother). Finally, there was a dearth of information on the types of long-term goals that CA immigrant parents might hold for children, or the short-term goals for different contexts (e.g., home and school). Given this lack of

knowledge, the most appropriate methods involved gathering qualitative data from cultural members (Yoshikawa et al., 2008). Although quantitative measures of children's activities and parenting goals that were designed for middle-class European-Americans could have been used there was no way to know a priori if these items would tap culturally-relevant activities and goals. Therefore I gathered this information from mothers' own narratives. I attempted to capture commonalities as well as variation in mothers' descriptions of their parenting goals, the available activities, persons present, and parenting activities. I also sought to understand the context and meanings behind activities and goals. Thus, the aim of the first part of this study was to provide a rich description of the developmental niches of young children from low-income CA families.

The ultimate goal of the second part of this study was to understand the implications of different patterns in CA children's developmental niches for their social skills. As such I needed to capture the prevalence of different activities, goals, and persons in children's environments. Towards this goal I needed to convert qualitative themes into quantitative data through the formation of categories and coding of frequencies of responses in each category (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Weisner, 2002). Through this "conversion" I was then able explore variation in the subsystems of children's developmental niches and to explore associations between such variation and young children's social skills using more traditional quantitative analytic methods. This use of mixed methods (i.e., qualitative and quantitative data collection) provided the "best of both worlds" for the exploration of the early

experiences of children in understudied groups (Teddlie, & Tashakkori, 2009; Yoshikawa et al., 2008).

Given these two broad aims, this cross-sectional, exploratory study was designed to investigate the following broad four research questions, and specific questions subsumed within each. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, no hypotheses were made.

Research Questions

1. What are the predominant parenting goals of low-income Central American immigrant mothers of young children?
 1. a. What are the predominant long-term parenting goals of low-income Central American immigrant mothers of young children?
 1. b. What are the predominant short-term parenting goals of low-income Central American immigrant mothers for their young children's behavior at home?
 1. c. What are the predominant short-term parenting goals of low-income Central American immigrant mothers for their young children's behavior at school?
2. What activities and persons are available in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families?
 2. a. What activities and persons are available in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families on weekdays?
 2. b. What activities and persons are available in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families on weekends?

3. What are the predominant parenting activities (i.e., parenting behaviors with children, family rituals) in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families?
3. a. What are the predominant parenting activities (i.e., parenting behaviors with children, family rituals) in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families on weekdays?
3. b. What are the predominant parenting activities (i.e., parenting behaviors with children, family rituals) in the daily lives of children from Central American immigrant families on weekends?
4. What patterns of variation can be found in the subsystems of children's developmental niches (i.e., within parenting goals, persons and activities available, and parenting activities) and how are they associated with maternal and child characteristics and with children's social skills (i.e., social cooperation, social interaction, and social independence)?
- 4a. What are the associations between maternal characteristics (i.e., country of origin, education level, age at migration), child gender and the subsystems of Central American children's developmental niches (i.e., parenting goals, persons and activities available, and parenting activities)?
- 4b. What are the associations between the subsystems of children's developmental niches (i.e., parenting goals, persons and activities available, and parenting activities?)
- 4c. What are the associations between the subsystems of Central American children's developmental niches and mothers' ratings of children's social skills?

4d. What are the associations between the subsystems of Central American children's developmental niches and teachers' ratings of children's social skills?

Research Design

Rationale for methodology.

This descriptive study utilized a mixed-method approach for examining young children's developmental niches and children's social skills within low-income Central American immigrant families. The study contributes to the very small literature base (e.g., Leyendecker et al, 2002; Melzi, 2000) focused on parenting in Central American immigrant families. The current study extended this research by capturing multiple aspects of the developmental niches (i.e., mothers' parenting goals, activities and persons available, and parenting activities within children's daily lives) of *preschool-age* children of Central American immigrants. Further, the study extended this prior research by linking children's experiences with their development, in this case their social skills. Finally, this investigation used semi-structured, open-ended interviews to capture salient aspects of children's developmental niches in the mothers' own words. This hybrid methodology was deemed appropriate for research with understudied populations: it gave us access to the types of activities, persons present, and parenting goals in Central American families, but also allowed us to quantify these aspects to gain a systematic portrait of young children's developmental niches.

In sum, this study detailed the types of activities in which Central American children engage outside of school, the persons who are present with children, household crowding, parenting activities (i.e., behaviors, rituals) with children and,

lastly mothers' long- and short-term parenting goals. With this qualitative information on multiple aspects of children's developmental niches, I then explored how it could be quantified in order to explore variation in the subsystems, sources of such variation, and implications of variation for children's social skills. I also used existing surveys. In particular, I examined the cultural validity of a measure on family rituals to be used as an indicator of parenting activities. Finally, I investigated the validity of a measure of children's social skills for use with CA parents and their children's teachers. Please refer to Table 2 for a delineation of the social environment and social skills constructs and measurement strategies that were utilized in this study.

Focus Group Study

An initial focus group was conducted with 20 Latina immigrant mothers of children enrolled at a local elementary school. The purposes of the focus group were to examine the appropriateness of potential study constructs and to pilot questions regarding these constructs. A bilingual/bicultural graduate student in Education moderated the focus group session based on key questions provided by the student investigator; the session was audio-recorded. Seventy percent of the mothers were born in El Salvador. Remaining participants were born in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, or Nicaragua. These mothers regularly participated in a weekly Parent Involvement and Education forum offered by the school. The focus group was a voluntary activity for one of such meetings. The focus group data were transcribed and translated by a firm specializing in such forms of multi-lingual data collection (see Translation section below).

Topics included mothers' goals for their children (i.e., what characteristics are important for children to develop) and favorite activities to do with their children. Mothers' goals for their children centered around educational achievement, career success, being helpful, sharing, being responsible, having a strong work ethic, valuing family, and valuing Latino culture. When mothers talked about favorite activities to do with their children, they tended to answer in terms of what their children liked to do with them, or what they (i.e., the dyad) liked to do together. The most frequently mentioned activity was cooking together. Another broad activity involved the mothers watching their children engage in activities their children enjoyed such as coloring, singing, and dancing.

The focus group involved a convenience sample of Latina immigrant mothers whose participation in weekly Parent Involvement meetings no doubt makes them a select group. Nonetheless, these preliminary results provided initial support for the idea that parenting goals and parenting activities are culturally-meaningful constructs. Results also indicated that mothers readily responded to questions about goals and activities and that the questions yielded variability in responses as well.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to ascertain the feasibility of the planned individual visits with mothers. We recruited 5 mothers from a local family services center that serves a large population of Central American immigrant families. Each visit entailed going through the entire protocol discussed below, as well as some additional measures that were dropped in the final protocol. The benefits of the pilot study included the identification of questions that were difficult to understand or that

did not apply to this population, further practice on the part of the interviewer in eliciting responses from mothers during the open-ended interviews, and information regarding the length of the visits. These findings resulted in small changes to the study protocol.

Informal Observational Field Study

For my own scholarship regarding parenting in Latino families, I participated in a service learning project in El Salvador. The project took place in a poor, rural village in the Northeast near the border to Honduras. During this three-week trip I was able to make naturalistic observations of “customs of childrearing” at home with my host family, at the town center, and during invited observations in the homes of five different families. Although I was not fluent in Spanish, I was able to understand the crux of interactions that took place between mothers and children. From these observations I noted four themes: 1) a system of distributed caregiving (children taking care of younger siblings and mothers intervening when needed); 2) early instrumental autonomy (three and four year olds could go to town center to play or buy food without parental supervision); 3) nonverbal communication (verbal exchanges were very infrequent, but mothers smiled and shared other facial exchanges with children while mothers tended to household tasks; and 4) lack of parent-child play (children played with siblings or peers). The observations I made were informal, the context was uniquely rural and impoverished and these observations were certainly not generalizable as customs of childrearing in El Salvador, let alone CA immigrants in the United States. It nonetheless contributed to

preconceived notions that I had regarding the context and styles of parenting in Central America

Participants

Participants included 48 mothers who emigrated from a Central American country (i.e., El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, or Nicaragua) and whose 3 to 5 year old children were enrolled in Head Start or Pre-K classrooms in a Title-1 elementary school in the Montgomery County Public School System (MCPS). The mothers were very diverse in terms of age, education, time in the US, and other demographic characteristics (see Table 3). Mothers were categorized by age of migration into those who migrated as adults (21 years and up) versus those who migrated prior to adulthood (before 20 years). Mothers who migrated prior to adulthood were all adolescents (13-20) with the exception of one mother who migrated at 8. Mothers' age at migration was associated with education level. There was also an emerging trend for Guatemalan mothers to have disproportionately lower levels of education, and for Salvadoran mothers to have higher levels.

The lead teachers in each of the five classrooms also serve as respondents. One teacher was African-American and the other four were European-American. Teachers rated their Spanish speaking/writing/reading abilities "not at all well to somewhat well".

The Washington DC metropolitan area, the location of the current project, is home to a large population of Central American immigrants. It is the third largest settlement area for immigrants of Salvadoran-heritage, following the cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco. This area differs from these other communities in that

there is not also a large population of Mexican-heritage immigrants (Montgomery County Planning Organization (MCPO), 2010). Montgomery County, the county where the data were collected, boasts a Hispanic population of 17%, 47% of whom are of Central American –heritage (MCPO, 2010). The population in the area where the school is located is 80% Hispanic (MCPO, 2010), and characterized as an ethnic enclave.

The area around the school consists mostly of apartment buildings and rental homes. The main street a few blocks away from the school is bustling with pupuserias (i.e., eatery that sells traditional CA food such as pupusas) and other Latin restaurants, dollar stores, check cashing services, and Latin markets. There are also low-cost health clinics, lawyers' offices, and CASA de Maryland - an umbrella organization that links Central American families with immigration information/services, social services, and English as a Second Language (ESL) and job training services. Central American families living within the greater metropolitan area tend to be poor, to be first-generation, and to share living space with relatives or unrelated adults (MCPO, 2010)). According to mothers and family service workers at the school, employment opportunities included construction, food industry, and factory work an hour's distance out of town. Many of the fathers relied on temporary day-laborer work, while those who had jobs typically worked more than 40 hours a week and more than 5 days a week. Jobs were scarce at the time of this study, which was cited as one of the difficult aspects of immigration, namely, that the economic opportunities did not meet families' expectations.

I chose to recruit mothers-child dyads from this particular elementary school because of its history of serving a large proportion of Hispanic students (66.6% of students during the 2009-1010 school year were Hispanic) and its large Head Start/pre-K program. This school had many practices in place to facilitate home-school connections including Spanish translations of all materials, a Spanish-English bilingual teacher in 4 out of 5 Head Start/pre-K classrooms, weekly informational coffee hours conducted in Spanish, a bilingual family service worker, a well-staffed English Language Learner (ELL) program, weekend educational trips, and a parent education program. The target school also had a history of collaborating with faculty from the University on a number of educational practice and research projects (Tirrell-Corbin & Cooper, 2008).

The MCPS Head Start program serves children and their families whose income is less than 100% of the federal poverty guidelines. Montgomery County offers free Pre-K classes for children whose family income meets the Free and Reduced Price Meal (FARM) requirement of less than 185% of the federal poverty guidelines. Mothers and children were recruited from both programs as these programs shared the same curriculum, offered the same family services, and served only families with low incomes.

Procedures

Translation and transcription.

To support the linguistic and functional equivalence of the English and Spanish- versions of study measures and materials, a bilingual/bicultural professional

translator who is involved in the local community was hired to do all the translation work. Many of the study measures (i.e., semi-structured interviews and questionnaires) had already been translated into Spanish. However, these measures were translated for use with Puerto Rican or Mexican immigrant populations. The translator compared the English and Spanish versions and use a “decentering” method as needed to loosen the linguistic equivalence of translated items in favor of functional equivalence across languages (Pena, 2007). This same individual also translated the study background questionnaire, the recruitment screener, and all consent forms. A second individual performed a back translation of all translated materials. The first translator compared and made adjustments as needed.

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and translated by two graduate students in the Spanish language department at our University. One student was a native-Spanish speaker and the other student was a native-English speaker. As the students transcribed and translated the interviews, they would “check” each other’s work for accuracy and cultural equivalence of the translation, and make appropriate edits. This “checking” procedure for translation has been advocated by Latino scholars (Umaña-Taylor, & Bámaca, 2004).

Training for data collection.

One bilingual/ bicultural graduate research assistant of Salvadoran-heritage was hired to assist with data collection during the Fall semester of 2009. Training for data collection was conducted by the graduate student investigator and her dissertation advisor. The trainings included parent recruitment strategies, protocols and strategies for semi-structured interviews, and protocols for the administration of

measures. The graduate research assistant: (1) recruited and scheduled visits with mothers who were eligible to participate and gave permission to be contacted; and (2) interviewed and administered questionnaires to mothers.

Recruitment and consent.

Initial IRB approval was obtained for this project (Appendix A). Preliminary approval was also obtained from the Principal of the target school. Following procedures for research with Head Start programs I first gained approval from the parent-led Policy Council for the Head Start programs within all of Montgomery County Public Schools pending approval from Montgomery County Public Schools Research Office of Shared Accountability. This application was submitted prior to project implementation and approval was obtained from Montgomery County Public Schools Research Office of Shared Accountability approximately 6 months later.

Once approval was obtained, we began recruiting lead teachers. Recruitment of teachers was voluntary, and was coordinated first through the aid of the school principal and staff development teachers who are the school liaisons to the PDS Partnership with University of Maryland. The student investigator met with the lead Head Start and pre-K teachers, informed them of the purposes of the research partnership and asked if they would like to participate. A copy of the consent form is attached (Appendix B).

After teachers consented to participate, we began recruitment efforts with the mothers. The teachers and the Parent Coordinator, who works with the Latina mothers at the target school, were asked to supply the Latina mothers with screeners to identify eligible participants. A copy of the screener is attached (Appendix D).

After providing initial information to eligible families about the study, and emphasizing its voluntary nature, the Parent Coordinator obtained verbal consent to provide contact information to the research team. A copy of the contact information form is attached (Appendix E).

After receiving the screening forms from eligible participants who consented to be contacted, the graduate research assistant called potential participants. If parents did not have a phone, the research assistant and student investigator contacted parents during drop-off and pick-up time at the school. Once mothers were contacted, the study was described to them, with an emphasis on its voluntary nature. Mothers were offered \$50 for their participation. At the scheduled visit, mothers signed a consent form (Appendix C). The bilingual research assistant read the content of the consent form to mothers to avoid any problems due low literacy of some of the participants.

Data collection.

All data for the larger study was collected in the elementary school. The student investigator worked with the school administrators to locate a convenient, secluded room or area that can be reserved for scheduled times of data collection. Past research indicates that the target study population may prefer to meet with researchers outside of the home (Zambrana, 1995). Data collection in the school helped increase comfort and minimize inconvenience to families.

The graduate research assistant and the student investigator collected data at each scheduled visit using multiple data collection methods. The student investigator helped to coordinate visits at the school. Visits lasted between 1 ½ to 2 hours. All mothers chose to be interviewed in Spanish. The bilingual research assistant engaged

the mother in a series of semi-structured, open-ended interviews, which were audio-recorded. Mothers were then be administered a battery of questionnaires. The bilingual research assistant read and completed all questionnaires to avoid any problems due to lower literacy levels of some participants.

Variables and Measures

To explore young children's early home experiences in an understudied population, it was important to obtain a preliminary portrait of typical activities, social interactions, and parenting goals that constitute children's daily lives. The prevailing argument of this study was that the most relevant and accurate information would be obtained from qualitative methods, in which mothers were asked to describe the activities, persons present, and goals in children's daily lives. From this qualitative data, categories could be derived, and frequencies of experiences that match said categories could be coded. In this way, trends in the prevalence of activities, the involvement of certain persons, and the relative importance of different goals could be reported. The bulk of the variables in this study were ascertained from qualitative data and quantified in the manner just described. The study measures and variables are described below. Please refer back to Table 2 for a listing of these.

Household information.

Mothers were interviewed about characteristics that have relevance for an ecological understanding of children early social environments. Specifically, data was collected concerning the following maternal and household characteristics: mother's country of origin; mothers' years living in the United States; mothers' race/ethnicity,

mothers' age; mothers' education level; mothers' employment status; mothers' marital status; household income; household composition; and number of rooms in the house. Mothers also reported on their children's gender, age, birth order, and year in Head Start or pre-K (i.e., 1st or 2nd year). To view the questionnaire, please see Appendix F.

Mothers' parenting goals.

To examine mothers' broad long-term goals for their young children and short-term goals for their behavior within the home and school setting, I adapted the semi-structured Socialization Goals Interview (SGI; Harwood, 1992), which assesses long-term socialization goals. Mothers were asked to describe the qualities, skills, and behaviors that they would and would not like their children to develop as they grow older. Then mothers were also asked to describe the qualities, skills, and behaviors that they want their children to have currently at home/ with family and at school. Mothers' responses were audio-recorded and later translated into English.

My analysis of mothers' interviews followed the general goals of content analysis, namely to describe or summarize mothers' words. The two goals were then to understand the general meaning of the goals and to ultimately arrive at a frequency for the goals. Although not conducting grounded theory, I used the general beginning guidelines for qualitative analysis as attributed to Glaser and Strauss (Berg, 2008). First I read about 50% of the interviews (in random order) and took notes on the emerging goals. Then I returned to the interviews with a set of potential goal codes. I engaged in open coding in which units of texts are assigned to a general goal "concept" such as "to be friendly". During open coding each unit of text (words,

phrases, sentences, or even paragraphs) that I could answer affirmatively “this is a goal” was compared with past goal codes, and merged under that code if possible or made a new goal code. After reading through half the interviews again, and coming up with an exhaustive list of goal codes, I then engaged in axial coding, whereby goal codes are compared and subsumed under larger goal categories. I used the qualitative data software ATLAS.ti 6 to organize and document the coding process.

To attempt to make my codes as culturally appropriate as possible, I partnered with the bilingual/bicultural research assistant who had led the interviews. In reviewing my coding scheme she made some suggestions for changes. Then she took the scheme and coded a random 25% of the interviews. We met frequently and made some slight changes to the goals, including using Spanish phrases for the categories. We met after coding three interviews, and calculated reliability each time based on the scheme from the previous meeting. Overall we maintained 80% percent agreement on the individual goal codes, and 100% reliability for coding responses within the same larger goal category.

To quantify mothers’ goals, I used Harwood and colleagues’ procedure (Leyendecker et al., 2002). For each of these three questions, each mother’s total number of phrases (e.g., “get along with others”) and individual word (i.e., “respectful”) descriptors were tallied to create a variable for each mother representing “total number of descriptors” for that question. Mothers’ proportional number of responses for each category was created by dividing the number of responses within each category by the total number of responses. This resulted in each mother having percentage scores for responses in each category within the three separate questions.

Proportion scores for each category were preferred over the number of responses for each category due to variation in the number of responses made by participants.

Available activities.

The available activities were ascertained from the Daily Routines section of the Ecocultural Family Interview (EFI; Weisner, 1997). The EFI has been used successfully to garner information about the family activities among low-income Latino populations, specifically Mexican American families (Aruzubiaga, Rueda, & Monzo, 2002). Following the interview format in the EFI (Weisner, 1997), mothers were asked to talk the interviewer through a typical weekday and then a typical weekend for her child. The interviewer asked the mother to describe the child's typical routine starting from the child's waking until bedtime. The interviewers used prompts when needed such as "What does your child like to do at home after school?" or "Who does your child spend time with after school?". Throughout the conversation, the interviewer attempted to gain a comprehensive portrait of the activities that occur and the persons present during children's typical weekdays and then typical weekends. The interviewer attempted to ascertain the extent to which persons present guide the child's activities, actively observe the child's activities, or are accessible from afar. The interviewer also asked mothers about the general duration of mentioned activities. For example, the interviewer might ask "So for about how long would you say your child plays in the yard with his brother?". The interview was audio-recorded and later transcribed and translated into English. A copy of the semi-structured interview is available in Appendix H.

To assess the interview data, I used generalized content analysis as described by Berg (2008). Coding and categorization were purposely descriptive more than analytical (Berg, 2008). First, I engaged in open coding, in which I coded varied units of text (e.g., single words, phrases, or sentences) that referred to discrete activities, the names of which were usually provided by mothers in the narrative. In the second stage, I conducted axial coding to merge theoretically similar discrete activities into more general activity categories. Mothers did not always discuss their children's activities in terms of types or categories. As such, the merging of discrete activities into "theoretical" activity categories and the names I gave to the activity categories was influenced by my research background in child development, as well as my middle-class European-American background. I consulted with the student interviewer and the two translators during the coding process to assess the cultural validity of my coding scheme.

The goal had been to gather information not only on types of activities but duration of these activities, and the types of people who engaged in each activity. This level of detail proved to be unrealistic in an interview format. Therefore the quantification of activity themes resulted in just a dichotomous rating of whether mothers reported that type of activity or not.

Persons present.

Persons present during the week and weekend was captured through mothers' reports on the household roster. I coded for the presence of different types of individuals including fathers, relatives, nonrelatives, and any siblings.

The original goal had been to code for persons present based on individuals mentioned in the daily activity interview. However this also proved to be unrealistic in the interview format. Also mothers seemed hesitant to discuss how individuals other than parents were involved with children, but many discussed other persons later in the interview. Therefore, I chose to use information about all the people who lived in the house as an indication of the social setting.

Another index of persons present was household crowding. This index divided the total number of children and adults listed on the household roster by the total number of rooms in the household. A higher crowding index represented more persons present per room. This strategy has been used to document crowding in various studies of low-income families (Evans et al., 2000).

Parenting activities.

Parenting activities (i.e., parents' behaviors with children, family rituals) were identified from mothers' responses to the Daily Routines section of the Ecocultural Family Interview (Weisner, 1997) and maternal report on the Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ: Fiese & Kline, 1993). One indicator was ascertained from mothers' descriptions of typical weekday and weekend for their children. In coding children's activities, I also coded for mothers' or fathers' involvement in activities. Parenting activities then were the activities that mothers reported that they or children's fathers engaged in with their respective children.

One other aspect of parenting activities, family rituals, was assessed through maternal report on the Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ: Fiese & Kline, 1993). The two subscales of this questionnaire used in this study assessed family rituals with

regards to dinnertime and weekends. For each activity setting, mothers reported on eight dimensions that might characterize the activity as a ritual (i.e., occurrence, roles, routine, attendance, affect, symbolic importance, continuation, and deliberateness). For example, family dinnertime becomes more or less like a ritual based on the extent to which the family regularly eats together, family members have specific roles or jobs at dinner, dinner occurs on a routine schedule, family members are expected to attend, family members feel that it is important to eat together, dinnertime has a special meaning, dinnertime has stayed the same over time, and the family plans for dinner.

A forced-choice format was used to lessen the effects of social desirability (Fiese & Kline, 1993). Parents chose between one of two statements that is most characteristic of their family, such as “In some families, dinner time is just for getting food” BUT “In other families, dinner time is more than just a meal; it has a special meaning”. Then the parents rated whether the chosen statement is “really true” or “sort of true” of their family. The scores for the dimensions within each activity setting were summed, with greater scores reflecting greater ritualization within that activity setting. The total scores for each activity setting were then summed to reflect greater family emphasis on rituals in general. A copy is provided in Appendix I.

The FRQ was originally validated in four studies with predominantly White, undergraduate students from middle-to-upper class backgrounds (Fiese & Kline, 1993). Internal consistency was adequate across studies (α from .61 to .87 across the different settings, and α from .52 to .79 across the different dimensions). Internal consistency for the total score across dimensions and settings was high ($\alpha = .90$).

Coltrane, Parke, and Adams (2004) used a portion of the FRQ to assess family rituals in the settings of dinnertime and weekends in a Mexican immigrant sample. Internal consistencies for the total scores for the two settings were adequate ($\alpha = .65$). In my study, mothers reported on family rituals in the activity settings of dinnertime and weekends.

Children's social skills.

Mothers and preschool teachers reported on children's social skills using the Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scales, Second Edition (PKBS-2, Merrell, 2002). The Social Skills Scale of the PKBS-2 consists of three subscales: 1) Social Cooperation - reflecting adult-related social adjustment; 2) Social Interaction - reflecting the peer-related social behaviors of making friends; and 3) Social Independence - reflecting adult and peer-related behaviors that allow one to achieve independence. Mothers and teachers reported how often in the last three months they observed the target child engage in a particular behavior from 0 (never) to 3 (often). Sample items from the three scales are "Accepts decisions made by adults", "Comforts other children who are upset", and "Works and plays independently", respectively. The PKLB-S is a norm-referenced and standardized instrument. A Spanish version has been validated for its linguistic equivalence (Carney & Merrell, 2002). Recently, the PKLB-S was used as an outcome measure for the First Five LA Demonstration Project. With this population of children from lower-income, largely Latino families, teachers' reports on the PKBS-2 subscales demonstrated good internal consistency (α from .89 - .95) (Douglas & Atkins-Burnett, 2008). Cognitive

interviewing with parents suggested items were understandable and easy to rate (Aikens et al. 2008).

Reflective Statement

Reflexivity, or conscious analysis of “self-as-researcher” is a gold standard of qualitative research, and an emerging practice in quantitative paradigms (Rogoff, 2003). Every step of the research process including the kinds of research questions asked, the methods, and analytic framework are all heavily influenced by characteristics of the researcher including epistemological beliefs, political beliefs, socioeconomic class, race/ethnicity, educational background, as well as personal experiences (Daly, 2007). In situations where there are stark cultural as well as socioeconomic differences between researcher and the “researched”, some argue that the gap between perspectives may be too wide to bridge (Daly, 2007). Admittedly, with my chosen educational background in a post-positivist field (developmental science), I was extremely motivated to try to understand the perspectives of Latinas with young children, while trying to minimize the “biases” that I bring to this research. Further, as an obvious outsider to the local Latino immigrant community, I hoped that my privileged position as a White, middle class graduate student would not be an obstacle to research that I hoped would have implications for improving schools’ partnerships with families from this population.

Despite these desires, I realize that my background undoubtedly affected my research questions and analyses. First, I entered into this project from a “cultural strengths” perspective (Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010; Rogoff, 2003). I do believe that many systems in society (the educational system) are built around White, middle

class standards, and because of this other cultural norms and values are not as well recognized. Hence in my questions and analyses I probably looked for and highlighted the positive values and experiences that these immigrant families provide their young children. At the same time, my perspective on positive parenting and goals was informed by such characteristics as my own upbringing, my own ideas about child development, and my research background, which includes substantial study of general “Latino” goals, and practices. Therefore some reflexivity on the part of the reader is in order to be cognizant of how my biases were infused in this research project and my findings.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this mixed method study was to explore the early social experiences, or developmental niches, of young children from a unique, understudied group - Central American (CA) immigrant families. The exploration begins with qualitative analysis and basic descriptive information regarding the three subsystems of children's developmental niches including: 1) the *psychology of the parent* as indexed by mothers' reported parenting goals; 2) *the physical and social settings* as indexed by the activities and persons that are available during children's daily routines; and 3) *customs of childrearing* as assessed by activities and behaviors that mothers and/or fathers engage in with their children. This descriptive information is deemed crucial given the lack of knowledge that early childhood researchers and practitioners have about lives of children from CA immigrant families. Within this discussion, I describe the common themes in mothers' descriptions of their parenting goals, the activities and persons present, and parenting activities that characterized children's daily lives. Quotations are included to exemplify these themes. These quotations were translated from Spanish to English by a doctoral-level translator. All participants' names were changed for confidentiality. When possible, I elaborate on the possible meanings of goals and activities within children's proximal environments. This data-driven analysis of mothers' descriptions serves the dual purpose of the identification and exploration of the meaning of goals, social settings, and activities that might be of particular importance to this cultural group within this context, and which might otherwise have gone undetected using pre-existing surveys and purely quantitative methods common to most developmental research. Building

on purely qualitative methods, I also infuse basic quantitative methods to document the prevalence of certain goals and actions, and persons. With information regarding the prevalence and frequency of these aspects within children's lives, we can start to draw connections, such as the link between different patterns in frequency and prevalence, and the degree to which children manifest certain social outcomes.

The first three of the four current research questions, which are addressed in the first half of this chapter, consist of this description of the three subsystems of CA immigrant children's developmental niches. In the latter half of this chapter, I explore the fourth question, specifically the implications of variation in children's developmental niches for children's social outcomes. The first step in this process is to explore how and whether quantitative measures can be used to accurately reflect the patterns of goals and actions of parents, as well as the development of children in this sample. Towards this end, I explore how the qualitative data concerning children's developmental niches can be transformed into quantitative data. I also examine the validity of quantitative data including a measure of children's social skills. Then having chosen the most "valid" measures, I will: 1) explore how maternal and child characteristics relate to the different subsystems of the developmental niche; 2) examine how subsystems relate to each other; and 3) examine how variation in the subsystems in this sample might help to explain children's social skills both at home and in school. By the end of this chapter then I hope to have shed light on important themes within the developmental niches of CA children as reported by their mothers CA and then to have explored variation within children's developmental niches, and its associations with children's developing social skills.

Describing and Defining the Developmental Niches of Children from CA Immigrant Families

Mothers' parenting goals.

In the first question of this study I explored CA immigrant mothers' predominant goals for their children. Mothers responded first to a question about the characteristics and traits they *would* and *would not* like to see their children develop as adults. In the next questions, mothers were asked to think about their children in two contexts, namely at home/ with family, and at school, and then mothers were asked to discuss the traits and behaviors they wanted their children to display in those contexts. Throughout these three questions, mothers' responses could be coded under six major goal categories including *bien educado*, *buen camino*, *buenas relaciones*, *motivación*, *salir adelante*, and *sentir cómodo* (see Table 4). These goal categories were labeled with Spanish phrases that were highly salient throughout the interview, and were also umbrella terms for a category which contained more specific goals. There were a few goal codes that did not fit the six major categories, however, these codes represented just 5% of the codes, and were mentioned by few of the mothers. These codes are listed in the Miscellaneous category and were not explored further within this analysis.

In the paragraphs that follow, I first give a general description/definition of the six goal categories in order of their frequency of use averaged over the entire interview. I describe the goals within each category that were used most frequently throughout the interviews. After introducing the six goal categories, I then describe more specifically mothers' responses to the three main questions posed in the

interview. Descriptive information on the mean percentage of mothers' responses pertaining to each goal category is provided in Table 5. In addition to the mean, the table provides the range across the sample in the percentage of mothers' responses pertaining to each goal. Another form of descriptive information is found in Figures 2-4. Here, for each mother, I examined her top three goals, as indexed by the proportion of her responses, and coded the first three with a rank. The figures then show the percentage of mothers who respond the most frequently, the second most frequently, and the third most frequently with the respective goal. For example in terms of long-term goals, *bien educado* was ranked first (or was the most frequently mentioned goal) for 75% of the mothers, whereas *salir adelante* was ranked first by 13% of the mothers. Further, *salir adelante* was ranked second by 33% of mothers, and *motivación* was ranked second by 19% of the mothers. This information, of course, documents the prevalence of the goal categories; in the section that follows, I also try to document the multiple meanings and contexts for these goals as described by mothers' themselves.

Mothers' responses related to *bien educado* far more than any other goals throughout the interview. The Spanish phrase *bien educado* literally translates to "well-educated", but captures a very different meaning than it does in English. It refers broadly to being well-raised or educated in terms of knowing right from wrong, having good manners, and understanding social obligations, including the need to help others. *Bien educado* is a state of being, but is reflected in one's behavior.

Whereas *bien educado* refers mostly to being a good person, mothers also stressed the importance of being a social person and having good relationships, here

dubbed “*buenas relaciones*”. Throughout the interview, being sociable/friendly, getting along with others, and being loving were some of the most common goals mothers had for their children.

The third most frequent set of goals are categorized by the phrase *salir adelante* or “to make it”. These goals typically referred to achievements in the academic and professional domain. The most common short- and long-term goal was for children “to study”, which meant completing homework in the short-term but to go as far as possible in school in the long-term.

The fourth most mentioned types of goals related to concepts I have dubbed “*motivación*”. Here mothers referred to ways of engaging in tasks at home or at school, or more general strategies or approaches to life that would help children be well-behaved or achieve. “To participate” was the most common descriptor.

Goals related to *el buen camino* or the good/right path were the fifth most common descriptors. *El buen camino* was a metaphor mothers drew on during discussions of what they wouldn’t want for their children, namely for their children to stray from the good path. The path represents one’s trajectory in life, and mothers spoke of many types of bad influences that could result in children taking the wrong path, which could ultimately lead to a life of suffering for the child (e.g., life of crime).

Finally, the goal of *sentir cómodo*, or “to feel comfortable or at ease” pertained to children reaching positive mental states, including feeling more confident, and less shy. These responses were relatively infrequent. With this introduction to the six major goal categories of *bien educado*, *buenas relaciones*, *salir*

adelante, motivación, buen camino, and sentir cómodo, I now turn to how these goals were manifested in mothers' responses to their long-term goals for their children.

Long-term goals.

Bien educado. When asked in general about the traits they would like their children to develop as adults, all mothers spoke about traits related to *bien educado*. In fact, 75% of the mothers had the most responses pertaining to this general category. The goals most common to this category were that children develop to be respectful, kind, educated, "good people", and to be well-behaved. When pressed to give examples of how children show that they are *bien educado*, respectful, or well-behaved, mothers oftentimes referred to the importance of demonstrating good manners and proper decorum. Sometimes the term *educado* encompassed "school education" but usually it referred more to proper upbringing. As Irma states: (all names have been changed to pseudonyms to protect confidentiality),

My mother and my father educated us a lot. In which sense...we know how to be respectful to older people. For example [...] if the younger one is playing and we are chatting she can't come running in between us, because I have taught her respect, for example, she has go to the back, you see? That's the education I want, because for example at school they learn how to write, math, everything, science, so maybe that kind of thing, they don't teach them, and that's what I want to tell you. When I say she is prepared at school, I also want her to respect older people, to avoid treating them with "tu" *(informal way of "you"), because that's what we do, and you shouldn't do that. I also want her to have that little education. To be a doctor and to be a B.A. and to

be a teacher, a secretary, but also to be a good girl, to be able to educate, to be an example for the rest, that's what I want. (Participant 38)

As one can see respect, proper manners, and proper behavior were central to this mothers' vision for her child and they were equally if not more important than educational achievements.

Other mothers incorporated more overtly moral and pro-social behaviors as examples of what it means to be a well-educated or a good person. Helping others in need, sharing without expecting anything in return, and being kind to everyone (showing no preference) were examples used by many mothers. In terms of helping people, about 20% of mothers spoke about specific careers in which their children could serve others or help to defend others people's rights, particularly the rights of women, children, and immigrant families.

When mothers were asked what characteristics they did not want their children to have as adults, the goals were usually the antitheses of descriptions of *bien educado*. Here mothers almost unanimously spoke about the pitfalls of adolescence, and hoped their children would not pick up bad habits or experience changes in their personalities during this period. Mothers spoke about children turning disrespectful and rebellious towards their parents and other elders - becoming *mal educado*, or basically forgetting or rejecting their upbringing. Many mothers spoke about the importance of developing close relationships with their children now (a goal discussed under *buenas relaciones*), as well as the importance of shielding children from bad influences (a goal discussed under *buen camino*) in order to help children maintain proper behavior throughout adolescence and into adulthood.

Salir adelante. The second most frequently mentioned long-term goal was related to the concept of *salir adelante* or “to make it”. The two most commonly mentioned goals were that children study, meaning continue to attend school and/ or finish school, and that children have a career or become professionals. One mother explained how she talks to her children about their futures:

When they don't want...Catie...no, more Jessica, Catie I know that right now she's really into school because she likes it, but when the older one says “Ay, mami I'm tired I don't want to go to school,” look, I tell her, your job is to go to school, and if you want to go make tortillas in a restaurant and get your little hands all cut up, if you want to suffer like me, without... look you need a profession and to be a young lady and to wear a tie (professional clothes), and you're gonna sit in a really nice comfortable chair and make good money, and you're going to be an elegant young lady, and you're not going to suffer I tell her, that one that picked up a knife and is with her hand like this (It sounds like mom is referring to her job at the restaurant). And then she...”no mami I don't want that I don't want that - I want to be a girl that sits at a desk with a computer” OK, you always have to keep it in your head that when you're grown up you're going to be a professional. (Participant 27)

Though not unanimous, many like this mother, wanted “a better life” for their children, and many of these mothers used their own difficult stories to help motivate their children. They hoped their children would take advantage of the United States' educational system to study, and ultimately to have a career that was stable and appealing. Although the mother quoted above speaks about economic success, she

was one of only 5 mothers who mentioned the goal of material wealth. The phrases that many mothers used such as “to make it”, “to have a future”, “to be someone in life”, and “to be a person of value” suggests that mothers are concerned that their children receive the dignity and opportunity that come with educational and career achievement.

Buen camino. Just as mothers wanted their children to “make it” in life, they wanted their children to “stay on the right path”. As stated earlier, many mothers discussed things they hoped would not transpire during the adolescent years. The most common hope was children would avoid negative peer influences. It was through deviant peers that children stray from the right path, learning bad habits, and behaviors that they would not do on their own. At the extreme this exposure can set children on a negative trajectory ultimately leading to such bad outcomes as school drop-out, gang membership, teenage pregnancy, and a life of vices. As Maria states:

For example, you hear so much about gangs, I don’t want him to be in that. I don’t want him to have bad friendships either, because, I don’t know... blocking bad friendships so he doesn’t get ruined, because these boys can end up ruined.

(Participant 30)

It is important to note that there was wide variation in the kinds of consequences that mothers discussed regarding their children’s potential deviation from the good path. Also, whereas negative peer influences, exposure to drugs and alcohol, early romantic relationships and other forms of delinquency, were ways in which one could take the wrong way, many mothers focused more on behaviors and characteristics of those on

the right path, which in this context was to study and to be strongly connected with family.

Buenas relaciones. Mothers spoke often of social and relationship goals for their children as they become adults. The most frequently mentioned social trait was that children become overtly sociable/friendly- adults who like to chat, try to get along well with everyone, and are liked by others. Of second most mention was the desire for children to develop into loving and caring people. Sometimes mothers would state that their children were already affectionate and they hoped they would “stay the same”. A salient relationship goal was that adult children be a good/son or daughter. A good daughter “remembers her parents”. Mothers hoped they would always be priorities in their adult children’s lives, and that their children would maintain respect and develop gratitude for the sacrifices of their parents. A third goal and one that arose mostly when discussing potential problems that might arise was that children and parents could have trusting relationships, which would provide the context for children to confide in their parents, and parents to impart advice (i.e., *consejos*). For example, in the following passage, Flor talks about her son Michael:

I would like him to tell me what he’s going to do always, where he’s going to be... and trust him. That’s the most important thing: trust your children, because if you don’t trust them they won’t tell you things or anything. You have to offer them your friendship so they count on you everything they are going to do. Yes, I would like him to tell me things, to feel comfortable doing it, where he’s going and everything. (Participant 59).

This idea that mothers be able to act almost as friends to their children/adolescents, was echoed by many participants. Finally, 10 out of the 48 women spoke about gender relations, mostly in terms of their children's future romantic relationships. At the very least, mothers hoped their daughters would not end up in physically abusive relationships, and likewise that their sons would not be violent. However, most of these ten mothers also spoke more generally about the importance of interpersonal freedom and equality within romantic relationships.

Motivación. Mother's goals for their children's long-term *motivación* pertained to personality traits and behaviors that reflect a process, more than achievement per se. The four most mentioned goal codes were that children be motivated/ have goals, that they be studious, that they be independent, and work hard. Mothers emphasized the importance of having goals particularly with regard to achievement and staying on the right path. It was difficult, many stated, for Latinos in particular because of the cost of college, the family's economic needs, and the lure of seemingly easy life on the street. But it was important to impart the message that "if you work hard and stay focused you can do whatever you put your mind to" (Participant 6). Some mothers talked about how they were already talking to their preschoolers about career options and seeking out role models for their children. Many mothers had the goal that their children become studious - meaning someone who studies diligently, enjoys studying, and sees the value in studying. About half of the mothers spoke about the importance of children not being dependent, and being able to responsibly handle their own matters. Independent in this case referred to instrumental independence like being financially independent. This was stated as

especially important for female children who would have more options if they did not depend on men. Finally, many mothers hoped that as adults their children would work hard. Norma mentions many of these interrelated goals for her son:

He should be hard working, study, prepare himself, he should think of a future so he has a better life. He shouldn't feel the need to... how can I put it... spend his time thinking the wrong things. He should think that everything he wants to do, he can make it, so he can succeed. (Participant 35)

Sentir cómodo . Comments in the *sentir cómodo* category were not mentioned by many mothers, but when they were they were mentioned multiple times. The most common goal was that a child not be shy. Some mothers mentioned that they themselves have experienced shyness; others were already worried that their children suffered from being too shy. One mother explained how her own shyness had been problematic:

Because sometimes you are not that respectful, especially if you see someone, you have to say good morning, be friendly, because I am a little shy, and she's shy now, so for her future I don't like her to be like that, because a shy person doesn't stand out. So I would like her to be more extroverted, to forget about being shameful [sic] (Participant 30)

This shyness came as being easily embarrassed, having difficulty communicating, and according to some mothers a sort of "sadness". Mothers hoped their children would open up, get more comfortable, and be able to express themselves. The other most frequently mentioned goal related to *sentir cómodo* was that children felt supported by their parents. One mother explained that when parents do not give their children

the time or attention, children can feel “at loss, like a dog with no owner” (Participant31). The confidence one gets from family was identified as crucial to one’s peace of mind. Overall, though, it was rare for mothers to discuss children’s individual happiness.

Short-term goals for home.

Bien educado. When asked about the behaviors and traits they wanted their children to have at home and with family, goals related to good behavior were again highly salient. The most common goal was for children to be obedient/listen. There were three contexts in which mothers emphasized the importance of listening. First, many mothers complained that their children did not obey them particularly at home and they hoped that this would change. Other mothers spoke of how their own children already listened and “understood” them - they only had to be told once or twice not to do something. Although the question was about behavior at home now, many mothers discussed their desire that their children would listen and take their advice (*consejos*) in adolescence. Another frequently mentioned broad goal was for children to have good manners at home. This could be seen in greeting and offering food/drinks to guests, and also using proper language such as addressing adults in formal language and calling adults by their role (Aunt) and not by their first names. For example, Idalia wishes for her son:

Yes, to be an exemplary boy. I wish that when family or friends come to visit, they say wow, what a well behaved boy. I want him to be a respectable boy, obedient, to be aware when you are talking to him. (Participant 44)

Another goal for home, which was related to *bien educado*, was that children be helpful. Similar to the way mothers discussed obedience, some mothers expressed a desire for their children to be more helpful at home by cleaning up, and helping with younger siblings. Interestingly, one mother, who had migrated with her son just two years before, described how it was important to her now in the States that her son always clean up after himself. But she stated that this had not been a concern in El Salvador where he could keep his toys outside, but now living in an apartment, the mess became an inconvenience. Clearly, the physical and social settings of many families - namely apartment living with little private or outdoor space - makes goals related to *bien educado* especially salient. Finally, mothers spoke about how in the future they wanted their children to be helpful, generous, and supportive with other family members, particularly their siblings.

Buenas relaciones. The second most mentioned goal category for behavior at home was buenas relaciones. Mothers spoke the most about their children being affectionate, loving, and caring at home and with family. Usually this was in the context of saying that they like their children's behavior at home because they are affectionate. Getting along well with others, both adults and children, was another frequently mentioned behavior parents wanted for their children. Mothers also stressed the importance of children having good sibling relationships now, but even more so in the future. As Martina explains:

Well, you see that nowadays families are so split. I would like my family to always be close. Since they are three siblings, they should always stick together. If they have a problem, if they see there is a problem they can solve

it, right? With their siblings I mean. At least they should count on moral support, if they can provide that. They should always be together, they shouldn't grow apart. (Participant 8)

Finally, as this quotation alludes to, many mothers discussed the importance of family unity or that their children value family. Within this discussion, many mothers stressed that children should as adults stay close with all of their family, make special efforts to spend time with family, and avoid developing preferences for some family members over others.

Salir adelante, motivación, and sentir cómodo. – The final three goal categories were mentioned infrequently by mothers with regard to their children's behavior at home. However, even though the category did not emerge as a strong theme, individual codes were prevalent. For *salir adelante*, about 20% of mothers spoke with pride about how intelligent or clever their children were at home. Children impressed their parents by asking difficult questions, and by learning things quickly such as how to write their name or how to use the computer. For *motivación*, mothers spoke about teaching their children to be responsible at home through assigning them small tasks or teaching them about organizing their belongings. Finally, for *sentir cómodo* mothers emphasized that they wanted their children to be confident in their abilities to be helpful. This short-term goal seemed to complement the long-term goal that children feel supported by their parents.

Short-term goals for school.

Bien educado. Mothers' most common goal for their children at school was that they be well-behaved. Just as at home, mothers wanted their children to listen to

the teacher, obey him/her, and follow directions. The third most mentioned goal was that children share more and learn to take turns in class. Mostly, mothers referred to sharing things and not getting into fights over school objects. But a handful of mothers spoke specifically about sharing information with peers. For example one mother says:

Here at school, the qualities I would like her to have... first, to be a girl focused in her studies, not fighting around with other kids... and to share everything they do in groups, right? If that boy doesn't know something, and she does, then she should share what she knows. I wish she focused on her studies... not... learning what she learns only for herself. (Participant 57)

Lastly, mothers also wanted children to respect their teachers. Examples of this respect included greeting the teacher in the morning, again listening and obeying the teacher, and for some mothers cultivating an attitude of gratitude towards the teacher.

Motivación. Mothers' goals for school not surprisingly included aspects of *motivación*. First and foremost, mothers wanted their children to participate in class, and this meant being involved and cooperating in activities. A related goal mentioned by nearly every mother was that children pay attention. As one mother said "Well, she should be always paying attention so she can learn... when you pay attention you learn. And I would like her to spend more time studying than playing." (Participant 1). About half of the mothers wanted their children to answer the teachers' questions - many either remarked that the teacher said their children do not speak up, or rather that the teachers likes how their children answer questions "while other kids are

mute” (Participant 5). Some of these mothers also wanted their children to ask questions.

Buenas relaciones. The most common social goal for children was they get along with their classmates. For some mothers, “getting along” meant avoiding fights. However, a closely related and frequently mentioned goal was that children be more sociable, friendly, and chatty. This goal usually applied to the whole group of children and the teacher. Some mothers described their children as less social than other children in the class, and hoped they would interact more with their little friends. Some mothers did not want their children to form a small group of friends - showing preference - but rather to get along with everyone. Another goal was that their children develop a good relationship with their teacher. Finally, many mothers discussed the social strategy of turning to adults for help. For example, Esmeralda explains that she tells her daughter. “Sweetie, behave, don’t fight with your classmates, that’s not good. If something happens, fights or something, you have to tell everything to your teacher; it’s the teacher, who knows. Tell her.” (Participant 45) Only one mother, who felt her son had been bullied, spoke about the goal that her child directly stand up for himself in a conflict situation.

Salir adelante. Achievement in the classroom was discussed by less than half of the mothers. A clear goal for these mothers was that their children learn the most they can in class. Nine of the mothers spoke more specifically about academic excellence. In particular, mothers wanted their children to receive good grades and perform at the top of their classes.

Sentir cómodo. Of all the contexts, *sentir cómodo* was mentioned most in terms of children's experience at school. The most common goal was that children be more communicative and less shy in the classroom. As was discussed under the category of *motivación*, many mothers wanted their children to be more engaged in class, particularly through responding to teacher's questions. However, a few mothers spoke more in a concerned manner about their children's severe shyness, and about hoping their children would get more comfortable. The second most common goal, mentioned by six mothers, was that children enjoy school. These mothers mentioned that the transition to preschool had been emotionally difficult for their children, and that as mothers they had questioned whether enrolling children in preschool was a good idea.

Buen camino. Goals related to staying on the good path were mentioned only a few times. In particular, mothers hoped that their children would not pick up any bad habits at school, or befriend children that would be bad influences.

Summary. Central American immigrant mothers' goals for their children were rooted in the concept of *bien educado*. Across questions about long-term goals, as well more immediate goals for home and school, mothers' responses focused on the importance of proper, moral, and altruistic behavior. At the same time, mothers wanted their children to "make it" in the long-term and at school. These two goals were not seen as opposing each other, rather being *bien educado* was essential to one's achievement. For example, one mother says about her daughter at school "I would like to hear she's excellent, and her behavior and her interest for her studies should lead her to be recognized". Many other mothers spoke often about the

importance of traits related to *motivación*, such as being hardworking and focused. *Motivación* was for many mothers essential to achievement, and for other mothers *motivación* was linked to staying on *el buen camino*. *Buenas relaciones* (as in having social skills and good relationships) were important for mothers' short- and long-term aspirations of their children. Good relations could also support the goals of taking *el buen camino* and *sentir cómodo*. In sum, through these interviews the general goals of *bien educado*, *buenas relaciones*, *salir adelante*, *motivación*, *buen camino*, and *sentir cómodo* emerged. Mothers differed in terms of which of these goals they emphasized. Also mothers oftentimes spoke about their aspirations in ways that reflected the interrelatedness of many of these goals. In the latter half of this chapter, I will explore how the combination of goals that mothers' emphasized relates to other aspects of their children's developmental niches, and to children's social skills. In this next section, I describe the variety of physical and social settings of children's developmental niches - an aspect of children's lives presumably in which mother's goals get instantiated.

Persons present.

Children from Central American immigrant families lived with a variety of different types of people in their households as well as a huge range in the number of people in the house (see Table 5). Fathers (biological or social) were present in 71% of children's households. There was a huge range in fathers' involvement with their children, which seemed to depend both on work schedules, but also on family cohesiveness. For example one mother describes her husbands' role in her son's life.

So on Sunday their father is home, well, almost every Sunday, he goes to work every now and then. That's the only day we all spend time together. He likes to be with his father a lot, a lot. In the evening on weekdays, since it's only at that time, he is stuck to his father. (Participant 44)

In this case, the child's father was not available often due to his schedule, but he played an important role when he was around. In other situations mothers described their partners as not very involved in family life.

For children in two parent families, 47% lived with relatives and 24% lived with nonrelatives including friends or unrelated adult renters. Of the children with single mothers, 71% lived with relatives and 43% lived with nonrelatives. As such, single mothers were more likely to live in multi-family households. In two-parent households, mothers' or fathers' brothers (children's uncles) were the most common relatives to live in the house. In mother-headed households, mothers' brothers or mothers' cousins were the most common relatives.

The role of relatives in family life clearly differed from family to family. One single mother describes how her brother is involved in dinnertime and other activities with her children "Only my brother sometimes, because my brother works, sometimes he eats with my brother, sometimes he tells him: uncle, let's play, let's go play soccer, so sometimes they play there with my brother" (Participant 40). On the other hand, one mother who lives with her own mother and stepfathers worried about the delinquent habits of her stepbrothers, and the girlfriends they brought home. Hence the presence of relatives could be a source of support but also tension.

When nonrelatives were present, mothers tended to describe limited involvement with these persons. Families might take turns using the space. As one single mom describes the dinner routine “Yes, they are there, the couple that lives there, first they go to the dining room, so we wait until they are done and then it’s just the 4 of us there” (Participant 47).

Most children lived with other children. Specifically, 74% of children in two-parent households had siblings and 82% of children from single-parent households had siblings. As one can see in Table 5, children had up to 6 siblings living in the house. About 31% of children lived with children that were not immediate siblings, namely cousins or children of renters. These children lived with up to three unrelated children. All together, 78% of children lived with at least one other child, and children lived on average with 2 other children. One mother discusses how it is difficult for their child to not have siblings. Speaking about her and her husband one mother states:

Well, we both try to spend time with her, and not leave her on a side because it’s not easy to grow up alone, I did, so you need someone to play with, someone to share, because that’s what she does with us. (Participant 28)

As indicated in Table 5, children tended to live in crowded conditions. Children lived on average with 6 people, but the number of people in the house ranged to 10 individuals. The household crowding index was 1.13 which means that there was over 1 individual for every single room in the house, which included kitchens, bathrooms, living rooms, as well as dining rooms.

Summary. Children in this sample experience a range in the number and type of persons present in their households. However most children lived with fathers, and a majority of children lived with extended relatives. It was also not uncommon for children to live with nonrelatives. In mothers' descriptions of daily activities, the support and involvement of different persons (e.g., fathers and relatives) was clearly variable, with the exception that mothers did not tend to discuss family interactions with nonrelatives in the house. Finally, most children lived in crowded conditions. In the latter half of this chapter, in this chapter I will explore how the types of persons present are related to the other aspects of the developmental niche, and how they are linked with social skills. Now, I explore the physical and social settings further by describing the activities in CA children's daily lives.

Available activities and parenting activities.

In the analysis of CA immigrant mothers' descriptions of the activities available to their children on typical weekdays and weekends, I identified ten main activity categories, two of which pertained mostly to weekends. The activity categories, and the more specific activities that pertain to each category, are presented in Table 7. For each of the activities that children engaged in, I note whether a parent (i.e., the child's mother and/or father) was involved in the activity. In the section that follows, I describe the types/categories of activities in which children engaged, in order of the percentage of mothers who reported a given activity type. Within this discussion, I indicate the types of activities that mothers or fathers were involved in (i.e., parenting activities). Then, I describe the discrete or particular activities that mothers discussed, which were parts of a larger type and highlight the variation in

both children's activities and parents' participation. Please see Table 8 and 9 for frequency information on children's activities and parenting activities.

Weekday activities.

Personal care. In describing their children's daily activities, mothers discussed their children's personal care, or their activities involving sleep routines, maintenance of personal *hygiene*, and dressing. In response to interview prompts, all mothers discussed their children's morning routine, which included waking up, washing, and getting dressed. Overall 63% of mothers described helping children with personal care tasks, whereas the remainder discussed how their children performed these tasks independently. For example, Clara explained Joseph's routine to the interviewer:

Interviewer: "When he gets up...."

Clara: "He gets up; he gets his shoes, his jacket..."

Interviewer: "He does that?"

Clara: "Yes."

Interviewer: "OK."

Clara: "And he's so happy to go to school. So then he goes to the bathroom and he washes his face. I put some paste on his brush and I check him to see if he does it all by himself."

Interviewer: "Does he brush his teeth?"

Clara: "Yes. And then, when it's around 8.30, 8ish, he goes 'let's go to school, let's go!', so I bring him here." (Participant 28)

Whether independently or not, all children showered, bathed, or washed. Hand-washing was a frequent activity throughout most children's days. In terms of bedtime routines, families varied in terms of parents' role in initiating and participating in their children's bedtime routines. Some children would change and go to bed when they became sleepy or when they saw that it was their bedtime. Other children headed to bed when reminded by a parent. However, some children needed more active support to get into bed and fall asleep. Mothers described staying in the room until the child fell asleep, reading to the child, or singing. Some of the mothers expressed worry when their children could not fall asleep independently.

Meals. All mothers discussed mealtime activities and eating. Importantly, children from 4 out of the 6 Head Start/pre-K classrooms ate breakfast and lunch at school. For children in the morning or afternoon pre-K classrooms, breakfast or lunch, respectively was provided. So presumably, all children experienced one or two mealtimes at school.

As would be expected, most mothers (88%) reported that they or their children's fathers were present at least one of their children's meals, specifically. Although most children could eat breakfast at school, most mothers offered to make their children food. When children ate at home, mothers typically asked their children what they wanted to eat to avoid wasting food. However, given the choice, parents reported that most children stated that they wanted to eat at school. Nineteen percent of mothers expressed concern that their children were not eating enough at school, or not eating nutritious, sustaining food at school. These mothers tried to convince their children to eat a small meal before and after school.

Many of the mothers also discussed children's snacking routines. Sixty-three percent stated that their children would eat a snack or even a light meal when returning home from school. Similar to breakfast, most children chose what they wanted to eat for snack.

For most children, dinner was more formal. Most mothers cooked meals at regular times. Many children helped prepare dinner - an activity described under household chores below. Children's dinner experience seemed to vary with family composition. In most nuclear families, dinnertime involved everyone sitting down together, usually when the father arrived home. In Alexandra's words about dinnertime:

During dinner time... well, everyone helps, they help set the table while I serve, she gets the forks, the spoons, my husband gets the juice, and so on, and we all have dinner together. After that, no rush, we do the dishes. (Participant 6)

Sometimes extended family, such as children's aunts or uncles, was also present at dinner. However, in other families, fathers or other family members arrived home too late for dinner, thus, mothers and children would eat together or mothers would serve children and then eat later with the other adults. At least from the mothering standpoint, making sure one's child was well-fed and sitting with children while they ate, if not eating with them, appeared to be an important aspect of childrearing.

Active and social play. All mothers indicated that play was a daily activity for their children. Interestingly, only 54% of mothers and or fathers played with the child according to mothers' reports. Mothers' descriptions of their children's play varied

from being very general- “all she does is play” - to descriptions of specific kinds of games that children played with different social actors in their lives. Play seemed to be the dominant activity in terms of the way children spent their time outside of school.

Thirty-one percent of mothers said their children played outside of their apartment/home in apartment courtyards or backyards, respectively, and were able to run and jump around, play ball, ride bikes, oftentimes with young relatives or neighbors, and always with mothers or fathers observing and sometimes participating in play. However, as stated earlier, mothers stated that these outdoor activities were limited to the warm months. Rough and tumble type play also occurred for some children when their fathers arrived home.

Although all mothers stated that their children played at home, only 35% of mothers specifically stated that their children played with toys. According to these narratives, children generally played with toys by themselves or with siblings or other relatives. Toy cars and dolls were the most commonly-mentioned props for boys and girls, respectively, as well as stuffed animals. Only one mother described her child playing with more elaborate toys which included a play kitchen set with plastic food.

It was rare for mothers to discuss pretend play in which they were play partners for their children. There were 6 mothers who did discuss pretend play. For example, Bianca described her son Michael:

Sometimes he says: “mom, you are going to be the doctor and I am the kid who goes to the doctor okay”, so I start then, or he will say “you are the doctor of my puppy, I am going to bring you my puppy” and he

starts to play with his teddy bears, and he brings them to me and we start playing with him. (Participant 40)

Interestingly, two of these mothers lovingly referred to playing with their children as “spoiling” them. Other mothers mentioned that the children tried to engage them in play, but because the mothers were busy with cooking or housework, they redirected their children to play with younger siblings or to do other tasks. It seems that parent-child play, particularly pretend play, is not an integral aspect of childrearing for CA immigrant families and, as such, few children experienced this kind of play.

Media entertainment. Ninety-four percent of mothers reported that their children used some form of media entertainment daily, with 90% of children watching television, and 13% of children playing computer/videogames (mostly in addition to watching TV). Only 35% of mothers stated that a parent watched television with the child. The amount of usage and the role of the parent with regard to media varied greatly among families. Some children had constant access to television and would go back and forth between watching cartoons and playing in the afternoon and evening. Twenty five percent of mothers discussed purposely limiting television time and computer time. One mother discussed her son and her other children’s television watching:

Then he watches TV for a little while, but I do not let them watch a lot of TV. Because sometimes they say television ruins your sight. If it's too much television, he will not pay attention to his homework, it will be only that. So I tell him not to do that. What I do, is that I hide the remote control, so they don't watch TV. And I don't let them watch movies or

soap operas, only cartoons. Because that is not for them, it's not good for them. (Participant 46)

Children typically watched cartoons including Dora the Explorer and SpongeBob. Educational shows were not explicitly mentioned. At the same time, some mothers discussed watching television as a relaxing family activity after dinner. This was noted as a special opportunity to be together. In some cases, this meant that children were watching regular programming or *telenovelas* (i.e., soap operas) with their parents.

Pre-academics. Mothers reported the following pre-academic activities: coloring/ drawing/painting; cutting with scissors; doing homework from school; doing homework assigned by parents; going to the library; reading; and writing. Although some mothers referred to some of these activities, such as coloring, as play, these were the kind of activities assigned as homework and were frequent activities at preschool. A large majority, 83% of mothers, mentioned that their children engaged in at least one of these pre-academic activities daily. Slightly less than half of the mothers reported that a parent was involved in pre-academic activities.

The most common pre-academic activities involved coloring/drawing/painting and completing school homework. Forty-six percent of mothers reported that their children drew in coloring books or on paper throughout the evening, or even painted pictures. Many mothers added that their children loved to color and draw, and about 20% of mothers (but no fathers) would color with their children. Homework was also mentioned by 46% of mothers as an everyday activity for children. In addition to drawing assignments, children engaged in writing assignments such as writing the

alphabet or their names. According to many mothers, children would check their backpacks for homework first thing upon arriving home. These children typically did their homework early in the evening after settling in at home. Others did their homework later alongside an older sibling. About 25% of mothers or fathers helped their children with homework.

A smaller proportion of children practiced writing in addition to completing homework assignments. About 19% of parents gave their children supplemental writing activities such as copying letters, numbers, or words in a notebook. Another 23% of children chose to spend time practicing writing on their own. Jessica described her daughter Alma's writing:

She grabs her notebook, she starts to draw, to write. "What's your name, Mom? What is your name, and your brother's, Jose? And Panchito, how do you write Panchito?" She already learned how to write everyone's names. From her own initiative. If you tell her "Alba, go and write something," no. Her own idea, by herself, she learned by herself and she also learned the numbers from 1 to 50. "Say the numbers, Sweetheart." "OK." So she starts saying them to me, how it goes, and when she's not right I correct it, but it's her, alone. (Participant 08)

Reading was the final common pre-academic activity mentioned by mothers. One third of the mothers reported that they read with their children daily. Among mother-child pairs that did read, many mothers talked about how their children would approach them to read, while other mothers described regular reading times, such as when children arrived home from school or at bedtime.

Conversations. Another everyday activity entailed engaging in conversations with adults such as parents, older relatives, or adults living in the house. Sixty-seven percent of mothers mentioned talking as an activity for their children. Although we might expect that all children speak with some frequency with adults outside of school, it is noteworthy that mothers identified talking or chatting as an activity in and of itself and that 54% of mothers identified that they or their partners spoke with their children.

A common verbal activity involved discussion with parents about the children's days at school. About 21% mothers detailed regular times, such as the child's arrival at home or a father's arrival at home, when their children would talk about what they had done at school, things the teacher had said, and any assignments they had gotten. Many conversations related specifically to children's behavior at school. Idalia described conversations with her daughter:

So I check her handouts, "what did you do at school? Did you get a time out?" And what she loves to tell me is that she took a little nap at school, because they put them to sleep. I tell her: "I am not sending you to school to sleep, I send you there to study. So if you're going to sleep there I am not sending you to school." "Ha ha ha. We all sleep there, mom," she says. (Participant 49)

Another frequent conversation involved feelings about going to school. Twenty-five percent of mothers described how their children expressed excitement about going to school. The conversations, which mothers described, often involved

clarifying when children would next go to school and discussing the people (e.g., teachers and other students) who children wanted to see.

Finally, 35% of mothers described more generally that their children “chatted” with adults. A few mothers stressed that they or their partners took the time to “chat” with their children. In other circumstances, mothers regularly observed their children talking with others. Chatting oftentimes involved asking other people about their days and how they were doing.

Household tasks. Mothers, in general, spent much of the afternoon and evening time cleaning, cooking, and doing other household tasks. About 50% of the mothers identified ways in which their preschool age children contributed to the household - which included helping with meals, cleaning up after themselves, and doing housework. Some mothers talked about the benefits to their children’s sense of responsibility in being able to voluntarily participate, but others stressed that children’s participation in household activities allowed children to be near their busy mothers.

Children helped with meals by doing simple cooking preparation work with their mothers, by setting the table, and by doing dishes. In terms of cooking, many children wanted to help make tortillas and mothers would let them play with the dough even if the children made a mess or were unable yet to make a proper tortilla.

For example, Elsa stated:

Well, sometimes it depends on the time, if it's late I start cooking, I cook, or sometimes he says: “mom, mom,” “What?” “The little boy is going to help his mommy because mommy gets tired. I am going to do

the tortillas.” “OK.” So I'll let him do that because he says he is going to help me, so I let him help me, but it's not that he really does that, I am there for him only so he can have peace of mind. (Participant 40)

Other children wanted to help with the dishes, and many mothers would allow them even though the mothers usually had to rewash the dishes. However, in the case of cooking and washing dishes, as the mother stated above, it seems that children were not necessarily helping but that these interactions helped children to feel competent, or to connect with their mothers. Some other mothers wanted to allow their children to participate but felt it was too dangerous in the kitchen.

In some families, children did provide more tangible help. Some children volunteered to help set the table, while others were assigned this task. Many children took their dishes to the sink after a meal, and some even took their parents' dishes to the sink.

Aside from helping in the kitchen, 29% of children regularly practiced cleaning up around the house. Mostly prompted by mothers who wanted to instill good habits, children put away their toys, their schoolwork, their clothes, and their shoes. A few children helped mothers with housework such as dusting, mopping, making beds and doing laundry.

Going out. When school was out, a majority of children spent the remainder of the day at home. However, about 45% of mothers discussed daily trips to the park where their children engaged in activities such as playing on the playground, riding bikes, playing with balls, and playing with other children. Excursions to the park with mothers and or fathers could last from 30 minutes to 3 hours depending on the family.

A handful of mothers discussed taking their children to other entertaining destinations such as the movies, bowling, or the library. About 10% of children went shopping with their mothers or out to run other errands. For about half of these children, their mothers discussed shopping as a form of entertainment/learning. As Imelda says “I take her to the Giant so that she can count. We go in the afternoon, in the afternoon we go to Giant, I tell her do you remember how many apples there were? Yes, she says, there are “five”, she says. And I ask her what colors. We need five red ones and four yellow ones”. (Participant 2) But other mothers discussed going out as an inconvenience for themselves and their children. As Alejandra explains “And since I’m a single mom, normally I’m always busy. So I have to go out with her to do the shopping or whatever, on my day off...that’s what we always do. To tell the truth their routine has to keep up with mine.” (Participant 11) Importantly, mothers stated they did not take their children out to play when it was cold (which included the months we were collecting data).

Weekend activities. Children’s daily activities on weekends were fairly similar to weekdays, with the obvious distinction that children spent more time outside of the school setting. In this second part of the interview, mothers tended to detail fewer discrete activities. However, many mothers highlighted what was different on the weekends, particularly that weekends brought activities involving the whole family or the addition of extended family. This shift occurred in mothers’ own narratives - mothers spoke more about what “we do” than what “the child does”. Three types of activities emerged as highly salient to the weekends- “going out”, visiting friends and family, and religious activity. These are discussed in turn.

Going out. Mothers discussed the modes of “going out” versus “staying in” on weekends. Ninety-six percent of children and their families went out on the weekends allowing children not to be “locked in”. When children went out with their families, the most common destinations were the park (59%), shops for necessities (42%), and the mall (38%). Families might spend 3 to 4 hours a day at the park. Like weekdays, the park was a venue for active play, but it also was a destination at which families could grill or have picnics. Importantly, mothers commented that during the cold months children could not go to the park, and went with the family to the mall. Trips to the mall allowed for walking, window shopping, and access to children’s games and playgrounds. Some mothers reported that they could follow up on children’s interests at the mall by going to places like pet stores or bookstores. Some mothers spoke more specifically about how their children participated in shopping on the weekends, which usually entailed going to the grocery store, shopping for necessities, or buying toys (such as coloring books) at the dollar store. Yolanda said the following about her children weekends’ activities:

It depends. If my husband is not working, we go out. We go out with them, we ask them where do they want to go, we take them out for breakfast, or we go to a mall with them because the older ones like to do that, and the little girls, after doing something for the older ones, we take the little ones. All the little girls want to go sometimes to Chucky Cheese to play. We look for some activity for them, something for girls. You know how at the mall there are places where children can play. So, since the weather now is so cold, we stay there at the mall for them to

play, sometimes they ride the merry-go-round and that's how we spend the day. By six we go back home for dinner. All of us together.

(Participant 15)

Importantly, "going out" was usually a whole family activity. Children's experiences varied by the novelty that their family sought in going out. Some mothers actively looked for new parks, museums, libraries, or even free activities to entertain their children. But more often than not, children were taken to familiar settings such as the local parks and malls.

Religious activities. Attending church with their families was a predominant activity for about 46% of the children on the weekends. Families attended Evangelical or Catholic churches. These two dominations provided very different experiences for the children. In the Evangelical churches, children usually attended special classes and spent longer amounts of time with the church community. Children's classes usually included Bible stories, weekly memorization of a Bible verse, Bible-themed arts and crafts, singing, dancing, prayer, and time for social and active play. Families spent between 3 and 5 hours at Evangelical churches on the weekends. In addition, 13% of the children attended church one or more times during the week in addition to Saturday and/or Sunday. Children attended Catholic churches typically just one weekend day for 2 hours.

Religious activity occurred in the home in the form of prayer. Several children engaged in daily prayer usually with their mothers. One mother, Imelda stated: "Above all in the morning when they get up they pray. They pray. Even the littlest one. We pray for everyone. Because there are people who didn't wake up alive. There

are people who are very sick.” (Participant 2) Prayer appeared to be a very important ritual for some families, and appeared to be an opportunity for children to develop empathy for others.

Visiting family and friends. About 46% of the mothers reported that their children were able to visit friends and family on the weekends. In most cases, children spent time with their mothers’ siblings and their children, although some families joined the fathers’ relatives on the weekends. Mothers described these visits as opportunities for their children to play and have fun with their cousins. Visits with family could last half a day or more and oftentimes included the preparation of a traditional meal in the home. At the same times, mothers described how they would go with family to the park or to the mall. For example, Raquel said:

Weekends, sometimes his cousins come, they play with him, because there’s one that’s a little bigger than him. But we go out. We go to his aunt’s and uncle’s, my brother’s and sister’s houses, to walk around the mall, whatever. (Participant 25)

In addition, several mothers talked about taking their children to visit and play with neighborhood friends. From most mothers’ accounts, mothers and fathers would take advantage of the weekends to socialize and to help their children build and sustain relationships with family and friends.

Summary. In this section I summarized the types of activities that children from this low-income Central American immigrant population engage in on weekdays and weekends. I also discussed the types of activities that parents were involved in. During the weekdays, children unanimously participated in personal care

routines, mealtimes, and media entertainment, and most engaged in mealtimes with at least one parent. Active and social play outdoors and indoors was very common for children. Parents were involved about half of the time, and mothers did not discuss pretend play. Most children engaged in pre-academic activities such as coloring/drawing, and completing homework. Again about half of the parents were involved in pre-academic activities. Children often engaged in household tasks, either participating in mealtime routines with their mothers or completing small tasks that they were request to do. A little less than half of the parents took their children out after school, usually to the park to get some exercise and play time with other children, while a few mothers took their children to other activities such as bowling. Weekend activities included the same basic living tasks, and some play and pre-academics. However, nearly all families went out to destinations, such as the park or the mall. Finally, about half of the sample spent time in religious activity and another half visited family and friends. If family circumstances allowed (i.e., father is home, not too many children reside in household), weekends appear to be a time for relaxing and bonding among these CA immigrant families.

Throughout mothers' discussions of the daily activities for weekdays and weekends, certain themes emerged. Perhaps the strongest theme was the importance of spending time with family. Family time could occur during mealtimes, watching television together, heading out for window shopping, or spending the day at the park on weekends. A second strong theme was the importance that children start to do small tasks independently, such as dressing/bathing but also taking some responsibility for cleaning up after themselves. A third theme across the interviews

was the ebb and flow of activity during weekdays and weekends - mothers and fathers did not structure children's time or their activities. Finally, a fourth theme was the importance of the outdoors, for children to expend energy, for everyone not to feel locked in, for exercise, and for other reasons. Unfortunately, constraints such as the cold climate and parents' work schedules could interfere with family time and outdoor time. Here, then other resources such as having siblings or cousins as play partners or mothers who involve their children in household tasks may have been especially important for the socialization of the CA immigrant children.

Exploring Variation in the Developmental Niches of Children from CA

Immigrant Families

The analysis up to this point has been descriptive. I have attempted, through analysis of the content of the interviews, to highlight seemingly important aspects of the different subsystems of CA children's developmental niches, and variation within. As so little research has been done with this unique group of families, it was imperative to learn about both the content of the different aspects of the developmental niche and the potential meaning from mothers themselves. In so doing, we have a better idea of what might be normative, protective, or reflection of strain within this group, and tentative ideas about the implications for child outcomes.

After exploring mothers' descriptions of their parenting goals, physical and social settings, and their parenting activities, the next step was to explore as systematically as possible, and in a quantitative fashion, how these different aspects of the developmental niche relate to children's social outcomes. Importantly, this entailed an understanding of sources of variation in the subsystems, including how

maternal and child characteristics are linked with differences in the subsystems of children's environments, and next how the different subsystems coalesce or vary with each other. Finally, with an understanding of the predictors of the subsystems of the developmental niche, and the associations within, the goal was then to explore links between each of the subsystems and children's social skills.

Given that this study is one of the first to examine the early home experiences of children from Central American immigrant families - a population of particular relevance to this geographical area - its goals are obviously hypothesis-generating rather than hypothesis-confirming. As such, the number of statistical tests run is on the liberal rather than the conservative side, precisely for the sake of gaining more information. Further, the sample size is quite modest, due to the selection criteria, with the obvious effect of reducing statistical power. For the combined reasons of exploration and maintaining statistical power, the analyses conducted were t-tests, ANOVAS, and chi-squares (Fisher's exact test).

Quantifying the subsystems of children's developmental niches, quantifying sources of variation and exploring psychometric properties of self-report data.

An essential aspect of this mixed methods study was to quantify the qualitative data. The goal was to be able to use frequency data about qualitative themes to explore statistical associations with survey data, including demographic characteristics, parenting surveys, and maternal and teacher report on child social skills. In this section, I detail the data creation process, both in terms of quantifying aspects of the developmental niche, and creating meaningful categories for maternal

characteristics from the demographic variables. Lastly, I detail the analyses of the psychometric properties of the survey and assessment data. These decisions involve a mixture of theory and data exploration that is essential in the study of this population for whom many of the typical measures of developmental science may not be valid.

Quantifying the subsystems of children's developmental niches.

Parenting goal clusters. In order to explore how mothers' parenting goals were related to the home environment, and children's development of skills, I chose to use a person-centered method, specifically cluster analysis. The objective was to look for patterns among mothers in their goal responses, allowing us to examine multiple goals at a time, and perhaps more importantly to explore whether there were naturally occurring patterns in the salience of certain variables across mothers. Essentially, the objective was to find groups of mothers whose responses to the goal questions were similar.

To examine mothers' goals, I chose to aggregate mothers' responses across the four questions because I assumed both short- and long-term goals would guide behavior within the developmental niche. I calculated frequency counts for mothers' responses pertaining to *bien educado*, *buenas relaciones*, *salir adelante*, *motivación*, *buen camino*, and *sentir cómodo* categories from each question. Then to account for the fact that there was a large range in the number of response given by mothers (*Range*= 28- 122, *M*= 71.79, *SD*=21.55), mothers' frequencies for each category were divided by their respective total number of goal responses, to reflect the proportion of responses across the four goal questions pertaining to each category. This method of transforming mothers' scores to proportion of responses was used by Harwood in her

series of studies, and Tamis-LeMonda and colleagues (2002). Proportional data can be problematic given that it violates the assumption of independence of observations. I used the squared arcsine transformation which is appropriate for proportional data (Harwood et al. 2002).

Given the exploratory nature of this study, I used hierarchical rather than non-hierarchical clustering methods. The theoretical assumption of hierarchical methods allows for the exploration of nested structures, rather than the forced finding of mutually exclusive categories (Henry et al., 2005). I used the squared Euclidean distance measure and Ward's linkage which "minimizes the within-group sums of squares of each cluster when clusters are joined together." (Henry et al., 2005). Prior to clustering, it is advised that data are standardized so that variables with unusually large ranges or variance are not weighted more heavily than others in the procedure. Due to the aforementioned transformation, the variables were spread, so I standardized each variable on a scale from 0 to 1 (Henry et al., 2005).

In my first cluster attempts, I noticed that with three, four, and five clusters, two of the goals, *sentir cómodo* and *buen camino*, which were mentioned in less than 10% of mother's responses, appeared to clump individuals together who shared mainly high scores on those respective variables. Given that low frequency responses can get weighted more heavily, I decided to drop these categories of goals from our clustering procedure (see Dromi, 1999 for example).

After clustering four variables, examining the dendogram, and taking into account groupings that made theoretical sense, I decided upon 4 clusters. Goal Cluster 1 (n=11) was composed of mothers who stressed the importance of *salir adelante* and

buenas relaciones, and motivación while stressing *bien educado* less than other groups. Goal Cluster 2 (n=22), had a high emphasis on *salir adelante* but differed from the Goal Cluster 1 in that they also emphasized *bien educado*. Goal Cluster 3 (n=4), was composed of mothers whose goals for their children centered almost entirely on *bien educado*. Goal Cluster 4 (n=11), placed little emphasis on *salir adelante*, medium emphasis on *bien educado*, medium emphasis on *buenas relaciones*, and a high emphasis on *motivación*.

One way ANOVAS examining group differences in percentages of mothers' goal responses pertaining to *salir adelante, bien educado, motivación, and buenas relaciones*, showed main effects for group on each goal (verifying meaningful cluster differences). See Table 10. A series of multiple comparisons using Dunnett's tests revealed that Goal Cluster 1 and Goal Cluster 2 had higher proportions of their responses pertaining to *salir adelante* than Goal Cluster 3 and Goal Cluster 4, and the former and latter groups did not differ from each other. For *bien educado*, every group was higher than Goal Cluster 1; Goal Cluster 2 and Goal Cluster 4 did not differ; and Goal Cluster 3 was higher than all other clusters. In terms of *motivación*, Goal Cluster 4 was higher than every group but Goal Cluster 1, which nearly had a higher proportion of *motivación* than Goal Cluster 2. Goal Cluster 1 was higher than Goal Cluster 2 and Goal Cluster 3 on *buenas relaciones*, but did not differ from Goal Cluster 4. Goal Cluster 4, in turn, was higher on *buenas relaciones* than Goal Cluster 2 and Goal Cluster 3, which did not differ from each other.

Persons present (and available activities). Dummy variables were used to signify the presence of the child's biological or social father, the presence of other

sibling/s in the house, presence of relatives, and presence of non-relative adults.

Given the potential redundancy of dichotomized “activities available” and “parenting activities”, I chose to examine parenting activities only in the quantitative analyses.

Parenting activities. In this section, I hoped to use the content from the daily activities interviews and scores on the quantitative Family Ritual Questionnaire (Fiese & Kline, 1993) to explore associations between this subsystem of the developmental niche, maternal and child predictors, other subsystems of the developmental niche, and children’s outcomes. For parenting activities, I used mothers’ reports of what mother and/or father did with the child. The idea was that capturing the activities that the child experienced with one or both of the parents would better represent the home environment than mothers’ parenting activities alone. To quantify mothers’ descriptions of children’s activities, two options were considered. A frequency variable could have been constructed in much the same way as the parenting goals- as a count of the number of mothers’ responses that pertained to each activity category. Alternatively, each category could be coded dichotomously according to whether the mother reported that she and/or the father engaged in at least one discreet activity within each activity category. There were conceptual problems with using frequency of responses pertaining to activities as variables, because it was not clear that higher counts would reflect more parental involvement in an activity. For example, if one mother states that a parent engages in 4 different pre-academic activities with the child every evening, and another mother states that she and/or the father spend an hour reading with the child, it is not necessary clear that the first case the number of activities represents greater involvement in terms of variety or time. Therefore, I

decided that the best way to capture the parenting activities was to score each dichotomously (i.e., the parent and child were or were not involved in an activity type).

For the purposes of examining whether participants could be clustered according to the parenting activities that mother did or did not report as part of their children's everyday activities, and for the purposes of data reduction, I first attempted to cluster the dichotomous parenting activity variables. I conducted cluster analyses separately for the weekend and weekday parenting activities, and in both cases did not include high frequency or very low frequency activities. However, no coherent patterns emerged in parenting activities that could discriminate between participants. I also conducted cluster analyses in which the goal was to cluster the activities themselves (similar to the goals of a principal components analysis) to see which activities went together among all the participants. Again, no pattern emerged.

Therefore, in the present analyses, I explored the parenting activity variables individually (i.e., mother and/or father involvement in an activity). Starting with parenting activities on weekdays and weekends, there were 20 potential variables. Many such activity variables had either really high frequencies or very low frequencies. To eliminate extra tests, I did not examine weekday and weekend meals, weekday religious activity or visiting, or weekend conversations as these activities tended to take place in nearly all families or very few families. Then, I aimed to ensure that each construct was tapped either on weekday or weekend. With these aims, I examined parents' dichotomous participation in active and social play, conversations, going out, media, and pre-academic activities on weekdays. For

weekends, the chosen parenting activities included active and social play, household tasks, personal skills, religious activity, and visiting friends and family.

Creating categorical variables from maternal demographic characteristics.

The three maternal characteristics, and one child characteristic, to be used to explore variation in all the subsystems in the developmental niche included mothers' country of origin, mothers' level of education, mothers' age at migration, and child gender. The three maternal characteristics were chosen because they are cited in the literature as potentially explaining variation in parents' goals and activities (Harwood et al., 2002; Rumbaut, 2004.)

Due to the fact that few mothers had migrated from Honduras (n=4) and Nicaragua (n=2), I combined this group to compare with mothers who migrated from El Salvador (n=27) and Guatemala (n=15), respectively. Further, for mothers' level of education, I created categories based on the levels in the schooling system in El Salvador and in conjunction with patterns of years of school completed within the sample. Specifically, the first 9 years of basic education in El Salvador are broken up into three cycles: 1st cycle 1 to 3 years, 2nd cycle 4 to 6 years, and 3rd cycle 7th to 9th (akin to middle school). After these compulsory 9 grades, students move on to secondary education which can be two to three years (10-11th grade or 10-12th depending on whether student gets a technical degree). Then, university is 5 years (Foreign Credits, 2012). In our sample, 37.5% of mothers had between 0 through 6 years of school, another 30.1% had between 7 and 11 years of education. Only mothers with 12 years of education (14.6 % of mothers), not those with 11 years,

reported getting high school degrees. Just two mothers with more than 12 years reported getting a college degree or more. So the educational levels I categorized were 0-6, 7-11, and 12 or more years.

The third maternal characteristics used to predict the different subsystems of children's developmental niches was maternal age of migration. In particular, I divided the sample into those mothers who migrated to the United States prior to adulthood (age 8-20) versus in adulthood (21 and up) following the recommendations by Rumbaut (2004).

Post hoc exploration of these constructs revealed trends towards differences in proportions of mothers' with different education levels by country of origin, ($p=.119$). Although not statistically significant, mothers from El Salvador were close to having higher education levels and mothers from Guatemala were trending towards having lower education levels. Country of origin and age at migration were not associated. Fisher's exact test revealed a significant association between education level and migration prior to adulthood. Those who migrated prior to adulthood were overrepresented in the mid-level education level, whereas mothers who migrated in adulthood were overrepresented in the highest education level, ($p=.016$).

Exploring psychometric properties of self-report data.

Family rituals. As part of the construct of parenting activities, I aimed to explore with the extent to which their families kept important family rituals. Although mothers discussed routines in the daily activity interviews, another goal was to obtain a standardized, quantitative measure. Mothers reported on two subscales (dinner time and weekends) of the Family Ritual Questionnaire (Fiese, & Kline, 1993). The

response format was a Harter-type scale, in which mothers chose whether a statement was “like my family” or “not like my family” and then “sort of true” or really true”. The internal reliability for the items on the dinner questionnaire scale was inadequate, (Cronbach α =.56) (see Tables 11 and 12). In an attempt to explore the dimensionality of the items, I conducted exploratory principle components analysis with varimax rotation (see Table 13). With a sample size of 43 for this subscale (not all participants completed it) and 7 items, criterion was met for a minimum of 5 to 10 participants per item or variable in factor analysis (Field, 2009). However, KMO’s statistic for sampling adequacy was .56, a ratio dubbed “mediocre” by Kaiser (Pett, Lackey, & Sullivan, 2003). The factor analysis also yielded 3 components, with three items cross-loading at .4 or above. The desired scale was supposed to represent one factor. Hence, with the combination of low internal reliability and results of the factory analysis, I decided that this subscale was not a valid assessment of the extent to which dinners are ritualized within this sample.

A very similar pattern was found the weekend subscale. The internal reliability for the weekend items was low (Cronbach’s α = .61) (see Tables 14 and 15). An analysis of items suggested that the removal of the item concerning regular roles, would improve the subscale reliability. The removal of this item raised the alpha to .63. A principle components analysis to explore the shared variance among items suggested that there were two components underlying the scale. This time KMO was .71 or “good” (Pett et al. 2003). Items reflecting the occurrence, routines, attendance, and affect in weekend rituals loaded at .40 or above on the first component (see Table 15). The last two items, symbolism and planning, loaded on a

separate component. One can speculate why these last two items were on a separate component. For example, the symbolism item read “In some families spending time together at weekend events is special and the planning item read “There is much planning that goes on for weekend events”. It may be the first component reflects the emotion involved and extent to which that the family gets together regularly, whereas the second component refers more to doing specific things, and this may not necessarily go along with the first component. The two items were also more abstract. The fact that two factors came out of the items, and that the reliability was so low, suggest that the instrument was not a valid assessment of the ritualization construct for this sample.

Children’s social skills. Reliability analyses for mother report on the PKBS Social Skills subscale yielded acceptable internal reliabilities for two out of the three subscales. For teacher report, internal reliabilities were very high. The internal reliability for mothers on the subscales Social Cooperation and Independence were moderate (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .76$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .73$) (see Tables 17 and 19). However, the internal reliability for mother’s report on Social Interaction was very low, (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .49$) (see Table 18). Examining the correlations, the highest inter-item correlation was $r(11) = .38, p = .009$ and many inter-item correlations were near 0 or in the negative zone (see Table 20). Given the unacceptable reliability of this subscale with mothers in this sample, it was not used as an individual outcome measure. Further, the subscale was not combined with the other subscales to form a Total Social Skills score. Teachers’ reports on the Social Cooperation, Social Interaction, and Independence subscales were high (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .95$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .95$;

Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$) (see Tables 17-19). To be consistent with mother's report, I used teacher reports' on the separate subscales and did not combine scales for a total Social Skills score. Interestingly, there was no correlation between mothers' and teacher reports' on children's Social Cooperation, ($r(47) = .08$, $p = .574$) and there was only a trend towards a significant correlation between the reports on Independence, ($r(47) = .26$, $p = .084$).

Exploring sources of variation in the subsystems of children's developmental niches.

The next step was to explore what maternal and child characteristics might differentiate between the goal clusters. Chi square test of independence is typically used to explore whether there are associations or differential patterns than would be expected by chance within two or more categorical variables. The sampling distribution of chi square tests approximates the chi square test statistic (Field, 2009). The larger the sample size, the more accurate the approximation becomes. Unfortunately, with small sample sizes and when cell sizes are less than 5, the sampling distribution of the test statistic is too far from the chi square tests to yield accurate probabilities (Field, 2009; McDonald, 2009). For small samples and in cases where there are low probabilities of falling within certain categories, Fisher's exact test is recommended. Fisher's exact test computes the exact probability of obtaining the observed data in a contingency table by considering all the possible cell combinations that could result in the observed data. The test is exact because it uses the exact hyper geometric distribution to calculate the probability rather the approximate chi-square distribution to compute the p-value (Field, 2009; McDonald, 2009).

Fisher's exact test is notoriously conservative but was theoretically more accurate than the chi square tests for the current situation. Due to the small sample size, and low power of Fisher's exact test, I set the alpha level at .10 to reduce the chances of Type II error.

Variation in goal cluster membership. In order to examine whether the four goal clusters differed in terms of maternal education level, country of origin, pre-adult versus adult migration, or child gender, I ran a series of Fisher's exact tests (see cross tabs in Table 21). The goal groups did differ in their proportion of mothers with different education levels ($p = .407$). Although not statistically significant, there was a trend towards differences in the goal clusters in proportions of mothers originating from different countries ($p = .141$). All 6 of the mothers from Honduras or Nicaragua were in Goal Cluster 2. Guatemalan mothers appeared overrepresented in Goal Cluster 1 while Salvadoran mothers were more likely to be in Goal Cluster 4 (i.e., 33% of their sample). Finally, the goal clusters did differ in terms of the proportion of mothers who were adult vs. pre-adult migrants, $p = .011$. None of the mothers who immigrated prior to adulthood were in Goal Cluster 1, few were in Goal Cluster 4, and they were disproportionally likely to be in Goal Clusters 2 and 3. There were no associations between child gender and cluster membership ($p = .210$).

Variation in persons present. The next step was to examine maternal characteristics related to persons present in the home. There was no rationale for child gender to relate to persons present so these tests were not conducted. Maternal education, country of origin, and age at migration were all unrelated to whether the household (persons present) included the child's father, a non-relative adult, or one

more siblings. There was only an emerging trend towards an association between maternal education and the presence of a relative in the house ($p=.135$). Specifically, 72% of mothers with the lowest education level lived with a relative, as did 50% of mothers with the mid-level education, and just 38% of mothers with 12 or more years of education lived with a relative (see cross tabs in Table 22).

Variation in parenting activities. To examine whether there were differences in weekday parenting activities by maternal characteristics and child gender, a series of Fisher's exact tests were conducted (see cross tabs in Table 23). The proportion of mothers reporting parenting activities involving Active and Social play did vary by mothers' countries of origin ($p=.006$). Although there is no statistical test for determining the location of the difference, the percentage of Guatemalan mothers reporting Active and Social play was notably higher at 87%, compared with Salvadoran mothers, 59% and the group from Honduras/Nicaragua, 50%, respectively. There were no further differences in the proportions of mothers reporting Active and Social Play by educational categories, age at migration, or child gender. Further, there were no differences in proportion of mothers reporting Conversations, Media, or Pre-academic activities by mother's education level, country of origin, age at migration, or child gender. There was a statistically significant difference (at the .10 level) in the proportion of mothers reporting "Going Out" by country of origin, $p=.060$. Specifically, none of the mothers from Honduras or Nicaragua reported "Going Out" activities, whereas 52% of Salvadoran mothers and 53% of Guatemalan mothers reported that a parent went out with children for

entertainment or shopping. There were no differences in the proportions of mothers Going Out by the other maternal characteristics or by child gender.

In terms of Weekend Parenting Activities, there were two differences by mothers' education level (see cross tabs in Table 24). The proportion of mothers reporting that a parent engaged in Weekend Active and Social Play differed by mothers' education, $p=.080$. Fewer mothers in the mid-level education category (8%, or 1 out of 13) reported Active and Social Play, as compared with 38% in the lowest education category, and 37% in the highest education category. Parent's engagement of children in Visiting Friends and Family also differed by mothers' education, $p=.086$, with 27% of mothers in the mid-level category reporting Visiting compared with 61% of mothers in the lowest education category, and 50% of the most highly educated mothers. There were no differences in Weekend Parenting Activity by mother's country of origin. Further Weekend Parenting Activities did not differ by child gender.

Summary. In these analyses I examined potential sources of variation in the subsystems of the developmental niches of children from CA immigrant families. It is important to explore patterns between maternal and child characteristics in order to understand the meaning of such variation and implication for children's development. In general, there were few significant associations, and no differences in subsystems by child gender. Mothers' patterns of parenting goals were related only to age at migration, with mothers in Goal Cluster 2 more likely to have migrated prior to adulthood than their counterparts. There were no significant differences in persons present in the household by any of the maternal characteristics or by child gender.

Weekday parenting activities related somewhat to country of origin. Guatemalan mothers were more likely to report that they and/or their partners played with their children, while mothers from Honduras and Nicaragua were less likely to “Go Out” (which included entertainment) on weekdays. Two out of the five weekend parenting activities were related to mothers’ education level. Mothers and/or fathers were more likely to engage their children in Active and Social Play and Visiting if mothers had the lowest level of education (0-6 years) or the highest level (12 years plus), but less likely if mother had mid-level of education (7- 11years). There is an interesting U-shaped pattern here that suggests something other than education per se is accounting for these differences in weekend activities. Nonetheless, it is important to stress that the potential sources of variation predicted relatively little about children’s developmental niches.

Exploring associations between subsystems of children’s developmental niches.

In the next step, I examined potential associations between different subsystems of children’s developmental niches. The theory would suggest that there be some coherence between the types of goals mothers have, the people who are present, and the kind of activities children and parents are engaged in together.

Associations between goal cluster membership and persons present. The first step was to explore whether mothers’ goal cluster membership was related to persons present in the house (see cross tabs in Table 25). Fisher’s exact test was used because expected cell size was less than 5 for all cells. There was an association between Goal Cluster membership and whether one or more siblings lived in the

house ($p=.055$). Children whose mothers were in Goal Cluster 4 were less likely to have siblings (55%) than children whose mothers were in Clusters 1, 2, and 3, respectively 82%, 86% and 100% of whom had siblings in the house. There was also a difference in Goal Clusters in terms of proportions living with one or more nonrelatives ($p=.038$). Half of the children whose mothers were in Goal Cluster 2 lived with one or more nonrelatives, compared with 18% in Goal Cluster 1, 0% in Goal Cluster 3, and 10% in Goal Cluster 4. Finally, there were no unexpected differences between Goal Clusters in terms of whether a father or one or more relatives were present.

Associations between goal cluster membership and parenting activities.

The next inquiry was whether mother's Goal Cluster membership had any bearing on Parenting Activities. There was more disproportionality in parents' Weekday Going Out and Pre-academic activities by Goal cluster membership than would be expected by chance ($p=.026$, $p=.055$, respectively). Proportionally fewer children whose mothers were in Goal Cluster 2 "Went Out" with a parent on weekdays than their peers in Goal Clusters 1, 3, and 4, with a rate of 23% compared with 64%, 75%, and 64%, respectively. In terms of pre-academic activities, mothers in Goal Cluster 3 reported the most involvement at 100%, followed by Goal Cluster 1 at 64%, and by Goal Clusters 2 and 4, at 41% and 27% respectively (see Table 26).

Next I examined potential differences in Weekend Parenting Activities by mothers Goal Cluster membership. Again, a series of Fisher's exact tests were run (see cross tabs in Table 26). There were no statistically significant differences in the proportions of mothers from different Goal Clusters engaging in certain Parenting

Activities than would be expected by chance. If one examines the contingencies for Personal Skills activities and Religious Activities, the proportion of mothers in Goal Cluster 2 engaged in helping children with Personal Skills, and the proportion of these mothers reporting religious activity appeared to differ from the other Goal Clusters. This may have led to a significant result with a more powerful test and with a larger sample.

Associations between persons present and parenting activities. The last analysis of associations within the developmental niche compared persons present with Parenting Activities (see cross tabs in Tables 28 and 29). Having a sibling in the house was associated with less Weekday Parental Play with children ($p=.045$). Fully 82% of mothers with just one child in the house reported Parental Play, but 46% of mothers reported Play when the target child had a sibling. There were no statistically significant differences in weekday activities based on father, relative, or a nonrelative's presence. In terms of weekend activities, the persons present did relate to at least two of the five Parenting Activities. The presence of one or more nonrelatives in the house was associated with play ($p=.034$), with 50% of mothers discussing Parental Play with children when nonrelatives were present versus 18% who did not live with nonrelatives. Relatives in the house also was related to Parental Play ($p=.059$), but in the opposite direction with 41% of mothers who did not live with relatives discussing play with children on the weekend compared with 16% of mothers who did live with relatives. Lastly the presence of a sibling was related to whether or not parents took the target child to visit friends and family ($p=.013$). Specifically, 82% of children without a sibling went Visiting on weekends compared

with 35% of children with siblings. Finally, the presence of the father in the house did not appear to affect the likelihood of the chosen five Parenting Activities taking place on the weekends

Summary. In the examination of links among subsystems of the developmental niche, there were relatively few associations. However, mothers in Goal Cluster 2 were more likely to live with nonrelatives, whereas children whose mothers were in Goal Cluster 4 were less likely to have a sibling in the house. Children whose mothers in Goal Cluster 2 were less likely to “Go Out” with a parent than others, whereas children whose mothers were in Goal Cluster 1 or 3 were more likely to have parents engage them in pre-academics during the week. In turn, the persons present seemed to offer different opportunities for children’s activities. Living with a sibling lowered the likelihood of parental play on weekdays and lowered the likelihood of visiting of friends and family on the weekend. The presence of nonrelatives was associated with Parental Play on weekends, whereas the presence of relatives lowered the likelihood Parental Play. Father presence did not forecast differences in whether any of the ten parenting activities occurred.

Associations between subsystems of the developmental niche and children’s social skills.

The final exploratory question was to examine the implications of variations in children’s developmental niches with their social skills. First, I examined whether mothers with different patterns of goals have children who were rated higher on social cooperation, interaction, and independence. Next, I examined whether the presence of different persons, namely fathers, siblings, relatives, or nonrelatives, was

reflected in group differences on the three social skills subscales. Finally, I explored whether Parenting Activities on weekdays and weekends are associated with children's social skills.

Our sample size of 48 precluded the use of multiple analysis of variance procedures to examine group differences on the multiple social skills outcomes. As stated, this study was exploratory and the goal was to learn some basic things about CA immigrant children's social environments and the implications for different sets of social outcomes. As such, I erred on the liberal side in performing multiple one-way ANOVAS to examine differences by Goal Cluster, as well as a series of t-tests to examine group differences by persons present and by parenting activities.

Association between goal cluster membership and children's social skills.

In comparing the Goal Clusters, there was a large range in group sizes from an 'n' of 4 to an 'n' of 22. Statisticians warn that Type I error rate can be seriously inflated in ANOVA procedures in which sample sizes are unequal, and variances heterogeneous. Further, in the case of teacher report on social cooperation, Levene's test of equality of variances statistic was trending towards significance for mothers' reports of social cooperation (Levene's statistic (3, 43)=1.918, p=.141), and significant for mothers' reports of children's independence (Levene's statistic (3, 43)=2.826, p=.050) and teachers' report of children's social cooperation (Levene's statistic (3, 43) =2.444, p=.073). I therefore used the Welch test which is designed for use when group sizes are unequal (Field, 2009). There were no group differences between Goal Clusters in mothers' reports of children's social cooperation or independence (Welch's F (3, 13.98)=.20, p=.893; Welch's F (3, 12.64)=.59, p=.633).

However, there were differences between Goal Clusters in teacher's reports of children's social cooperation (Welch's $F(3, 11.63) = 5.7530, p = .012$). There was also a trend towards group differences in teachers' reports on children's interaction (Welch's $F(3, 11.60) = 2.28, p = .133$). Teachers' reports on children's independence did not differ by Goal Cluster (Welch's $F(3, 12.08) = 1.02, p = .417$). Follow up tests using Gabriel's pair-wise test procedure (Field, 2009), which was created to deal with the problem of unequal group sizes, revealed that the children of mothers in Goal 1 had higher social cooperation scores than children of mothers in Goal Cluster 2 ($p = .014$), and children of mothers in Goal Cluster 3 ($p = .064$) (See Table 30). Goal Cluster 1 did not differ from Goal Cluster 4, which did not differ from Goal Cluster 2 and 3. The social cooperation scores of children from Goal Clusters 2 and 3, in turn did not differ from each other.

Associations between persons present and children's social skills. The next step was to explore whether children who lived with different Persons Present varied in their social skills. Children whose fathers lived in the house did not differ according to mothers' reports on social skills. However, there was a trend for children with fathers in the household to be rated higher on independence ($t(46) = 1.65, p = .110$) (see Table 31). The presence of siblings or relatives in the household was not linked with differences in children's social skills as rated by mothers or teachers. Children with nonrelatives in the house were rated as less socially cooperative by teachers than their counterparts ($t(46) = 2.05, p = .046$).

Associations between parenting activities and children's social skills. The last set of analyses examined whether the Parenting Activities on weekdays and

weekends were linked with differences in children's social skills. A series of t-tests were run comparing the scores on the social skills subscales for children whose mothers did versus mothers who didn't report that either they or the children's father engaged in a particular activity category (see Table 32 and 32). In some comparisons, Levene's test for equality of variances was significant meaning that the variances in the outcome variable for the two groups were heterogeneous. In these cases, I used the t-statistic from the "equal variances not assumed" test as the significance test.

For Weekday Parenting activities, there were some counterintuitive findings. There were no differences in the social skills by mothers' or teachers' reports for children whose parents engaged Active and Social Play with them as compared to those who parents did not. Mothers who reported Parenting Conversations with the child rated their children higher on independence ($t(45) = 2.26, p = .029$), while these same children were rated lower at social cooperation by their teachers ($t(46) = -1.98, p = .054$). Children whose parents reported "Going Out" did not differ in ratings of social cooperation or independence, however, there was a trend for teachers to rate these children higher on the Interaction subscale ($t(45.79) = 1.60, p = .116$). The group of children whose parents engaged in Media Entertainment with them, were rated lower by their mothers on social cooperation ($t(45) = -2.65, p = .011$). Finally, Parenting activities around pre-academics were linked with lower scores on teachers' reports of social cooperation ($t(38.53) = -1.79, p = .082$), and trended towards lower scores on teachers' reports of independence ($t(46) = -1.60, p = .117$). There were no comparisons in which both mothers and teachers reported group differences based on a Parenting activity.

The exploration of links between Weekend Parenting Activities and children's social skills revealed differences for all but one Parenting Activity. First, mothers who reported Parenting Active and Social Play with children on weekends also rated their children higher on social cooperation and independence ($t(27.566)=1.748$, $p=.092$; $t(45)=1.666$, $p=.103$). Second, children whose parents engaged them in Household Tasks on the weekends had higher social cooperation and independence scores as reported by mothers than their counterparts who did not engage in household tasks ($t(45)=-2.17$, $p=.035$; $t(45)=1.58$, $p=.080$). Interestingly children whose mothers discussed helping them with Personal Skills on the weekend had lower ratings on social cooperation and independence as rated by mothers ($t(45)=-3.92$, $p=.000$; $t(45)=-1.86$, $p=.069$). Teachers also rated these children as lower on social cooperation ($t(46)=-2.48$, $p=.016$). Maternal reports on children's skills did not differ by whether parents engaged children in Religious Activity or Visiting Friends and Family. Teachers rated children whose parents engaged them in Religious Activity as less skilled in social interaction ($t(46)=-1.79$, $p=.080$) than their peers.

Summary. The prediction out to children's social skills from children's experiences in their developmental niches is complicated by the fact that mother' and teachers' reports on the social skills subscales were uncorrelated. The subsystems of Parenting Goals and Persons Present had more frequent associations with teachers' reports of children's social skills, whereas Parenting Activities were related to teachers' and mothers' reports of children social skills. More specifically, children whose mothers were in Goal Cluster 1 manifest greater social cooperation in the classroom than children whose mothers were in the other clusters with the exception

of children in Goal Cluster 4 who had mid level scores. In terms of persons present, children with nonrelatives had lower social cooperation scores according to teachers. Finally, a perplexing finding in terms of Parenting Activities was that parental engagement of children in Weekday Conversation and Weekend Pre-academics predicted lower social cooperation scores according to teachers. There was a trend for children whose parents talked about Weekday “Going Out” to have higher social interaction scores as rated by teachers. Finally, teachers rated children whose parents helped them with personal skills and engaged them in religious activity to have lower social cooperation and interaction scores, respectively. In terms of mothers’ reports, parental engagement in Weekday Media Entertainment with children and Weekend Personal Care routines was linked with lower ratings of children’s social skills. Other parenting activities including Weekday Conversations, Weekend Active and Social play, and weekend Household Tasks were linked with higher scores on social cooperation.

Summary

The results from this mixed-methods study provided rich detail on the developmental niches of young children from CA immigrant families, and some preliminary findings regarding the influence of different subsystems of the developmental niches on children’s social skills. In the qualitative/descriptive portion of the project, six major parenting goal categories emerged from mothers’ interviews including, in order of overall frequency, *bien educado* (literally “well-educated”), *buenas relaciones* (“good relations/ships”), *motivación*, *salir adelante* (“to make it”), *el buen camino* (“the good path”), and *sentir cómodo* (“to be comfortable/at ease”).

The goal of *bien educado*, which referred to children being well-behaved/obedient, respectful, helpful, and moral, was the most salient and consistent long-term goals and short-term goal. *Buenas relaciones*, which referred to children developing social/friendly traits, and having good relationships was a frequently mentioned long-term goal but also the subject of mothers' short-term goals for children at home and at school. When talking about their long-term goals for their children and goals for school mothers emphasized *salir adelante*, or "making it" academically and professionally and *motivación* (e.g., being motivated, studying, participating).

In terms of the physical and social settings of children's daily lives, the children in this sample predominantly lived in overcrowded conditions, and most lived in apartment buildings. Most children lived with fathers, and about ½ of children lived with relatives and ¼ with nonrelatives. Children of single mothers were more likely to live with more people including nonrelatives.

The available activities to children from CA immigrant children included activities related to personal care, mealtimes, media entertainment, household tasks, conversations, "going out", active and social play, and pre-academics. Religious activity and visiting friends, as well as "going out" were frequent activities that children participated in on the weekends. In this study parenting activities were defined as the activities that mothers reported that they or children's fathers engaged in with the child. Common weekday parenting activities then included personal care, and mealtimes for almost all participants. About half of parents engaged in active and social play and conversations and household tasks with their children. Less than half of parents engaged their children in pre-academic activities and going out, and a

minority of parents engaged in media entertainment, religious activity and visiting other people on weekdays. Mothers discussed fewer activities for their children on weekends, and even fewer parenting activities. However the common activities for children of “going out”, visiting friends and family, and religious activities almost always involved parental participation. Weekend activities were typically described as fun, relaxing, and social times, particularly when fathers were able to participate.

In the quantitative portion of this study, I sought to understand sources of variation within CA immigrant children’s developmental niches and potential connections between that variation and children’s social skills (namely their social cooperation, positive social interaction, and independence). One way to characterize the subsystem of parenting goals was to investigate patterns amongst mothers in the types of goals that they emphasized. Through cluster analysis, I found that based on the four most frequently mentioned goals, mothers could be categorized into four goal clusters. In order to characterize the persons present and available activities I coded for the presence of fathers, siblings relatives, and nonrelatives in the household. Finally, for each activity category that emerged from the interview, I coded whether or not the mother discussed parental involvement (of mother or father) in said activity. I chose to examine variation in a subset of the 20 parenting activities with medium-level frequencies. With these quantitative transformations in mind, I turn to the results of the exploratory analysis.

The first set of exploratory analyses involved the relation between maternal and child characteristics and subsystems of the developmental niche. This question was complicated by the fact that age at migration and maternal education level were

confounded, and there was a trend towards differences between mothers' country of origin and education level. Setting alpha levels at .10, I found just one difference between Goal Clusters: namely mothers in Goal Cluster 2 and Goal Cluster 3 were more likely to have migrated to the US prior to adulthood than mothers in the other clusters. There were no statistically significant associations between maternal characteristics and the persons present. There were two differences in weekday activities by country of origin: Guatemalan mothers were more likely to play with their children and mothers from Honduras and Nicaragua were less likely to engage in "Going Out". In terms of weekend parenting activities, an interesting finding was that mothers in the lowest education- and the highest- education level were more likely to engage in active and social play and more likely to visit friends and family than those in the mid level education group (7-11 yrs). There were no differences by child gender in mothers' goal cluster membership or parenting activities.

Having examined the relationship between maternal characteristics and child gender and the subsystems of the developmental niche, the next step was to find possible associations between subsystems of the niche. First, mothers' goal membership was linked with the persons present- children of mothers in Goal Cluster 2 group were more likely to live with nonrelatives, whereas children of mothers in Goal Cluster 4 were less likely to have siblings in the house. There were few differences between goal clusters and parenting activities. However, mothers in Goal Cluster 2 appeared less likely than other groups to "Go Out" on weekdays, and Goal Cluster 3 and Goal Clusters 1 were more likely to be involved in pre-academic parenting activities than other goal clusters. Finally, the persons present were

associated with differences in parenting activities. In particular, children who had siblings were less likely to experience parental active and social play and to visit family and friends on the weekend. Furthermore, the presence of nonrelatives was linked with more parental play on weekends, whereas the presence of relatives was linked with a lower likelihood of play.

In the final question examining links between the subsystems and children's different social skills, variation in goal cluster membership and persons present was linked with teacher's and not mother's report of children's social skills. Children whose mothers were in Goal Cluster 1 were rated highest on social cooperation by teachers. Children in Goal Cluster 4 mothers had mid-level social cooperation. In terms of persons present, living with nonrelatives was associated with lower social cooperation in the classroom. Finally, a few parenting activities were linked with social skills. Teachers tended to assess children as having lower social skills when parents engaged in some of the more interactive activities such as Weekday Conversation, Weekday Pre-academics, and Weekend Religious Activity. However different parenting activities, such as Weekday Conversation, Weekend Active and Social Play, and Weekend Household Tasks were associated with mothers' higher ratings on social skills.

The quantitative findings, or second half of this study, correspond in many ways with the qualitative themes. The parenting goals reflected highly salient ideas about valued characteristics and behaviors for children and for the most part, there was great commonality in the types of goals that this group of mothers discussed. In terms of persons present, CA immigrant mothers did not speak much of members of

the household, but descriptions of the presence of nonrelatives made this arrangement seem far from ideal for families. In the daily activity interviews, mothers focused on certain activities such as conversations, household tasks, “going out”, mealtimes and personal care activities (completed independently by children). It seemed from the interviews that these activities were important for bonding, and teaching. But akin to parenting goals, the types of activities and parenting activities discussed were rather homogenous. In trying to explore variation in these different subsystems of children’s developmental niches, many of the findings were consistent with the qualitative data such as the links between certain parenting activities and mothers’ reports of social cooperation, and links between presence of a nonrelative in the house and less child social cooperation. Many explorations resulted in no differences in child outcomes, or no links between different subsystems of children’s developmental niches. This could reflect the relative homogeneity in this sample. Finally, in some cases parenting activities that seemed “positive” from mothers’ interviews (e.g., conversation, pre-academics, and religious activity) predicted poorer social skills as rated by teachers. As such these methods complimented each other, and the discrepancies highlight areas for future study. This disconnect might reflect the fact that the salience and meaning of mothers’ described activities and the types of interactions within them, differ from the types of activities and interactions expected at school.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this mixed-methods study, I explored the social environments of young children from low-income Central American (CA) immigrant families. Children from CA American families represent the second largest group of children of Latino immigrants (Hernandez et al., 2007), and their experiences may be distinct from children of Mexican- and Puerto Rican-heritage, who have received more attention in the literature (Harwood et al., 2002). Using the framework of the developmental niche, I explored the parenting goals, and the persons and activities that CA immigrant mothers make available to their young children. This study is the first to link the varying social experiences of children from CA families with their development of social skills (e.g., social cooperation, social interaction, and independence) which are considered essential aspects of school readiness (Galindo & Fuller, 2010). In the discussion that follows, I first provide a summary of the findings. Next, I will consider key findings in the context of the literature on children from Latino immigrant families writ large. Further, I focus on measurement issues - reflecting on the relationship between qualitative and quantitative findings of this study, as well as the validity of survey measures for this study. I follow this with an exploration of the limitations of this study. Finally, I discuss implications of this study for future research with immigrant families and implications for policy/practice.

Summary of Findings

This mixed-methods study began with an analysis of themes in CA immigrant mothers' descriptions of their parenting goals, the persons present and activities in

children's daily lives. Mothers' long- and short- term parenting goals could be categorized into six major categories including *bien educado* ("well-raised"), *buenas relaciones* ("good relations/ships"), *salir adelante* ("to get ahead") and *motivación, el buen camino, and sentir cómodo*. Children tended to live in two-parent households, with a variety of other persons present such as siblings, relatives, and unrelated adults. The activities available to children involved personal care, mealtimes, active and social play, media entertainment, conversations, household tasks, pre-academics, "going out", religious activity and visiting friends and family. Of these activities, parents (mothers and/or fathers) most often engaged children in personal care, mealtimes, conversations, household tasks, "going out", religious activity and visiting friends and family. The majority of the time children engaged in the other activities by themselves, or with siblings or cousins. Across activities, mothers emphasized the importance of family time, of being outside, and of children development of independent skills (e.g., dressing), and early senses of responsibility.

In the second part of the study I examined sources of variation in the subsystems (e.g. parenting goals, persons present, and parenting activities) of children's developmental niches. Then I explored connections between the subsystems of developmental niches, and lastly examined how variation in the subsystems was associated with children's social skills. In terms of sources of differences in parenting goals, persons present, and parenting activities, there were few differences by maternal demographic characteristics and no differences by child gender. Mothers' age at migration appeared to differentiate between her Goal Cluster membership, whereas mothers' countries of origin differentiated between the

occurrence of two out of five weekday parenting activities (e.g., play and “going out”), and education level differentiated between weekend activities (e.g., play and visiting). When examining how different experiences within the niche co-occurred, two Goal Clusters differed from others in terms of persons present (e.g., nonrelatives, siblings) and there were differences in two activities (“going out” and pre-academics) by Goal Cluster. The persons present were linked with differences in just two parenting activities. Specifically the presence of a nonrelative in the household was related to parental active and social play with children, whereas the presence of relatives predicted less play and the presence of sibling predicting lower likelihood of visiting on weekends. In the final goal of looking at the implication of variation in environments for children’s different social skills, there were differences in children’s social cooperation by Goal Clusters. For persons present, children living with nonrelatives were rated lower on social cooperation. In terms of activities, parents’ reports of engagement in parenting activities had either no relation to child outcomes or a negative one as rated by teachers. On the other hand, three parenting activities (conversation active and social play, and household tasks) were linked with higher social skills for CA children. However, when mothers discussed parental involvement with two more supervisory activities (media entertainment and help personal skills), they rated children as less socially-skilled. I discuss these findings in turn.

The qualitative and quantitative methods used in this paper yielded different sorts of information regarding the developmental niches of young children from CA immigrant families. The themes from mothers’ interviews paint a rich picture of the long- and short-term goals that mothers have for their children, the types of people in

children's lives and lastly details regarding common, discrete activities that children experience, and ways in which CA immigrant parents are involved. In the exploratory section of this study, in which I attempted to use the broader categories to quantify children's experiences in their developmental niches and explore sources of variation and possible implications of these experiences for child development, the results were complex. In particular, the relation between information that CA immigrant mothers provided about their children's early social experiences and children's development of an array of social skills proved to be less straightforward, and sometimes counterintuitive to inferences one might have made from the qualitative data. In this discussion, I begin by examining the contribution of the qualitative findings to our understanding of CA immigrant children and their families, and the overlap between these findings and the literature on Latino parenting writ large. In the second part, I consider the quantitative findings in light of the very limited research on CA immigrant families and surprisingly sparse literature on the early social experiences of children from Latino families more generally.

Describing and Defining the Developmental Niches of CA Children

Parenting goals.

In this study mothers emphasized the importance of *bien educado* not only in the context of children's development into adulthood but also in the two immediate settings of their lives, namely at home and at school. This goal of *bien educado* has been reported in so many interview-types studies of Mexican immigrants (Delgado & Ford, 1998; Reese et al., 2005) and Puerto Rican mothers (Harwood et al., 2002) that it has been described as a fundamental aspect of "Latino" parenting (Fuller & Garcia

Coll, 2010). Aside from identifying *bien educado* as salient, it became clear that there were substantial differences amongst mothers in the way they defined *bien educado* - some mothers focused solely on obedience and good behavior, both of which imply a modicum of self-control. Other mothers emphasized that a person of *bien educado* is kind and generous, and treats all people with respect (not discriminating or showing preference towards certain people). These characteristics paint the child or future adult as being proactive rather than simply being compliant. For example, as one mother pointed out, being too quiet or excessively shy (perhaps a desirable quality for a child if the mother is interested primarily in obedience) can actually hinder one from actively displaying respect and one's good character. Two sets of researchers, Arcia and Johnson (1998) and more recently Calzada, Fernandez and Cortes (2010), found that another large concept that I have subsumed under *bien educado*, namely *respeto*, has different connotations for expectations for children's behavior depending on the mother. Here there was also this difference between what I am calling "passive" and "active" *respeto*. It is important to emphasize the variation in meaning of *bien educado*, including the connotations of being kind and helpful.

In this study, two other goals were mentioned quite frequently, namely *buenas relaciones* and *motivación*. *Buenas relaciones* - meaning being sociable, affectionate/caring, and having positive familial and other relationships - was a salient parenting goal for the long-term and short-term. The value of *familismo*, or family connectedness and obligation, has been consistently identified with Latino immigrant families (Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010; Harwood et al. 2002). In this study, mothers did emphasize the importance that siblings "get along", and some mothers spoke

specifically about long-term “family unity”. However, *buenas relaciones* was not a family-specific goal, namely, being a friendly/chatty person, in general, made up the variety of responses in this category. Another category of goals that was fairly salient for the long-term and for short-term was *motivación*. In some early studies, with Mexican immigrant parents of school-age children, motivation (Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993) and responsibility (Buriel, 1993) were defining features of children’s intelligence, and a central goal of parenting, respectively. Although *motivación* is an important goal, research has suggested that Latino immigrant families have later expectations for when children are able to take on responsibilities such participating in household tasks and planning/structuring their own time (Halgunseth, et al., 2006; Savage & Gauvain, 1998). It is interesting to note that in this Central American sample, many mothers are already encouraging children’s development of motivation /responsibility.

Finally, the three other goals that were mentioned in mothers’ interviews, namely *salir adelante*, *el buen camino*, and *sentir cómodo*, have been noted in other studies with Latino immigrants. Leyendecker and colleagues (2002) found that low-income CA immigrant mothers stressed children’s future economic independence as much as EA mothers in their sample. Educational and financial successes were rated as very important goals among Mexican American mothers in Suizzo’s (2007) study. However, in both these studies, other forms of “self maximization” (Harwood, 1992) such as happiness, psychological wellbeing, and self-esteem were rarely mentioned; this was in stark contrast to the EA parents in both samples. Similarly, in this study, a very low percentage (6%) of mothers’ responses referred to aspects of children’s

psychological wellbeing. Moreover, responses related to *sentir cómodo*, the category of goals most like psychological wellbeing in this study, were often social in nature. The most common goals were for the children to not feel shy/ uncomfortable around others, and to feel supported from parents. Finally, *el buen camino*, has been mentioned in studies with Mexican immigrant parents of school-age children. In one study, Mexican mothers explained how children stray from the good path - and it was principally through exposure to a negative peer group (Cooper, Brown, Azmitia, & Chavira, 2005). In the current study, CA immigrant mothers of preschoolers are already concerned about the dangers of adolescence, and some discussed how they hoped their efforts now would help children stay on the good path later.

In the introduction to this study, I discussed potential hypotheses about CA immigrant mothers' parenting goals based on the cross-cultural tradition of framing cultures as having interdependent versus independent orientations. In particular, it was noted that individuals growing up in recently-developed countries, might emphasize "relatedness" goals to a greater extent than individuals growing up in the US or other information societies, who in turn might place stronger emphasis on goals related to autonomy (Kagitcibasi, 2005). The goals that mothers provided in some ways resembled both orientations. For example *salir adelante* relates to the child's ability as an adult to succeed independently. On the other hand *bien educado* and *buenas relaciones* are more akin to relatedness goals. But for the purposes of this study, namely to understand CA children's early social environments, it is more meaningful to focus on the six, nuanced categories of goals that emerged from

mothers' interviews, than to reduce our exploration of these goals to just two dimensions of relatedness and autonomy.

Persons present.

In this study, a relatively high rate of children were living with fathers, which is consistent with national trends regarding children from CA immigrant families (Urban Institute, 2012). Many children also lived with extended family, which is consistent with studies of Mexican-heritage children who attend Head Start (Howes, Guerra, & Zucker, 2008). However, Maryland state data suggest that higher proportions of children of CA immigrants live with two or more related adults, as compared to children of Mexican immigrants (approximately 82%; Urban Institute, 2012). Also in terms of persons present, we found here, consistent with Census data, that children from Latino immigrant families, in this case specifically CA families, live in overcrowded settings (Hernandez et al., 2008).

Finally, although not a main question of the study, aspects of the physical setting such as apartment living versus living in homes with yards, the availability of public outdoor activities, the availability of public indoor spaces, neighborhood safety and weather conditions, were fundamental aspects of the physical and social setting that mothers identified as affecting the types of activities and interactions that could take place. At least one mother spoke of the difference that urban apartment living had on her rules for her son. Other mothers lamented that children could not so easily play outside as they could in their home countries due to danger in their current neighborhoods. Also nearly every mother in the study discussed the cold weather during wintertime, and how this prevented them from going outside. These

combination of conditions meant that children spent most of their time indoors, under already crowded conditions.

Activities and parenting activities.

Personal Care. In this sample, all of the children practiced dressing and personal hygiene, and were establishing bedtime routines. Mothers indicated much parental engagement of children in these routines on weekdays, but this was discussed less on weekends. A theme that did stand out in a lot of these interviews was the desire for children to be more independent in these areas. Much of the literature on these early routines has described Latinas as encouraging children's dependence through parenting practices such as physically doing things for children, restricting children's movement, and co-sleeping (Harwood et al. 1996; Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2008). However, these studies have been mostly of mothers with infants and toddlers. Delgado and Ford (1998) found in their qualitative study of Mexican immigrant parents' views of child development, that learning to care for one's person was one of the first major developmental tasks in life. This could explain why mothers tended to emphasize that children were learning personal care skills or could do these tasks independently.

Mealtimes. The cultural importance of food and family meals has been a theme in research with Latino immigrant populations (Fiese et al. 2002; Tubbs et al. 2002), and it was expressed in this sample. Mothers ensured that their children ate breakfasts. However, as noted, some mothers' concern that their children were under-eating resulted in their children eating two breakfasts. Likewise, mothers allowed their children to choose meals which admittedly were less healthy, in order that the

children eat and not waste food. Further, mothers reported giving their children treats and/or going out to eat at the mall or fast food restaurants. These practices, which may place children at risk for obesity have been reported elsewhere (Kaufman & Karpati, 2007), but must be considered within context. In ethnographic work, Central American immigrant mothers have explained that the provision of generous portions of food to children reflects “good parenting” in traditional Latino culture and that “chubby” children are believed to be healthy (Sussner, Lindsay, Greaney, & Peterson, 2008). Further, Latina immigrants have described how lack of financial resources and neighborhood grocery stores makes it difficult to cook the healthier, fresh, traditional meals of their country of origin (Sussner et al. 2008). Finally, low-income mothers, in general, have described how providing treats is one thing they can do to have special bonding time with children (Tubbs et al. 2002).

More formal family mealtimes were highly relevant events for many of the mothers in this sample, although plenty of families were not consistently able to eat together. Hofferth and Sandberg (2001) reported that Hispanic children spend more time in family meals than other ethnic groups, net of sociodemographic differences. The mothers in the current study who discussed family mealtimes tended to describe this as a relaxed time to be together, and some also spoke of the joy it brought the focal children to eat with their fathers or other members of the family. Hence, the ability to share family meals appears to be a cultural ideal for this sample.

Active and Social Play. All children in our sample engaged in play and from parents’ reports, free play took up the majority of children’s waking time outside of school. This is consistent with national studies of children of all ethnicities

(Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001), as well as studies with low-income Mexican immigrants (Howes, Guerra, & Zucker, 2008; Livas-Dlott, Fuller, Stein, Bridges, Figueroa, & Mireles, 2010). The types of play articulated by mothers tended to be ballgames, and play with toys such as cars and dolls, but very rarely pretend social play.

From a mainstream developmental science view, make-believe or complex social play is typically understood to provide the most benefits for children's social development (Howes, et al. 2008). White middle class mothers tend to view play as a mechanism for the development of social and cognitive competencies, and will readily engage their children in play. As many have pointed out, these ideas about the benefits of social play have been drawn from research mainly with Middle-class European-American samples (Rogoff, 2003). In past research with Mexican-immigrant mothers and Guatemalan mothers, respectively, play was seen primarily as serving children's entertainment and emotional needs (Holloway, Rambaud, Fuller, Eggers-Pierola, 1995; Howes et al. 2008; Rogoff, 2003). Further, mothers have not served as play partners for their children, as this has been in the realm of siblings and peers. In this study, CA mothers echoed these ideas about play as principally serving children's entertainment needs but a few mothers also stressed that peer play helped children learn to get along with others.

Conversations. Another key finding was parents' explicit mention of having conversations with their children on a daily basis. This is noteworthy given extant data suggesting Latino children experience relatively little verbal engagement in the home (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Howes, et al. 2008) and that Latino

immigrant mothers tend not to consider their children as conversation partners (Rogoff, 2003). Although mothers were not asked for the motivations behind conversations and chatting, they did oftentimes talk about the content. In particular, conversations were often about school and how children had behaved. Also some mothers mentioned that their children “chatted” with other adults or older relatives about how their days went. In the interviews regarding mothers’ socialization goals, mothers often spoke directly about advice that they give to their children particularly advice concerning behavior at school. Some mothers also stated that they dedicate their time to children through chatting. There is a growing literature on Latino immigrant parents’ use of *consejos* (or advices), and *dichos* (oral storytelling) to guide children’s behavior and reinforce parental values (Cervantes, 2002; Delgado & Ford, 1998; Livas-Dlott et al. 2010) suggesting that this activity may be a childrearing norm among Latino immigrant parents. Interestingly, although overall verbal stimulation was lower in Hispanic families of kindergarteners from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort, Hispanic families did report more conversations at dinnertime and religious conversation than White or Asian families (Suizzo & Stapleton, 2007). Hence, chatting and conversations may provide a direct medium for CA immigrant parents to impart messages about socially desirable behavior.

Household tasks. Participation with mothers in household tasks was a common experience for half of our sample. Given their young age, actual contributions to the household were minimal. Mothers discussed a few different reasons for children’s participation which included: allowing children to be with

mothers and mothers to also get needed work done; enabling children to develop a sense of confidence in helping the family; and fostering a sense of responsibility when mothers assigned children small chores (e.g., taking plates to sink).

Researchers have found that Latino children spend more time helping in the household than other groups (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001). However, researchers have also suggested that Latino children typically are not expected to do chores until age 6 or 7 (Savage & Gauvain, 1998). In fact many mothers in this study made it clear that children's participation was not necessarily helpful for the family - children made a mess of the dough, dishes had to be washed again, and children's presence in the "dangerous" kitchen made mothers nervous. As such, participation in the household activities amongst preschoolers probably does not carry the meaning that "chores" do for older children.

Rogoff (2003) suggests it is common, in cultures where children are in proximity to parents and adults while they are working, for children to observe adult activities, over time to play alongside adults as they enact the adults' work, and then gradually to take over adults' work as they are able. Here again aspects of the physical setting, such as having to be inside and residing in crowded conditions, may hasten children's actual involvement in tasks as compared with their home countries. Parents who let their children participate in such tasks early may be making an effort to bond with their children, keep their children engaged, and provide opportunities for them to feel confident and independent.

Pre-academics. In this sample, nearly all children engaged in preschool-type activities such as coloring, practicing letters, doing homework, and writing during

weekday evenings. Parents were involved about half of the time - most usually coloring or cutting with scissors or checking children's homework. Like parents' engagement in play, their engagement in pre-academics was oftentimes elicited by children's requests (e.g., request for mother to read a book). A few mothers spoke about weaving pre-academic material into activities like cooking. Other times, parents' involvement in pre-academic activities would entail the provision of worksheets for children to practice writing letters over and over. This rote practice was observed by Reese and Gallimore (2000) in their study of Latino immigrant parents' literacy practices. They found that these activities fit parents' own experiences with learning to read in their home countries.

Very few mothers discussed the types of language and literacy activities that have been associated with readiness in school (e.g., reading, singing, telling stories). This is unfortunately consistent with research suggesting that Latino parents, even after controlling for often lower SES circumstances, engage children in fewer language and literacy activities in early childhood (Barrueco, Lopez, & Miles, 2007; Bradley et al. 2001; Suizzo & Stapleton, 2007). This is also consistent with ethnographic studies in which Latino immigrant parents describe their role as helping to prepare children socially for school through *educación* (Delgado & Ford, 1998; Reese et al. 1995).

Media Entertainment. The findings that almost all of the children in this study watched television daily is perhaps unsurprising; this proportion is also slightly higher than rates reported in studies with Latino families (70% at 4-7 times per week: MacArthur, Anguiano, & Gross, 2004). Television had entertainment value for

children and was an activity children could do alone, while playing, or when mothers were busy. Some mothers also discussed watching television with children, or together as a family. In studies with low-income mothers, watching television emerged as an important medium for family time (Tubbs, Burton, & Roy, 2005). Television has also emerged as a “babysitter” for young Hispanic children (MacArthur, Anguiano, & Gross, 2004). Further, in a study of low-income families of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, the amount of entertainment (rather than educational) television that children watched was negatively related to parental provision of stimulation and learning activities in the home, suggesting in part that children who watch a lot of entertainment television have fewer alternative activities (Huston, Wright, Marquis, Green, 1999). In addition, time spent watching television predicts fewer hours of sleep for young children (Adam, Snell, & Pendry, 2007). Further, a few mothers admitted that they watched *telenovellas* (or soap operas) and indicated that they believed this material was less than ideal for their children.

Going Out. In this study the family routine of “going out” emerged as highly frequent and salient on weekends, and for some families, a common occurrence during the week. The routine of going out involved the whole family, and usually included either time at the mall or at the park, both of which were in walking distance. It is interesting that national studies show that Latino families in general participate in fewer out-of-home activities (Suizzo & Stapleton, 2007) and spend less time outdoors (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001). However, Bradley (2001) found that low-income Hispanic fathers were more likely to engage children in outdoor activity than low-income fathers of other ethnicities. In the current study, mothers mentioned

environmental constraints (such as cold weather) as precluding the ability to go to the park, but mothers also mentioned they could go to the mall. Although not a question in this study, financial hardship, language barriers, undocumented status, and lack of transportation are issues that potentially affect whether and where families “go out”. In a study on physical activity with Latinas, mothers mentioned weather, neighborhood danger, and time constraints as limiting their outdoor physical activity (Lindsay, Sussner, Greaney, & Peterson, 2009). In the former study and current study, mothers identified indoor play parks (e.g., Chuckie Cheese) as an alternative to outdoor activities in the bad weather.

Religious activity. In this study, a little less than half of the mothers described church as a regular weekend activity for their children. This corresponds with national data in which 44% of Latino adults reported attending church every week (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). In general, Latinos in the US are thought to have higher levels of religiosity (beliefs, behaviors) than European-Americans (Yancey, 2006). About 68% of Latinos in the US identify as Catholic (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007), and in our small sample the majority of families who mentioned religion identified as Catholic. However, a small contingent was Evangelical and was fervently religious in terms of their goals for their children and the amount of activity dedicated to religion. In the US, 15% of Hispanic families are Evangelical and this number is expected to rise as it becomes more popular with US born families (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). Religiosity is generally stronger among Evangelical families (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007; Yancey, 2005) and the church is likely a strong source of support for these families.

Visiting friends and family. Regular family time may be particularly important in Latino families given that *familism* tends to be such a strong value (e.g., Fiese et al., 2002; Harwood et al., 2002). In fact, low-income Mexican American fathers' ratings on the importance of family rituals predict greater involvement with their children (Coltrane, Parke, & Adams, 2004). Indeed, Central American and Mexican American children spend more time in the presence of mother and father (Leyendecker et al., 1995), and with a larger network of family and friends than their European counterparts (Gamble & Dalla, 1997). In studies of Latinas' parenting strategies, mothers have highlighted the role of the larger family in helping to socialize children in the broad sense, as well as to help children learn and retain cultural values (Guilamo-Ramos, Dittus, Jaccord, Johansson, Bouris, & Acosta, 2007). Thinking more of the parents, family visits may reflect parents' own wellbeing, their commitment to family values, and also access to social support. On the other hand, some parents may not have family networks to enjoy on weekends. Hence, like many of the activities discussed in this paper, the importance for the child's social development may depend on the family context.

In sum, specific themes emerged throughout the discussion of children's activities as important for the organization of CA children's lives. Specifically, parents emphasized children's development of independent living skills, parents' concerted efforts to socialize with children through conversation and housework, along with a lack of parental structuring of children's play activities. On the weekends, "going out", finding activities to entertain children, and being together as a family were common themes.

Exploring Variation in the Developmental Niches of Children from CA

Immigrant Families

In the second part of the study, I converted the themes concerning subsystems of children's developmental niches into quantitative variables for analysis. Mothers' parenting goals, as one aspect of the subsystem *psychology of the caregiver* were quantified by frequency, and then by clustering mothers into groups based on their patterns of emphases on the four most frequently mentioned goals. For the subsystem physical and social setting, I used dummy variables for four types of persons present (e.g. father, relative, nonrelative, and sibling). For the subsystem *customs of childrearing*, I chose 10 of the activity categories in which a sizeable amount of mothers reported parental involvement. These activities include weekday active and social play, weekday conversations, weekday media entertainment, weekday pre-academic activities, weekday "going out", weekend active and social play, weekend household tasks, weekend personal care, weekend religious activity, and weekend visiting friends and family. With this background I discuss the findings concerning variation in children's developmental niches, including sources of variation, associations between the subsystems of children's developmental niches, and associations between the subsystems and children's social skills.

Exploring sources of variation in the subsystems of children's developmental niches.

Attempts to understand the role of the mothers' country of origin culture, education level, and extent of socialization in home country on parenting goals,

persons present, and available activities were complicated given the interrelatedness of maternal characteristics. It is intriguing that the country of origin, education, and adolescent migrant variables did not seem to have consistent associations with goals, persons present, and activities available. One of the ideas behind the examination of migration age is that those who migrate as adults may be more socialized to parenting goals and norms for childrearing from their countries or origin, whereas adolescents may receive socialization from countries of origin and host country. It is interesting then that the Goal Cluster 2 combines the goal that might be considered most “American”, namely *salir adelante* with the CA emphasis on *bien educado*. The finding that Guatemalan mothers were more likely to play with their children than other mothers was interesting, yet it is hard to interpret because of confounds. Perhaps some degree of play fits with previous norms for childrearing or perhaps Guatemalan mothers somehow adopt this norm more easily; again, this could be confounded with an emerging trend in this study for Guatemalan mothers to have been more likely to migrate prior to adulthood, and for Guatemalan mothers to be overrepresented in the lower education groups. I also found that the mothers with the lowest level of education and highest level of education were playing and visiting family with their children more than the mothers in the mid-education range. This may fit with the weekday patterns of Guatemalan mothers playing more with their children. In terms of mothers with the highest education, they may be more exposed to ideas that interactions promote better development.

This study is one of many studies with Latino families to find that education is not a consistent predictor of parenting goals (Reese et al., 1995; Suizzo & Stapleton,

2007) or parenting activities (Machida, Taylor, & Kim, 2002). The complication in this and any study with Latino immigrants is that the quality of the education may be highly variable both within and across Latin countries of origin such that education in years is a “soft” variable (Okagaki, & Stern, 1993). Feliciano (2006) has suggested that one must consider the selectivity of immigrants, and consider how parents’ education fits within the overall socioeconomic status of their countries. At the time of Feliciano’s study, the average educational status of Guatemalan and Honduran immigrants was around average for those countries, while Salvadoran immigrants had lower education levels and Nicaraguan immigrants had higher education level than the average individual in their respective countries. It is possible then that any effect of education is moderated by mothers’ country of origin, and this could explain why education level was not a consistent predictor.

The fact that there are differences in parenting activities by country of origin in this study is consistent with evidence demonstrating that parents from different countries of origin show differences in parenting behaviors. In fact, Figueroa-Moseley and colleagues (2006), and Schmitz (2005) found differences in parenting behaviors and the home environments of Salvadoran, Mexican, and Dominican families, and Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican families, respectively, after controlling for sociodemographic differences. The explanations for differences in Schmitz’s study included differences by country in terms of who selects to migrate, socioeconomic conditions in the sending country, and settlement experiences. In this study, unfortunately, I was not able to control for the demographic confounds, so the country of origin results are tenuous. Nonetheless, in this study, Guatemalan mothers

engaged in more play with children on weekdays, and Honduran and Nicaraguan mothers were less likely to engage in “Going Out” than the other groups.

Surprisingly, child gender was unrelated to mothers’ parenting Goal Cluster or parenting activities. There are few studies of Latino immigrant parents’ goals that have examined gender differences. Additionally, there is little research on differences in parenting activities in which Latino immigrant parents engage with sons versus daughters. There is evidence that Latino immigrant parents practice more protective parenting with adolescent females than males (Domenech Rodriguez, Donovan, & Crowley, 2009; Savage & Gauvain, 1998). However, in observational tasks of parent-child interactions with younger children, no gender differences have been reported (Howes & Obregon, 2009; Vargas & Busch-Rossnagel, 2003). From the current qualitative analyses, mothers’ responses at the goal code level, rather than category level, may have differed by children’s gender (e.g., greater emphasis on positive romantic relationships for daughters). Further, if I had examined individual activity codes, there might have been gender differences particularly with regards to types of play (active versus social). Overall, there did not appear to be major differences in the activities that parents were making available to sons versus daughters.

Exploring associations between the subsystems of children’s developmental niches.

Parenting goal clusters and persons present. The framework of the developmental niche suggests that parenting goals may affect and be affected by physical and social settings. Mothers in Goal Cluster 2, who were more likely to live with nonrelatives and more likely to have migrated before adulthood, had a lower

emphasis on *buenas relaciones* than Goal Cluster 1 and Goal Cluster 4 but also the second highest emphasis on *salir adelante*. The finding that children whose mothers were in Goal Cluster 4 were less likely to have other siblings might indicate that these parents have had less exposure to the American school system. In fact, the mothers in Goal Cluster 4 have a combination of goals that are diverse but reflect common Latino values in the literature. A post hoc investigation showed a nonsignificant trend for differences by goal cluster by years in the US, and that mothers in Goal Cluster 4 had a lower average number of years in the US than the other goal clusters.

Parenting goal clusters and parenting activities. Given theoretical links between parenting goals and parenting activities, I found surprisingly few differences between mothers' goal cluster membership and the parenting activities that they reported. However, Goal Cluster 1 and Goal Cluster 3 were more likely to engage their children in pre-academic activities during the week than the other clusters. Given Goal Cluster 1's emphasis on children's achievement, it makes sense that these mothers or their partners would engage in pre-academics with their children at home. With the high emphasis on *bien educado*, perhaps mothers in Goal Cluster 3 engage in pre-academic activities, such as completing homework, because this is an aspect of being well-behaved in school. An alternative explanation is that mothers in Goal Cluster 3 may stress the goal of good behavior so much because their children have behavioral challenges. In this case, this group of mothers might involve themselves with children's pre-academics to ensure that their children do follow directions and complete the task. There is no clear reason for why combination of goals in Goal Cluster 2 would result in less "Going Out" during weekdays. I suspect this overlaps

with the finding that children who live in the presence of nonrelatives are less likely to “Go Out”, and that Goal Cluster 2 mothers are more likely to live with nonrelatives. Perhaps the family conditions involved in living with nonrelatives makes “going out” more difficult for mothers. A post hoc idea that these mothers may be more likely to be unemployed was not supported.

Persons present and parenting activities. In this study, the presence of siblings, relatives, and/or nonrelatives (but not fathers) was associated with whether or not certain activities took place. In the mainstream developmental literature, birth order has forecasted different amounts and types of parental involvement with children principally in that firstborn children receive more individual attention and more protective parenting than later born siblings, and that parents generally have more resources when they have fewer children (Dunn, 2008). In my study, when children had siblings, they were less likely to experience Parental Play during the week and Visits to Family and Friends on the weekends. An obvious explanation is that children who have brothers or sisters will play with their siblings on the weekdays and weekends, but parents of only-children may make more efforts to “make up” for their children not having peers by playing with their children or arranging for their children to play with cousins and peers on the weekends. The presence of relatives also forecasted less play. This may reflect the fact that many of the relatives have their own children, cousins to the children in this study, who serve as play partners. Finally, the presence of an unrelated adult was linked with more parental play. Anecdotes from this study suggest that the need to keep things clean for renters, and the need to share or even take turns with space, restrained the ebb and

flow of activity that mothers described in other contexts. Perhaps like the children with no siblings, parents who live with unrelated adults are making up for the living environment by engaging in intensive play interactions when space is available.

Exploring associations between subsystems of children's developmental niches and children's social skills.

The framework of the developmental niche posits that the combination and interaction of parenting goals, persons present and available activities, and parenting behaviors in concert with children's own characteristics organize the environment in ways that sends messages about valued skills within that culture/context. As children's proximal environments, or developmental niches, expand to the school setting, this may bring upon activities and teacher's goals which may be more or less complimentary with systems at home. It should be noted at the outset that mother and teachers' reports on children's social cooperation and children's independence were uncorrelated. Moreover, the significance and direction of associations between children's developmental niches and children's social skills differed by subsystem and oftentimes differed by mothers' and teachers' reports. With this caveat, I discuss these findings in greater detail, and pose some explanations.

Parenting goals and children's social skills. This is the first known study with Central American immigrant families, and one of only a handful of studies with Latino immigrants to consider the associations between parenting goals and children's social skills (Gamble & Modry-Mandell, 2008; Gudiño & Lau, 2010; Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993). Further, the person-centered approach allowed for the examination of how mothers who share similar emphases across multiple goals might

have children with different social skills. In this study Goal Cluster 1, mothers who emphasized *salir adelante* (“to make it”) and *buenas relaciones* more than other mothers, had children whose teachers rated them as more skilled in social cooperation. Further Goal Cluster 4, mothers who had a low emphasis on *salir adelante* but a high emphasis on *motivación* appeared to be somewhat intermediate in terms of teachers’ ratings of social cooperation. Intriguingly, the construct of social cooperation, and the items used in this measure to assess it like “shows self-control”, “shares toys and other belongings” “accepts decisions made by adults”, reflects behaviors related to *bien educado*. It should be noted that on average Goal Cluster 1 mentioned *bien educado* more frequently than any other goal, but it was balanced by goals for children’s achievement and positive relationships with family and others. Three related explanations for this combination of goals boding well for children’s social skills come to mind. First, *familismo* and *bien educado* are the most highly cited values/goals for Latino families, and these goals are present across SES groups (Harwood et al., 2002). Achievement, on the other hand, is considered one of the most important goals for European-American parents (Rothbaum & Tromsdorff, 2007), although countless educational studies find that Latino families have high hopes for their children’s education (Reese et al. 1995; Suizzo & Stapleton, 2007). In this study Goal Cluster 1 has combined these sets of values, and this combination may align more with teachers’ values and expectations than the other combinations. A related point is that if we harken back to the cross-cultural framework of relatedness and autonomy, these mothers’ goals for *bien educado* and *buenas relaciones* reflect “relatedness” goals, and achievement and *motivación* reflects the

goal for autonomy. This combination is theorized to be most nurturing in societies that have recently experienced socioeconomic development. Finally, we see that on average mothers in Goal Cluster 1 mentioned diverse sets of goals, unlike Goal Cluster 2 and Goal Cluster 3. Perhaps the presence of multiple goals bodes well for children's development, as compared to a more narrow focus (Goodnow & Collins, 1990). Additionally, given that mothers' goals in Goal Cluster 1 look the most "Americanized", these mothers might be more involved in their children's preschool, and this involvement could soften the potential cultural disconnect between home and school (Durand, 2009).

Research should continue to examine in a multivariate framework how combinations of mothers' goals are related to child outcomes. It is unclear why the particular combinations did not relate more to teachers' reports of social interaction and independence in the classroom or to mothers' reports of children's social skills. However, returning to the framework of the developmental niche, parenting goals are thought to ultimately influence children's skills through the activities and persons that are available to children. In this study, children whose mothers had different sets of goals did not differ dramatically in terms of parenting activities or the persons present in the household. Thus if mothers' goals do not become instantiated in behaviors, or if mothers' evolving goals and behaviors are disconnected (as in the case of acculturation), mothers' parenting goals may not predict child outcomes in the expected ways. The other issue is whether the social skills subscales are getting at culturally valued skills, or in effect reflective of goals for children's behavior. This is an issue to which I will return.

Persons present and children's social skills. Regarding persons present, only the presence of a nonrelative was associated with children's social skills. It was somewhat surprising that the presence of a father was unrelated to children's social skills as the high rates of two-parent households are consistently described as assets for children in Latino immigrant families who experience a plethora of risks (Herenandez, et al., 2008). However, conclusions from developmental studies are less clear. In a large study of low-income White, Black, and Latino families, Ariel and Kalil (2007) found that once they had controlled for selection effects and aspects of father engagement, father presence itself did not matter for child outcomes. Further, only half of the mothers in this sample were married to the fathers, and some studies suggest that cohabitation is linked with poorer outcomes for Latino children (Padilla, Radley, Hummer, & Kim, 2006). Finally, given high rates of unemployment or underemployment of fathers, and a few cases of reported inter-partner violence in this sample, the presence of some fathers may sometimes do more harm than good.

That the presence of relatives had no consistent effect on children's social skills in this study merits further exploration, given the ambiguity in the literature around this phenomenon. In Foster & Kalil's (2007) analysis, Latino children in multi-generational households (i.e., with grandmothers) had greater social skills, although this effect did not hold with statistical controls. Howes, Guerra and Zucker (2008) found that Mexican-heritage children living with extended family engaged in less complex peer play than counterparts. However, with this same sample, the group of children whose families did not live with extended relatives and did not rely on the relatives for childcare had lower rates of mother-child attachment security as infants

than their counterparts (Howes & Guerra, 2009). Like the presence of fathers, the effect of living with family probably depends on a host of factors such as reasons for living together, as well as the degree of family cohesion and support. For example, in a classic study, Hispanic parents' reports of affective support from kinship networks, but not instrumental support (e.g., availability to provide child care, loan money), were related to parenting self-efficacy and more competent parenting (MacPhee, Fritz, & Miller-Heyl, 1996). Considering these findings, it makes sense that living with relatives would not have a direct effect on children's social skills.

The lack of association between presence of a sibling and children's social skills probably follows the same logic as used with other relationships. The presence of a sibling lowered the odds of play with a parent in this study, and is linked with decreased attention to children in studies in general (Dunn, 2008). These potential negative outcomes may be countered by the opportunities for social learning that having a sibling/ siblings presents. Further, the quality of the sibling relationship, the existence of sibling favoritism in the family, and the emphasis on *familismo*, all likely interact in predicting how siblings influence children's social skills (Gamble & Modry-Mandell, 2008).

The presence of unrelated adults was related to teacher's lower reports on children's social cooperation and independence in the current study, whereas the simple presence of other figures did not. Living with unrelated adults may reflect something more about the family. There are likely multiple mechanisms and explanations for this finding, some of which may relate more to socioeconomic conditions (e.g., having to augment rent) and maternal wellbeing (e.g., lower social

support) than the actual presence of an unrelated adult. From mothers' interviews, it seemed that the presence of nonrelatives constrained children's use of the physical space. Parents may have had to structure activities more than they would have, as well as place more demands on their children.

It is surprising though that these children were rated lower by teachers only. Perhaps the skills promoted when children live with unrelated adults, and also experience overcrowding, are the least compatible with expectations for behavior at school. Parents might emphasize obedience even more strongly with in a multi-family household. Given the descriptions of interactions when unrelated families lived together, it seemed as if interactions were purposely minimized. It was almost as if by doing things separately, families could feel like they had their own space. Perhaps children in this situation are restricted from developing relationships with their housemates, while at the same time expected to be polite and obedient. It seems like this combination could result in children learning to ignore social events, to have selective attention, and perhaps have a distrust of adults. Given that high proportions of children in immigrant families live with unrelated adults (Hernandez et al. 2008), the reasons for this negative findings merit further research.

Parenting activities and children's social skills. In this section, I examined 5 categories of weekday activities and 5 categories of weekend activities and examined whether parental participation (coded yes if mother, father or both were involved) would be associated with mother's and/or teacher's report of children's social skills. To my surprise, none of the parental activities were associated with higher scores for children as reported by teachers - parenting activities either had no association with

teacher report or predicted lower social skills scores for children. Meanwhile, there were fewer than expected associations between parenting activities and children's social skills as reported by mothers, but the few significant findings made were consistent with the qualitative findings. I first discuss some general explanations for the lack of correspondence between parental activities at home and children's social skills as reported by teachers. I then discuss the particular findings re: activities and social skills with a greater focus on mothers' reports.

Teachers and CA immigrant mothers' ratings on children's social skills could differ for at least three reasons. First, two individuals will interpret behavior differently, especially if the two individuals come from cultures in which expectations for behavior are different. There is a literature suggesting that teachers rate children from different ethnic/racial backgrounds as less socially competent than children from teachers' same backgrounds (Kesner, 2000). Secondly, mothers and teachers are rating children based on their behavior in two very different contexts. The activity in the classroom, as well as the expectations for children's behavior within activities, may be vastly different between home and school. Finally, the cultural-linguistic environment in school likely affects teachers' abilities to understand and recognize social skills, and children's abilities to display their social skills. I will return to these important issues in the measurement section.

Active and Social Play. In this study, mothers' reports of parents' involvement in active and social play on the weekends, but not the weekdays, predicted mothers' higher ratings of children's social cooperation and independence. Although parent-child play may not be an integral aspect of childrearing for CA immigrant parents,

mothers and fathers who do partake in these activities may be making an active effort to adapt to the new physical context and to adopt new cultural ideas in attempts to promote their children's development. Also it should be noted that mothers mentioned fewer activities and parenting activities on the weekends than they did for weekdays. This could have been because questions about the weekends were in the second part of the interview, and mothers may have been fatigued. Thus, parents who discussed the play activities they engage in with their children on the weekends may find these to be particularly salient. Further research is definitely needed to understand how and why Latino parents play. For now, we might expect that these parents' dedication to their children, and the opportunities that parent-child play provides such as advances in conversational skills, relationship strengthening, greater self-other understanding (Raver, 1992) and practice with enacting cultural routines (Rogoff, 2003) may affect children's independence and ability to cooperate with others. It is surprising again that this did not generalize to teachers' reports of children's social skills.

Conversations. The finding that CA parental engagement of children in conversation was linked to higher maternal ratings on social cooperation is consistent with some related work with young children from Latino families. Investigating children in Early Head Start, Howes, and colleagues (2008) found that mothers who spent more of the observation period engaging their children in conversation had children who later were more likely to engage in complex peer play. In a recent mixed-methods study with Mexican and Central American immigrant mothers of kindergarteners, Durand (2009) found that mothers who reported they helped to

prepare children for school by having conversations about behavior at school and positive relationships had children who were more engaged and cooperative in the classroom. It seems consistent then that in this study mothers who engaged their children in conversation (or whose partners engaged children in conversation) rated children higher on social cooperation. Interestingly, Bradley (2001) found that observed responsiveness in the HOME was unrelated to social competence and was predictive of increased behavior problems in the Hispanic sample of young children. It may be that responsiveness, as measured by “mother spontaneously talks to child during home visit” or “mother talks to child while doing housework”, is really unrelated to the current concept of intentional conversation. The types of conversation here may be more intensive discussion about proper behavior, which might result in children having a set of skills that do not meet teachers’ expectations. Further research is definitely needed to understand the role of conversation/ chatting in promoting children’s skills for home and school.

Household Tasks. Children whose parents engage them in household tasks on weekends were rated higher by mothers on social cooperation and independence scores than those who did not. Although I found no research on young children, involvement in chores predicts positive outcomes for older children of Latino immigrants (Weisner, Ryan, Reese, Kroesen, Bernheimer, & Gallimore, 2001). Children who are allowed or invited to participate alongside their mothers in household tasks, or who are given small tasks to complete, gain practice in cooperation and instrumental independence. It is thus not surprising that mothers who report these activities rate their children as higher on social cooperation and

independence. Additionally, children's own social skills likely affect whether parents involve them in household tasks, suggesting a mutually reinforcing pathway for the learning of culturally valued skills.

Media entertainment. The parenting activity of watching television with children (or in a few cases playing computer games with children) predicted lower ratings of children's social cooperation by mothers. As stated earlier, time spent watching entertainment television is inversely related to stimulation in the home (Huston et al. 1999), and predicts fewer hours of sleep for children (Adam et al. 2007). It was not uncommon for mothers to discuss how difficult it was to restrict television time, or simply turn off the television for bedtime. This was a common source of observed conflict between Latinas and children in Livas-Dlott and colleagues' (2010) observational study in the home. Despite the fact that some mothers identified watching television as important family time, it is unlikely to have the positive impact that conversations or other kinds of interactions might have on children's social cooperation at home.

Pre-academics. The findings that parent involvement in pre-academics predicts lower ratings for children's social cooperation and independence in the classroom is counterintuitive. Many studies with Latino families have found no relation between parent involvement and learning outcomes. For example, In Durand's (2009) study, parent-reported types of pre-academic preparation were unrelated to children's engagement and cooperation in the classroom. In two studies using the HOME, Whiteside-Mansell, Bradley, and McKelvey (2009) and Bradley et al. (2001) found that learning stimulation was unrelated to social competencies in

low-income Latino children, as well as a national sample of Latino children. However, in one study, Farver, Xu, Eppe, Lonigan (2006) found that for Head Start enrolled children from 1st or 2nd generation Mexican or Central American families, parents' literacy involvement was related to higher social skills in the classroom; this relation was mediated by literacy interest (suggesting that children's own characteristics could drive this). One might predict that practice with many of the activities that are done at school (e.g., drawing, writing, etc.) would help children transition to the settings of school. On the other hand, the emphasis on pre-academics, especially if it is didactic, may detract from parents' attention preparing their children socially for school. Alternatively this negative link could reflect something about why parents are engaging children in pre-academics. For example, like the literature on parent involvement of ethnic minority parents in the school system (Hill & Torres, 2010), parents who are engaged in pre-academics may have had communications with the teachers indicating that their children are behind in pre-literacy skills (and perhaps behind in social cooperation as well). Further research is needed to understand this finding.

Going Out. In this study, there was an emerging difference between the social interaction skills of children (as rated by teachers) who went out on weekdays with parents, but this difference did not reach significance. I did not examine associations between going out on the weekends and children's skills because this activity was common to almost every family. "Going out" on weekdays usually reflect mothers' and fathers' proactive attempts to find entertaining and relaxing activities, typically playing at the park and riding bikes for their children. In Hofferth and Sandberg's

(2001) study, time spent in sports was negatively related to behavior problems across races/ethnicities, but this clearly was not focused on young children. This dichotomous measure may be too gross as it included going out to shop combined with going out for more child-centered activities. Perhaps the reasons for “going out” might moderate connections between this activity and children’s social skills.

Personal Skills. Parenting activities on the weekend involving personal care skills were linked with lower social cooperation and independence by mothers and teachers. As stated, instrumental independence, or being able to do things on one’s own has been mentioned as a valued trait among Mexican and Central American immigrant mothers, respectively (Delgado & Ford, 1998; Leyendecker et al., 2002). Indeed, personal care skills are early ways of functioning independently, and are of great importance for the transition to school settings where one-on-one care cannot be given. Interestingly, some mothers also expressed a preference for children to fall asleep independently. Although regular sleep routines and longer lengths of sleep have been related to higher cognitive function for young children (Hale, Berger, LeBourgeois, Brooks-Gunn, 2011), Leyendecker and colleagues (2002) note that, within low-income families whose schedules may be unpredictable or based more on the needs of the whole family rather than one child, it is adaptive for children to be able to fall asleep on their own. If the norms are for preschool-age children to be starting to take on personal care routines for themselves, parents’ involvement on these tasks on the weekends, a time when there may be more opportunity for children to do these things at their own pace, may reflect that parent is unnecessarily addressing personal care which could foster the child’s independence. Additionally

or alternatively, one can see that mothers reported less personal care activity on the weekend in general, as the tendency was to discuss “going out”, visits, and religious activity. Hence, when mothers discuss children’s weekend personal care routines, it could reflect that the family engaged in fewer activities on the weekends, which could hinder children’s social development and reflect poorer wellbeing on the part of the parents.

Religious Activity. In this study, family participation in religious activity was unrelated to mothers’ reports of children’s social skills and a negative predictor of teacher reports’ of children’s social interaction. There is limited research on the influence of religious activity on family life and young children’s social skills in the US population in general, and even less for Latino families in particular. Bartkowski, Xu, and Levin (2008) found in their study of the kindergartener cohort of the ECLS that parental attendance at church was a positive predictor of children’s self-control, interpersonal skills, and approaches to learning as rated by mothers and teachers, and a negative predictor of behavior problems. Religious participation has also predicted better social outcomes for at-risk Latino adolescents (Hull, Killbourne, Reece, Husaini, 2008). In the current study, religious activity was the only activity that related to children’s scores on social interaction, a subscale which taps appropriate behavior with adults and peers. For children whose families attended Evangelical churches, religious activity involved chances to play and be in a school-like setting. Perhaps the expectations for behavior with adults at church, not so much with peers, is especially different from the assertive behaviors expected at school. If religious

activity involves parents' and children's engagement in the larger supportive cultural community, it is surprising that it did not predict better outcomes for home.

Visiting Friends and Family. Unexpectedly, visits with friends and family were not connected to parents' or mothers' ratings of children's social skills. Given the salience of these family activities for adults and for children as reported in mothers' interviews, it was expected to be linked at least with greater social skills as perceived by mothers. In studies with school-age and adolescent children of Latino immigrants, time spent in family social activities and parental endorsement of *familism* was linked with higher achievement (Weisner et al., 2001) and lower externalizing behaviors in school (German, Gonzalez, Dumka, 2009). Family unity and connectedness may become more important with development and the pressures of adolescence.

Measurement

The goal of this study was to understand more about the early social experiences and social skills of an understudied group. As such, the issue of how to measure these constructs was paramount and the driving force behind the mixed-methods design. It was known at the outset that the current tools for understanding children's learning and social environments had not been used with CA immigrant families. Further, when such tools had been used to understand the home lives of Latino families, particularly immigrant families, they were not helping to explain young children's social outcomes (Ispa et al., 2004; Whiteside-Mansell et al. 2007).

More information was needed about the kinds of activities that actually take place within CA immigrant families with young children and the persons who are

involved to better understand “norms” for childrearing, which in turn, might better help us to understand the kinds of skills that are being supported in the home. The daily activities interview, then, was used to learn about important new activity “constructs” in the daily lives of children of CA. A complementary goal was to explore the validity of measures that have been used with other Latino groups and which tapped constructs that were expected to be theoretically meaningful for this group. For the latter goal, of the two self-report measures I used in this study, one could not be considered valid for this group, and the other measure had questionable reliability depending on the subscale and whether CA mothers or children’s teachers were the reports. The first measure was of family ritualization and the other children’s social skills. I discuss these in turn.

Measuring family ritualization.

The questions for family rituals and routines were taken from the dinnertime and weekend subscales of the Family Ritual Questionnaire. Given the emphasis in the literature on the importance of *familism* in Latino immigrant families (Harwood et al., 2002), there was reason to believe the creation and maintenance of family routines and rituals might be an important aspect of childrearing in this population (Fiese et al. 2002). As an anecdote, even the translator, who was of CA-heritage, stated that the information on weekend rituals, in particular, was going to be valuable as getting together with family is such an important aspect of CA culture. In fact, it had been used in a shortened and adapted form with Mexican-American fathers (Coltrane et al. 2003) although the internal reliability coefficients was lower ($\alpha=.65$) than in Fiese

and Klines' (1993) validation study in which the Cronbach's α ranged from .61 to .87 across the different setting (e.g., mealtimes, weekends, celebrations, etc.).

Indeed in the interviews a high percentage of mothers discussed dinnertime and weekend family routines and expressed the importance of these activities. However, the questionnaire data, if taken at face value, would suggest these dinnertimes and weekend events are not "rituals" for these families.

Throughout data collection and in perusing the patterns of responses, it seemed that some of the seven dimensions that make up the construct of ritualization may not be central aspect of "rituals" for our sample. In particular, the FRQ requires that mother report on the occurrence, roles, routine, attendance, affect, symbolism, and planning for mealtimes and weekends. Three of these dimensions were problematic including roles, symbolism, and planning. The "roles" dimension asks whether everybody has a certain job or role in the mealtime or weekend event. In particular, the idea that everyone has a job to do may not accord with the way things occur in families in which gender roles are more rigid and hierarchical relations between parents and children are valued. Although it is likely that each member does play a role in mealtimes, as in the father whose arrival at home might signal dinnertime, or that children have a "role" in playing with their relatives on the weekends, this idea of "roles" is fairly abstract. Further, the planning dimension, "in some families there is much discussion and planning around weekends", really did not seem consistent with the way mothers spoke about weekends. For the most part, mothers emphasized the importance of being together as a family, whereas they did not emphasize special types of events. So it was no surprise that mothers' ratings on

this item were fairly low, and were not correlated with many of the other dimensions. Finally, the dimension of “symbolism” probably was appropriate for these families but may have been worded too abstractly. For example, “in some families, dinner time is just for getting food” but “in other families, dinner time is more than just a meal; it has a special meaning.” From notes taken during data collection, mothers were confused by this item. The average score for symbolism was 2.02 meaning “somewhat true” that in mothers’ families dinner time is just for getting food. However, the average score for affect, was 3.4 meaning something between “somewhat true” and “very true” that in mothers’ families people feel strongly about eating together. One would expect more consistency between these dimensions.

In addition to problems with the particular items, the Harter-type response scale of the FRQ appeared difficult for mothers to understand. Fiese (2002) used this format to reduce the effects of social desirability, but in this case immigrant mothers may not be as familiar with what developmental researchers and practitioners might view as desirable family behaviors. Also the “cognitive load” required for this response scale, particularly for a respondent with low literacy levels and lack of survey taking experience, may impede accurate reporting more so than social desirability.

The problematic measurement of family routines and rituals in this study is an important phenomenon that can contribute to the literature on low-income CA immigrant families. Moreover, the finding that planning and roles may not be integral aspects of family rituals may also extend to other Latino immigrant groups, and perhaps low-income families in general. Further research using qualitative methods to

understand the phenomenon of a “ritual” in CA immigrant families, followed by careful construction of understandable items will be needed to help adapt Feise & Klines’s (1993) measure or to create a new measure to assess this salient aspect of CA immigrant family life.

Measuring the social skills of children from CA immigrant families.

Various indicators in this study suggest a need to improve our conceptualization and measurement of the social skills of children from low-income CA immigrant families. I found first, that one of the subscales, namely Social Interaction, had extremely low internal reliability when mothers were the reporters (Cronbach’s $\alpha=.46$). Further, although the correlation between parent and teacher-report of social skills is often low, in this study there was no association. Finally, the predictive validity of the measure for teachers’ assessment of social skills seemed questionable in that teachers’ ratings were either not related to parents’ activities with children, or were lower when parents reported participation in an activity.

At a broader level than the psychometric properties of this particular social skills measure, it is questionable whether the field’s conceptualization and measurement of social skills as well as problem behaviors (e.g., internalizing problems) is valid with children from Latino immigrant families. I relate this back to two issues I raised earlier about mother and teacher reports. For one, the social skills emphasized at home may vary from the social skills at school. Secondly, differences in context may change the way children are able to manifest social skills. Finally, the fact that most children of Latino immigrants will be Dual Language Learners (Garcia

& Jensen, 2009) but are likely to be in English-only classrooms (Garcia & Jensen, 2009) puts these children at a severe social disadvantage.

Importantly, we have an emerging literature on the status of social development in children from Latino families. In the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort, Latino children manifested fewer behavior problems (particularly externalizing behaviors) than other racial/ethnic minority groups at the start of school (Crosnoe, 2005; Galindo & Fuller, 2010) with and without controlling for sociodemographic differences. In the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort, Latino children manifested fewer learning-related behavior problems than children from other racial/ethnic minority groups (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeir, & Maczuga, 2008). Many researchers, including myself, have taken these results to suggest that some of the common “Latino” values such as *bien educado* and *respeto* help children develop social readiness for school, which is of particular importance given the marked ethnic gaps in cognitive readiness (language and literacy) for school.

However, the average lack of behavior problems for Latino children cannot be equated with social skills. For example, Galindo and Fuller (2010) actually examined 5 social “competencies” including families indexed by self control, interpersonal skills, approaches to learning, internalizing problems, and externalizing problems. Children living in poverty, children who were first and second generation immigrants, and children from Central America did not differ from White children in behavior problems but had lower scores in the three social competencies, and the largest gap was in approaches to learning followed by interpersonal skills. The extent to which

this reflects an actual gap in these social skills and/or variations in teachers' expectations for these skills is not clear.

The findings from Galindo and Fuller's (2010) study makes one wonder if Latino immigrant children's social skills are reflected more by a lack of problematic behaviors, rather than in pro-active behaviors towards adults and peers in the classroom. For example, there is some emerging evidence that Latino children from less acculturated families have higher levels of shyness with adults, but also with peers (Gudiño & Lau, 2010), which likely results in more restrained classroom behavior. Further, for Dual Language Learners, teachers are more likely to be aware of and to recognize child behaviors that are disruptive to the classroom, as well as to recognize very assertive child behaviors, as compared to more nuanced interpersonal skills that might transpire in children's native language. Hence, teachers may not appreciate the culturally valued skills or behaviors that children are bringing from home in part because children may be reticent to engage teachers in interactions and because language barriers may prevent mutual understanding (Castro, Franco, Gillanders, Bryant, & Zepeda, 2012).

Furthering the idea that social interactions may look different among this population, it is interesting to note that in the current study, the subscale of the Preschool Kindergarten Learning Scale- 2nd edition (Merrell, 2002) that had the lowest reliability was the Social Interaction subscale, which assesses "appropriate behavior" towards adults and peers. The items assess behaviors like comfort-seeking, comfort-giving, empathy, and sociability with adults and peers. One item "child participates in family or classroom discussions" was the lowest rated item while

“child seeks comfort from an adult when hurt” was the highest rated item. Many of the items on this subscale uncorrelated. But the highest correlation was between “child seeks comfort from an adult when hurt” and an item “child has skills or abilities that are admired by peers.” This pattern of answers suggests children are involved in more hierarchical type interactions with adults, and that this is normative (in that such children are also admired by their peers).

The low reliability of the social interaction subscale in our study, combined with national findings that children from Latino immigrant families are receiving lower scores on other measures of social skills in the classroom, suggests a need for further understanding of culturally-valued social skills. Further research should investigate the possibility of creating an emically-derived measure of social skills based on CA immigrant parents’ and educators’ (preferably bicultural) perspectives.

In sum, I found limited support for the validity of a mainstream measure of family rituals to assess these behaviors in CA immigrant families. It appears this measure could be adapted for use by first eliminating dimensions of “ritualization” that may not be appropriate for low-income immigrant families. Further, the response scale should be simplified to make it more assessable for parents with low education and literacy levels.

In terms of social skills, this study suggests that measurement of social interaction or interpersonal skills needs to account for culturally-specific ideas about social skills. In particular, assertive behavior towards adults, including things like “joining in on conversation”, is not a normative behavior in the home context. As

such, measures are needed to capture the skills of importance to Latino immigrant families.

The basic tenets of positive development (i.e. developmental of culturally valued skills) within Super and Harkness' framework of the developmental niche become increasingly complicated within the context of immigration. As these authors point out, the *psychology of the caregiver*, which is the mechanism through which cultural values become embedded in children's early environments become more obvious when families move to new *physical and social settings* where different *customs of childrearing* prevail. Parents may become more proactive in organizing *the physical and social settings*, and enacting *customs of childrearing* that fit with their goals. The former idea that consistency in messages across subsystems assists children in developing culturally-valued skills may help to explain how dissonance across subsystems may be stressors for immigrants and their young children. The sporadic associations in this study between mothers' goals, parenting activities and children's social skills may reflect this complicated pattern of change. With different levels of exposure to mainstream culture mothers may adapt new goals, in other cases parenting behaviors may change independently of goals (e.g. through parenting education classes). The "effect" of any behavior may depend on how it resonates with mothers' goals and the physical and social settings. Thus from the developmental niche framework, we might expect better outcomes based on parents' abilities to be flexible (e.g., adapt goals and parenting behaviors that complement existing norms), and to be resourceful in organizing children's experiences in ways that resonate with evolving goals and behaviors.

Implications

Future research.

The findings from this mixed-method exploratory study have implications for the future study of young children from low-income CA immigrant families. The study also presents some general lessons for the exploration of the “developmental niches” of children from other understudied minority groups.

In this study, certain parenting activities were emphasized in mothers’ interviews, and for some, engagement in these activities was linked with higher maternal ratings on children’s social skills. In particular, conversations, “going out”, household tasks, and visiting friends and family, were salient activities. Given that current parenting measures fall short of predicting social outcomes for Latino children, future research is needed to help create measures of positive parenting (from the standpoint of activities) for Latino immigrant parents. Such research could expand upon the descriptive information about potentially important parenting activities, and more explicitly ask mothers towards about the meanings of the activities and the persons present in children’s lives. In particular, future work could probe mothers’ accounts of their strategies for parenting and provision of activities to help children develop valued characteristics and skills. Hopefully this will result in a better understanding of parenting in this population, and result in the development of a parenting measure.

In addition to measure creation, future research should also move towards understanding the dynamic nature of young children’s developmental niches, particularly in the face of immigration. For example, we know that immigrants’

parenting goals and childrearing norms may change with exposure to mainstream practices - in some cases parents may adopt new goals and behaviors, in other cases, goals associated with country of origin become more important to immigrant families. There are likely acculturative, ecological, familial, and psychological factors, and child factors that might affect parent' goals and childrearing norms, but also affect how these goals and norms become expressed in children's daily lives (Weisner, 2002).

Mixed-methods approaches would be best suited to understand sources and patterns of variation in young CA children's early social experience. For example, in this study, some mothers implied that they must negotiate between many competing demands, and oftentimes make compromises in the activities that become available to their children. Given that families in this sample were experiencing major stressors such as food insecurity, undocumented status, transnational parenting, low English proficiency, unstable employment or excessive work schedules, it is important to understand how these factors influence children's developmental niches, and ultimately their development. Ethnography could help detect processes of change and adaptation in parenting goals' and activities in children's developmental niches. This could be embedded within a larger study that would allow for sophisticated modeling of patterns across developmental niches, through the use of cluster analysis or latent class modeling, and the examination of an array of ecological, family, and child characteristics that might predict these patterns.

Another much needed line of research would better determine the links between the social skills CA children are learning at home and the expected social

skills at school, and what potential cultural disparities emerge for young CA children's transition to school. As we found in this study, there was no association between mothers' perspectives on children's social skills and teacher's perspectives. Further, the parenting activities that would seem to bode well for children's social skills did not seem to transfer to better social skills at school. An emerging literature shows that teacher reports of low-income children's "approaches to learning" and engagement in the classroom predicts growth in early math (Galindo & Fuller, 2010) and literacy skills (McWayne, Fantuzzo, & McDermott, 2004). These pro-active, learning-related social skills trump social cooperation, interpersonal skills and problem behaviors, in terms of predicting children's academic achievement. So an important next step is to explore overlap and mismatch in the skills valued at home and the skills valued at school, and to track the consequences through children's early school years.

Finally, most children of CA immigrant families (or immigrant families in general) enter a new linguistic environment when they transition into formal care or school. Importantly, there is a vast literature on language learning in dual language learners (Espinosa, 2007; Garcia & Jensen, 2009) and a growing literature on best practices in education for dual language learners. The influence of the linguistic environment on children's social experiences is less well-understood. As stated, children who are learning a new language are unlikely to be able to demonstrate their social skills, and also teachers who do not speak the children's dominant language are unlikely to recognize instances of social cooperation, social interaction, and social independence. There is some evidence that monolingual teachers rate Hispanic dual-

language learners as lower on social skills than their bilingual English-Spanish speaking peers (Castro et al. 2012). Further, in monolingual classrooms, dual language learners appear to make fewer gains in the social-emotional realm than English-speaking peers (Wanless, McClelland, Tominey, & Acock, 2011) despite starting at similar levels. These preliminary findings suggest that it will be important for researchers to help document language environments and teacher characteristics that help children practice and learn new social skills.

Limitations.

This study has several limitations that weaken the interpretability of results and also limitations that temper the generalizability of our findings to similar populations of CA immigrants. In terms of the qualitative data interpretation, the lack of member checking of the coding schemes that I developed was a weakness. In terms of the quantitative analysis, the lack of sensitivity of the quantitative indicators of children's developmental niches, the questionable validity of the outcome measure, the small sample size, the simple, mostly variable-centered analysis and finally the confounds between mothers' countries of origin, mothers' levels of education, and mothers' ages at migration weakens the faith that we can place in the exploratory analyses of different aspects of children's early social environments. I discuss each of these issues and their implications for the findings in turn.

Beginning with the qualitative process, a hallmark practice in qualitative research is to return to participants to assess whether the researcher's coding and interpretation of the data reflects their perspectives (Daly, 2007). Member checking may be especially important when the researcher comes from a different cultural

background, as in the current case (Daly, 2007). Unfortunately, available time and resources prevented me from engaging in this “gold-standard” research step.

However, I did partner with the Salvadoran graduate student who conducted the interviews to help finalize the coding scheme for mothers’ parenting goals for their children. Of the two issues that I analyzed and coded, namely parenting goals, and children’s activities, I believed that my cultural and educational background might affect my interpretation of “types” of goals, more so than “types” of activities. Nonetheless, it would have been ideal to return to participants to gain their own understanding of categories of goals and activities.

The second major limitation of this study is that the quantitative indicators I was able to create from participants’ reports of the activities and persons present in children’s daily lives were less than optimal. Although I had hoped for the interviewer to obtain from mothers a measure of the time that children spent in different activities, this proved to be unrealistic from the standpoint of the flow of the interview and mothers’ abilities to estimate average time spent in activities. This resulted in the rather gross measure of whether or not an activity took place or not (according to mothers). Still it is interesting that there was variability at this level, and that it sometimes was associated with differences in child outcomes.

The interviews also lacked consistency in terms of mothers always being asked about who participated in each activity with the child. This was difficult to monitor during data collection as I do not speak Spanish fluently, and there was considerable lag between when the interviews took place and when they were translated. Further, even when the interviewer did ask mothers about the persons

present, mothers seemed reticent to discuss how individuals other than themselves and their children's fathers were engaged with their children. There were more than a few instances in which later on in the interview mothers listed more people as being members of the household than they had included in the initial discussion of children's activities. As such, I decided to use the more complete household roster to create dummy variables for types of persons present in the household. Like the gross measure of activities, the persons present dummy codes appeared to capture something important - as it related to mothers' patterns of goals and to some of the activities. However, much more detailed information of *who* is involved in *what* activities with children, and *for how long*, would have provided a better sense of the early social environments of CA children. It would be more ideal to combine interviews with observation in the home (Harkness & Super, 2006).

Another limitation relates to the questionable construct validity of the social skills measure for children from CA immigrant mothers. This is an important finding in and of its self, and has been discussed previously. But it does call into question whether results regarding links between the subsystems of the developmental niche and children's various social skills should still be retained.

The small sample size in this study undoubtedly affected the strength of the results. I used basic statistical analyses and was unable to control for potentially confounding variables because of the sample size constraints. Also as the main study variables (e.g., activities, persons present) were categorical in measure, this required the use of nonparametric tests, which have lower power. Despite the fact that I raised

the critical alpha level for statistical significance tests to $\alpha=.10$, there still may have been associations that would have reached significance given a larger sample.

With regard to the study design, in linking aspects of the developmental niche to young children's social skills, a longitudinal design would provide a stronger case for causal inferences. However, the primary goal of the study was to capture extensive data on Central American children's developmental niches. Given the time and financial resources that were devoted to this goal, adding a longitudinal component would have been exceedingly difficult.

Another limitation of the study is that some obvious sources of potential variation in children's early social experience, namely, mothers' country of origin, mothers' education level, and mothers' developmental stage at migration were confounded. This made findings difficult to interpret. Knight, Roosa, and Umana-Taylor (2009) write that within-group studies of ethnic minority groups can be as problematic as studies that make comparisons between a specific cultural group and a White middle class comparison group. The potential problem with both is that there is little held constant between groups which makes sources of differences difficult to understand. In this project, efforts were made to recruit as homogenous a group as possible. For example, all the mothers were immigrants, their children all attended the same school, and all families were living in poverty (as indexed by meeting the requirements for FARMS). As such, this sampling plan represented a vast improvement from most studies, which involve Latino parents from different cultural heritages and of different generations (Harwood et al., 2002). Nonetheless it would have been ideal to have sampled mothers from just one country of origin, and then

examine how the early social experiences that they provided for their children might differ depending on their education level and age of migration.

Policy/Practice.

In documenting the developmental niches of children from low-income CA immigrant families, this study highlighted many strengths but also areas of hardship for these children and their families. In terms of hardships, the physical settings of these children's lives were often restraining - children were living in overcrowded conditions, and were forced to stay inside when the weather was cold. The activities for children and families on the weekends were oftentimes restricted to free activities in settings within walking distance, such as play at the park or the mall. Although this study was not focused on children's experiences in preschool/ Head Start, but rather their experiences in the home, it was clear that children's ability to attend school was a real strength/resource for these families. In the past two years, the US has entered a national economic crisis during which several states are changing policies to restrict undocumented immigrants' access to resources, and to crack down on illegal immigration (Robertson, 2011). The effect has been to engender fear on the part of Latino families, such that even though most of the children are themselves citizens, parents have kept their children out of school (Robertson, 2011). Beyond family-centered immigration policy, policies at the state and municipal level could address the lack of public spaces and resources that can be used by families with young children.

The study has stronger implications for early childhood education practice. First, it will be important to communicate the findings to educators of young CA

immigrant children. Such knowledge may enhance teachers' abilities to provide "culturally reflective instruction". Teachers of CA children should know that parents strongly value *bien educado*. For most parents, this means that children should be obedient and well-behaved, use proper manners, and be helpful/ generous with others in the classroom. Teachers should also know that *motivación* is important for the classroom, but that for most parents this means children should pay attention, participate, and respond to teacher's questions. Other aspects of motivation such as being intellectually curious and asking questions were not stressed.

Finally, teachers should know that *buenas relaciones* is an important goal; in the classroom it is manifested through being social/friendly, getting along with others, and having good relationships with their teachers. One specific behavior that was considered a skill by parents, but might be perceived by teachers as a deficit, is going to the teacher for help in social conflicts. When teachers are informed of parents' goals, and even expectations for discrete behavior (e.g., asking for help), teachers will be more accurate interpreters of children's behavior. In the end, teachers may want to encourage children to be more assertive in the classroom, but teachers will be more successful if they perceive children as demonstrating skills that are valued at home versus maladaptive behaviors. Teachers might also recognize and provide feedback for behaviors that are undoubtedly of central importance to families such as children's use of proper manners (e.g., greetings in the morning), helping their peers, and sharing.

The other important implication for classroom practice is for teachers to build upon the parenting goals and daily activities of CA families during classroom

activities and exercises. Educational research theorizes that some degree of continuity between physical settings and activities of home and of school is important for social wellbeing, as well as content learning (Harkness, Hughes, Muller, & Super, 2005). Educators could implement lessons to highlight cultural values such as *bien educado* and family unity. Teachers might incorporate the settings in which children spend time outside of school and the home such as the mall, the park, and church into the curriculum. Given the activities of these families, teachers could integrate lessons around cooking, housework, talking about family, and trips to the park.

The findings also have implications for expanding and strengthening partnerships with Central American families. By understanding parenting goals, and the persons and activities available to children, teachers will be in a better place to communicate with parents about children's progress as well as be in a better place to provide contextually-relevant advice. At the level of the school, general parent education programs could be framed around the goals of *bien educado* and long-term academic/career achievement. Educators may also enhance their family involvement activities and parental education programs by highlighting strengths, as well as identifying ways in which parents can further prepare children for school within those regular activities and settings. Through identification of salient CA family activities and children's strengths, educators may enhance cultural connections between home and school, thereby preparing CA children to thrive in their transition to school.

Conclusion

This study is part of a growing movement in developmental science to expand our knowledge base of child development beyond the confines of a population that

represents just a small fraction of the world's population, namely children from White middle class families in the United States (Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010). Within the United States, the Latino population will potentially reach 29% of the US population by 2025 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008). It is crucial that researchers, policy makers, and practitioners have more information regarding factors that promote positive developmental outcomes for Latino children. Arguably, this research should be undertaken as an inquiry into development within context - context referring to prevailing cultural values and norms, socioeconomic circumstances, and the physical and social settings of children's lives (Super & Harkness, 2002; Weisner, 2002). In the current study, I used such a framework to explore the early social experiences and development of children from an understudied sub-group of the Latino population, namely children from Central American immigrant families. Given that only one other research group has focused on the early home lives of CA children (see Leyendecker et al. 2002), this study makes a major contribution to our understanding of early contexts of development and the transition to school for this population.

The exploration of CA immigrant mothers' parenting goals for their children in the long-term, a question in Leyendecker and colleagues' (2002) study of parents of infants, and mothers' parenting goals for children's behavior at home and at school was an essential component of this exploration. Mothers emphasized *bien educado*, or proper comportment, first and foremost as has been found with other Latino groups (Fuller and Garcia Coll, 2010). However, these immigrant mothers also had strong aspirations for their children's academic and career trajectories, a finding consistent with what has been called the immigrant paradox or immigrant optimism (Hill &

Torres, 2010). Further, two groups of mothers strongly emphasized the importance of being social/having good relationships and being motivated and engaged in the classroom, which are two goals less associated with Latino parenting. Finally, beyond the pure description of goals, this study went on to examine how the combination of mothers' emphases on different goals would relate to children's social skills- an analysis that has not been undertaken in past studies of Latino parenting goals. In particular, mothers whose goals combined all four goals (e.g. *bien educado, buenas relaciones, salir adelante, motivación*) had children who were rated higher on social cooperation in the classroom than mothers with other patterns of goals.

Another approach for studying development in context is to explore the physical and social settings of children's daily lives (Super & Harkness, 2002; Weisner, 2002). Consistent with past studies with other Latino immigrant groups, I found that low-income CA immigrant children tend to live in overcrowded home settings, oftentimes with relatives, and even unrelated adults. The presence of unrelated adults predicted more interactive activities between parents and children, however, it was linked with lower social skills for children in preschool. This finding highlights the importance again of attending to the context and to the motivations and meanings of activities for cultural groups.

Again using the lens of development in context, I examined the daily activities of children from CA immigrant families to better understand how parents might structure the environment and engage with children. Children's home activities centered around personal care routines (dressing, washing), active and social play (although space and resources for play were limited), practicing pre-academics, and

watching television. Mothers and fathers participated in some of those activities, but major parenting activities focused on engaging children in purposeful conversation, finding ways for interested children to join them in household tasks, and taking children out on weekends for outdoor activity, trips to the mall, religious activity, or visiting friends and family. For parents, engagement in conversation, as well as household activities and play on the weekends, were associated with higher mothers' reports on children's social skills. While this mixed method study provides a general outline for understanding parenting activity types that might promote positive child development in CA immigrant families, much work is needed to further understand models of positive childrearing in this group. This is imperative for understanding development in this understudied group, and working with parents to enhance their children's development.

Finally, this study highlighted the potential disconnect between CA children's skills or competencies within the home context and skills at school. For decades, scholars have reported that the values promoted by immigrant families, especially Latino immigrant families, may not bode well for children's adjustment to school, where assertiveness, curiosity, instrumental independence, and charisma are valued (Greenfield et al. 2000; Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993). However, more recently, scholars have suggested that the "Latino" values of respecting adults, proper comportment, and cooperation should be assets for children's transition to school (Halgunseth et al. 2006; Fuller & Garcia Coll, 2010). Further, kindergarten teachers rate social skills related to cooperation, such as following directions and sharing/taking turns, as essential for school readiness (Piotrkowski, Botsko, &

Matthews, 2000). Because there was no association between mothers' and teachers' reports of social cooperation, and because parents' engagement in children's activities predicted lower levels of social cooperation in school, one wonders if even interpretations of social cooperation vary by culture and context. One also wonders about the role that language at home and in the classroom plays in this disconnect. In both cases, it is very important for educators to be aware of this potential disconnect and to learn more about nuanced ways children from different backgrounds might be displaying culturally-valued social skills in the classroom.

Knowledge of the developmental niches of young children from low-income CA immigrant families is important both for learning about positive trajectories for these children, but also important for challenging the often narrow view of child development that has resulted from a century of research on a particular demographic in the United States. Studies such as this one can highlight the unique resources and constraints that families of particular backgrounds tend to face (Garcia Coll & Pachter, 2002). These studies also inform us of parenting goals, which together with childrearing norms, help organize children's activities, the persons present, and parent's own activities with children. In this instance, this descriptive information concerning the developmental niches of young children from CA immigrant families will hopefully spur improvements in measurement and future investigation that include families from this population. Further, information about CA children's early social environments will hopefully assist educators in creating culturally responsive classroom environments, and in partnering with families to promote children's successful transitions to school.

Table 1. Definition of Terms

Developmental Niche: A conceptualization of the proximal environments of the child. The developmental niche is composed of three interactive subsystems: 1) the physical and social settings; 2) customs of childrearing; and 3) psychology of the parent. The three subsystems interact with the child's characteristics, and the larger cultural and contextual environment to construct an environment in which activities and interactions promote culturally-valued skills (Super & Harkness, 2002).

Parenting Goals: Parents' desires for their children to develop or possess certain characteristics, traits, skills, or behaviors.

Parenting Activities: Parents' tangible actions with children on a daily basis. Parenting activities include parents' behaviors in interactions with their children and the creation and maintenance of family rituals.

Family Rituals: Family rituals are commitments to different actions that have a symbolic and affective component for the family (Fiese & Kline, 1993). Family rituals create a sense of belonging and identity for the family.

Social Skills: Social skills include the ability to cooperate with others (particularly adults), engage in positive peer social interactions, and assert one's self. Social skills are demonstrated through behavior towards adults and peers.

Table 2. Developmental Niche Constructs and Measures

Construct	Variable	Measures
Mothers' Parenting Goals	Long-Term Goals	adapted Socialization Goals Interview ^p (SGI)
	Goals for Home Behavior	adapted SGI ^p
	Goals for School Behavior	adapted SGI ^p
Available Activities	Child's activities (coded from interview)	Ecocultural Family Interview ^p (EFI)
	Persons Present	
Parenting Activities	Individuals Present in the Household	Household Information Questionnaire ^p
	Household Crowding	Household Information Questionnaire ^p
	Parenting Activities (coded as activities that mothers and/or fathers engage in with children)	EFI ^p
Children's Social Skills	Family Rituals	Family Ritual Questionnaire ^p
	Social Cooperation	PKBS-2 ^{p, t}
	Social Interaction	PKBS-2 ^{p, t}
	Social Independence	PKBS-2 ^{p, t}

^pParent Report

^tTeacher Report

Table 3. Mothers' and Children's Basic Demographic Characteristics

	<i>M / n (%)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Range</i>
Mothers			
Mothers' age	31.50	5.27	19-43
Mothers' education in years	8.65	4.32	0-18
Mothers' years in US	8.81	3.49	1-16
Mothers' age at migration			
Under 21	13 (27%)		
21 years and up	35 (73%)		
Mothers' country of origin			
El Salvador	27 (56%)		
Guatemala	15 (31%)		
Honduras	4 (8%)		
Nicaragua	2 (4%)		
Mothers' relationship status			
Single, never married	19%		
Partnered, acompañada	40%		
Married	35%		
Separated	6%		
Mother employed	57%		
Children			
Child age (months)	59.38	4.45	47.31-68.37
Child gender male	21 (44%)		
Identified by teacher as having IEP	10 (20.8%)		
Speech and language	8 (17%)		
Other	2 (4%)		

n = 48

Table 4. Inductively Developed Categories for Mothers' Parenting Goals

Goal Category	Goal Codes
<i>Bien educado</i>	<i>Educado</i> , good, good person, help others/ collaborating, honest, humble, listen/ follow rules/ obedient , kind/nice, neat appearance, not easily upset, not be restless/hyper, not rude/rebellious, not spoiled, not prone to fights/violence, proper language/ manners, respectful, share/ generous, <i>tranquilo</i> (calm, doesn't cause trouble), treat people equally/no discrimination, well behaved
<i>Buenas relaciones</i>	Be affectionate/loving, ask adults for help with conflicts, child-parent communication/trust, get along with others, good relationships (e.g., with siblings, family in general, teachers), to be good in a relationship role (e.g. a good daughter, future husband, future mother), to not suffer or cause domestic abuse, play with others, be respected, value family, be sociable/friendly
<i>Salir adelante</i>	Academic excellence (e.g., good grades, scholarships), achieve more than parents, achievement (e.g., "make it", "go as far as he/she wants"), professional career, finish school/ earn degree, intelligent/ knowledgeable, job success (e.g., have a good job, be good at job), learn, read, speak English/be bilingual, study (e.g., do homework, go to school)
<i>Motivación</i>	Ask/answer questions, deliberate/thoughtful/careful (e.g., thinks things through before acting), goal-oriented/motivated, independent, intellectually curious, participate, pay attention , prepare, responsible, studious (e.g., put effort into studying, be a good student), work hard
<i>Buen camino</i>	Avoid delinquency (e.g., hanging out on streets, skipping school, membership in gangs), avoid early relationships/sexual promiscuity, avoid negative (peer) influences, avoid vices (e.g., drinking, smoking, drugs), take right path " <i>buen camino</i> "
<i>Sentir cómodo</i>	Adaptable, confident, express/ communicative/ not shy, feels supported by parent, happy/ enjoyment/ positivity, not be sad/worry, patient, self respect
Miscellaneous	Choose own career, follow Christianity, lose weight, practice sports/hobby, stay the same

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Central American Immigrant Mothers' Proportions of Responses Related to each Goal

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Range</i>
Long-term goals (n=48)			
<i>Bien educado</i>	.40	.10	.08-.84
<i>Salir adelante</i>	.17	.10	.03-.43
<i>Buen camino</i>	.13	.16	.00-.36
<i>Buenas relaciones</i>	.12	.06	.00-.35
<i>Motivación</i>	.12	.10	.00-.33
<i>Sentir cómodo</i>	.05	.09	.00-.31
Short-term goals for home (n=48)			
<i>Bien educado</i>	.56	.24	.10-1.00
<i>Buenas relaciones</i>	.29	.23	.00-.90
<i>Buen camino</i>	.07	.09	.00-.29
<i>Sentir cómodo</i>	.03	.07	.00-.38
<i>Salir adelante</i>	.03	.09	.00-.50
<i>Motivación</i>	.02	.04	.00-.16
Short-term goals for school (n=47)			
<i>Bien educado</i>	.42	.23	.00-.89
<i>Motivación</i>	.23	.15	.00-.57
<i>Buenas relaciones</i>	.16	.13	.00-.41
<i>Salir adelante</i>	.10	.13	.00-.67
<i>Sentir cómodo</i>	.09	.15	.00-.61
<i>Buen camino</i>	.01	.02	.00-.11
Average goals across interview (n=48)			
<i>Bien educado</i>	.43	.12	.11-.79
<i>Buenas relaciones</i>	.17	.07	.00-.32
<i>Salir adelante</i>	.13	.07	.02-.27
<i>Motivación</i>	.12	.06	.01-.24
<i>Buen camino</i>	.09	.06	.00-.26
<i>Sentir cómodo</i>	.06	.07	.00-.32

Note: One mother did not complete interview regarding goals at school due to time constraints

Table 6. Characteristics of Persons Present

	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Range</i>
Persons in household (n)		6.06	1.96	3-10
Household crowding		1.13	.35	.38-2.0
Persons living in house				
Father/ mother's partner	71%			
Extended relative/s	54.2			
Nonrelated adults/renter	29.2			
Sibling/s (n)	77.1	1.5	1.29	0-6
Other children (e.g., cousins, renters' children) (n)	31.4	.49	.92	0-3

Table 7. Inductively Developed Categories and Codes for Available Activities

Activity Categories	Activity Codes
Meals	Snacking, breakfast, lunch, dinner
Personal skills	Dressing, bathing, sleeping and waking routines
Active and social play	Outdoor play (yard, apartment courtyard), sports, general play (e.g., mother only mentions “play”), play with toys, pretend play, play games
Media Entertainment	Watching television, computer, videogames
Pre-academics	Coloring/drawing/painting, cutting with scissors, doing homework from school, doing homework assigned by parents, practicing numbers, colors, and alphabet, reading, and writing
Conversation	Chatting, reviewing school day, advices, stories
Household Activities	Helping with meals, cooking activities, cleaning up, housework
“Going out”	Going to the mall, shopping, going for walks, going to park, going to library
Religious activity	Going to church, children’s church/Sunday school, praying
Visiting	Visiting friends or family, family get-togethers in the home

Table 8. Frequency of Mothers Reporting Activities Available to Children on Weekdays and Weekends

Activity Category	Weekday	Weekend
Meals	48	44
Personal skills	48	32
Active and social play	46	31
Media Entertainment	44	39
Pre-academics	41	22
Conversation	31	8
Household Activities	29	17
“Going out”	22	46
Religious activity	9	22
Visiting	2	22

Table 9. Frequency of Mothers Reporting Mother or Father Involvement in Activities with Children on Weekdays and Weekends

Activity Category	Mother		Father		Any Parent	
	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend
Meals	40	37	17	19	42	41
Personal skills	30	12	3	3	30	12
Active and Social Play	16	14	3	7	17	16
Media Entertainment	20	11	11	2	26	13
Pre-academics	21	14	4	0	23	14
Conversation	26	4	6	1	26	4
Household Activities	24	15	3	1	25	14
“Going out”	19	42	5	25	22	46
Religious activity	9	21	1	9	9	21
Visiting	2	21	1	11	2	22

Table 10. Means and Standard Deviations of Proportions of Mothers' Goals in each Category by Goal Cluster

	Cluster 1 (n=11)	Cluster 2 (n=22)	Cluster 3 (n=4)	Cluster 4 (n=11)
<i>Bien educado</i>	.28 (.07) _a	.45 (.06) _b	.69 (.08) _c	.44 (.07) _b
<i>Buenas relaciones</i>	.23 (.05) _a	.15 (.06) _b	.06 (.05) _c	.17 (.06) _a
<i>Motivación</i>	.14 (.05) _{ab}	.10 (.05) _{bc}	.09 (.02) _c	.17 (.04) _a
<i>Salir adelante</i>	.18 (.05) _a	.15 (.06) _a	.04 (.02) _b	.05 (.02) _b

Note: Means in the same row sharing a common subscript do not differ at the $\alpha=.05$ level according to Dunnett's multiple comparison procedure.

Table 11. Descriptive Statistics for Dinnertime Subscale of the Family Ritual

Questionnaire

Items	M	SD	Cronbach's α
Dinnertime occurrence	3.40	1.03	
Dinnertime roles	2.02	1.01	
Dinnertime routines	2.52	1.37	
Dinnertime attendance	2.74	1.38	
Dinnertime affect	3.53	1.01	
Dinnertime symbolism	2.81	1.26	
Dinnertime planning	2.20	1.26	
Dinnertime total scale	19.24	4.40	.56

N=43

Table 12. Bivariate Correlations between Dinnertime Ritual Items

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dinnertime occurrence	-----	.29	-.06	.51**	.25	-.02	.05
Dinnertime roles		-----	.11	.31*	.08	.27	.18
Dinnertime routines			-----	.26	.14	.22	-.22
Dinnertime attendance			---	-----	.41**	.30	-.09
Dinnertime affect					-----	.31*	.13
Dinnertime symbolism						-----	-.01
Dinnertime planning							-----

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 13. Factor Loadings for Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation of Family Dinnertime Ritual Items

	1	2	3
Dinnertime occurrence	.01	-.16	.07
Dinnertime roles	.41	.39	.34
Dinnertime routines	-.00	.58	-.53
Dinnertime attendance	.78	.37	-.20
Dinnertime affect	.42	.49	.12
Dinnertime symbolism	.02	.83	.05
Dinnertime planning	-.02	.09	.89

Note: The three components accounted for 65.64% of the variation among items.

Table 14. Descriptive Statistics for Weekend Ritual Items and Total Scale

Items	M	SD	Cronbach's α
Weekend occurrence	3.40	1.12	
Weekend roles	1.98	1.30	
Weekend routines	2.42	1.37	
Weekend attendance	2.72	1.37	
Weekend affect	3.53	.96	
Weekend symbolism	3.56	.91	
Weekend planning	2.81	1.26	
Weekend total scale	20.42	4.59	.56

N=43

Table 15. Bivariate Correlations Between Weekend Ritual Items

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Weekend occurrence	-----	-.49**	.25	.28	.35*	.25	-.04
Weekend roles		-----	-.09	-.04	-.16	.03	.18
Weekend routines			-----	.46**	.39*	.27	.17
Weekend attendance				-----	.41**	.43**	.13
Weekend affect					-----	.44**	.30
Weekend symbolism						-----	.29
Weekend planning							-----

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 16. Factor Loadings for Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation of Family Weekend Rituals

	1	2
Weekend occurrence	.79	-.18
Weekend routines	.57	.37
Weekend attendance	.65	.35
Weekend affect	.71	.28
Weekend symbolism	.39	.72
Weekend planning	-.001	.90

Note: The two components accounted for 61.71% of variation among items.

Table 17. Descriptive Statistics for Mothers' and Teachers' Reports on the Social Cooperation Subscale of the PKBS- 2 Social Skills Scale

Item #	Mother Report			Teacher Report			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's α	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's α	
2	2.60	.61		2.50	.55		
7	2.38	.61		2.52	.58		
10	2.57	.54		2.38	.70		
12	2.77	.46		2.58	.58		
16	2.87	.40		2.60	.57		
22	2.28	.77		2.56	.62		
23	2.49	.59		2.50	.65		
25	2.45	.69		2.35	.60		
28	2.19	.80		2.15	.80		
29	2.45	.65		2.58	.65		
30	2.40	.68		2.27	.74		
32	2.43	.72		2.35	.67		
Social Cooperation Scale			.76				.95

Note: N=47 for Mothers' Reports and N=48 for Teachers' Reports

Table 18. Descriptive Statistics for Mothers' and Teachers' Reports on the Social Interaction Subscale of the PKBS- 2 Social Skills Scale

Item #	Mother Report			Teacher Report		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's α	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's α
5	2.36	.79		2.23	.83	
14	2.11	.96		2.13	.91	
15	2.87	.34		2.19	.82	
17	2.38	.77		1.69	.78	
19	2.51	.80		1.96	.94	
20	2.45	.80		1.67	.88	
21	2.66	.64		2.10	.95	
24	2.98	.15		2.46	.71	
27	2.49	.69		1.95	.90	
33	2.55	.77		1.81	.87	
34	2.72	.62		2.17	.72	
Social Interaction Scale			.48			
				.95		

Note: N=47 for Mothers' Reports, and N=48 for Teachers' Reports

Table 19. Descriptive Statistics for Mothers' and Teachers' Reports on the Social Independence Subscale of the PKBS- 2 Social Skills Scale

Item #	Mother Report			Teacher Report			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's α	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's α	
1	2.72	.65		2.44	.62		
3	2.83	.43		2.75	.53		
4	2.60	.71		2.63	.64		
6	2.68	.56		2.73	.45		
8	2.40	.71		2.14	.90		
9	2.66	.60		2.52	.68		
11	2.75	.49		2.63	.57		
13	2.17	1.05		2.85	.41		
18	2.66	.60		2.31	.69		
26	2.89	.31		2.15	.82		
31	2.55	.72		2.29	.85		
Social Independence Scale			.73				.88

Note: N=47 for Mothers' Reports, and N=48 for Teachers' Reports

Table 20. Bivariate Correlations between Mothers' Reports on the Social Interaction
Subscale items from the of the PKBS-2

Item #	5	14	15	17	19	20	21	24	27	33	34
5	----	.38 **	.34 **	.34 **	.11	.12	.34 **	-.12	.19	-.09	.12
14		----	.11	.39* *	-.10	.08	.06	.02	-.08	-.05	-.06
15			----	.19	.01	-.03	-.11	-.06	-.01	-.14	-.07
17				----	.28	-.00	.10	.07	.05	-.07	-.09
19					----	-.06	.09 2	.46* *	-.03	-.01	.07
20						----	.39* *	-.10	-.01	.29*	.34*
21							----	-.08	-.06	.12	.37*
24								----	.11	-.09	-.07
27									----	-.03	-.08
33										----	.01
34											----

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 21. Comparison of Goal Cluster Membership by Maternal and Child Characteristics

Goal Cluster	Mother's Education Level			Mother's Country of Origin			Mother's Age at Migration			Child sex	
	0-6	7-11	12+	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras or Nicaragua	Prior to Adulthood	Adult	Boy	Girl	
Cluster 1	4	2	5	6	5	0	0	10	2	9	
Cluster 2	10	7	5	10	6	6	8	14	10	12	
Cluster 3	0	3	1	2	2	0	3	1	2	2	
Cluster 4	4	2	5	9	2	0	2	9	7	4	

Table 22. Comparison of Persons Present in Household by Maternal Characteristics

Persons Present in Household	Mother's Education			Mother's country of origin			Mother's Age at Migration		
	0-6	7-11	12+	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras or Nicaragua	Prior to Adulthood	Adult	
Father (biological or social)									
yes	13	10	11	18	11	5	10	25	
no	5	4	5	9	4	1	3	10	
Relative									
yes	13	7	6	12	10	4	6	20	
no	5	7	10	15	5	2	7	15	
Non-Related Adults									
yes	4	4	6	8	4	2	4	10	
no	14	10	10	19	11	4	9	25	
Sibling									
yes	12	12	13	23	10	4	11	26	
no	6	2	3	4	5	2	2	9	

Table 23. Comparison of Weekday Parenting Activities by Maternal and Child Characteristics

Parenting Activities	Mother's Education Level			Mother's Country of Origin			Mother's Age at Migration		Child sex	
	0-6	7-11	12+	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras or Nicaragua	Prior to adulthood	Adult	Boy	Girl
Active and Social Play										
yes	11	8	9	10	13	3	8	18	10	16
No	7	6	7	17	2	3	5	17	11	11
Conversations										
Yes	8	10	8	14	10	4	8	18	12	14
No	10	4	8	13	5	2	5	17	9	13
Going Out										
Yes	8	6	8	14	8	0	6	16	10	12
No	10	8	8	13	7	6	7	19	11	15
Media										
Yes	8	4	5	11	5	1	5	12	7	10
No	10	10	11	16	10	5	8	23	14	17
Pre-academic										
Yes	6	9	8	12	8	3	7	16	8	15
No	12	5	8	15	7	3	6	19	13	12

Table 24. Comparison of Weekend Parenting Activities by Maternal and Child Characteristics

Weekend Parenting Activities	Mother's Education Level			Mother's Country of Origin			Mother's Age at Migration		Child sex	
	0-6	7-11	12+	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras or Nicaragua	Prior to Adulthood	Adult	Boy	Girl
Active and social Play										
Yes	5	1	7	8	4	1	3	10	6	7
No	13	13	9	19	11	5	10	25	15	20
Household										
Yes	3	5	8	9	5	2	2	14	6	10
No	15	9	8	18	10	4	11	21	15	17
Personal										
Yes	3	5	4	7	2	4	5	7	7	5
No	15	9	12	20	13	2	8	28	14	22
Religious										
Yes	5	9	9	14	9	1	6	15	8	13
No	13	5	7	13	6	5	7	20	13	14
Visiting										
Yes	11	3	8	10	9	3	4	18	8	14
No	7	11	8	17	6	3	9	17	13	13

Table 25. Comparison of Goal Cluster Membership by Persons Present in Household

Goal Cluster	Father		Sibling		Relative		Nonrelative	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Cluster 1	8	3	9	2	7	4	2	9
Cluster 2	15	7	19	3	10	12	11	11
Cluster 3	4	0	4	0	2	2	0	4
Cluster 4	7	4	6	5	4	7	1	10

Table 26. Comparison of Goal Cluster Membership by Weekday Parenting Activities

Goal Cluster	Active and Social Play		Conversations		Going Out		Media		Pre-academic	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
	Cluster 1	8	3	5	6	7	4	5	6	7
Cluster 2	10	12	10	12	5	17	8	14	9	13
Cluster 3	3	1	4	0	3	1	0	4	4	0
Cluster 4	5	6	7	4	7	4	4	7	3	8

Table 27. Comparison of Goal Cluster Membership by Weekend Parenting Activities

Goal Cluster	Active and Social Play		Household		Personal Skills		Religious Activity		Visiting Friends and family	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Cluster 1	1	10	2	9	2	9	5	6	6	5
Cluster 2	7	15	7	15	8	14	7	15	9	13
Cluster 3	1	3	2	2	1	3	3	1	1	3
Cluster 4	4	7	5	6	1	10	6	5	6	5

Table 28. Comparison of Weekday Parenting Activities by Persons Present in Household

Weekday Activity	Father		Sibling		Relative		Nonrelative		
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	
Active and social Play									
yes	20	8	17	9	14	12	8	18	
no	14	6	20	2	12	10	6	16	
Conversations									
yes	18	8	20	6	13	13	10	16	
no	16	6	17	5	13	9	4	18	
Going Out									
yes	18	4	16	6	11	11	5	17	
no	16	10	21	5	15	11	9	17	
Media									
yes	10	7	13	4	9	8	5	12	
No	24	7	24	7	17	14	9	22	
Pre-academic									
yes	15	8	18	5	11	12	9	14	
no	19	6	19	6	15	10	5	20	

Table 29. Comparison of Weekend Parenting Activities by Persons Present in Household

Weekend Activity	Father		Sibling		Relative		Nonrelative		
	yes	no	yes	No	yes	no	yes	no	
Active and social Play	yes	10	3	10	3	4	9	7	6
	no	24	11	27	8	22	13	7	28
Household	yes	8	6	11	5	9	7	5	11
	no	24	8	26	6	17	15	11	23
Personal	yes	8	4	9	3	5	7	4	8
	no	26	10	28	8	21	15	10	28
Religious	yes	17	4	21	5	10	11	6	15
	no	17	10	16	6	16	11	8	19
Visiting	yes	17	5	13	9	13	9	6	16
	no	17	9	24	2	13	13	8	18

Table 30. Differences in Children's Social Skills by Mothers' Goal Cluster Membership

Goal Cluster	Social Cooperation (Mothers' report)		Social Independence (Mothers' report)		Social Cooperation (Teachers' report)		Social Interaction (Teachers' Report)		Social Independence (Teachers' report)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Cluster 1	29.63	3.01	27.55	5.10	33.73 ^a	2.94	24.64	9.14	28.82	5.60
Cluster 2	29.67	4.49	29.09	3.00	27.10 ^b	6.41	19.87	6.97	26.32	5.11
Cluster 3	30.75	2.50	30.25	2.50	25.25 ^b	8.06	20.00	8.76	26.00	5.10
Cluster 4	30.27	4.61	29.45	3.73	31.00 ^{ab}	5.08	25.91	6.01	28.82	3.84

Note: Rows with subscripts which differ (a and b) have means which differ from each other at $p < .10$, according to Gabriel's multiple comparison procedures

Table 31. Differences in Children's Social Skills by Persons Present in Household

Persons Present	Social Cooperation (Mothers' report)			Independence (Mothers' Report)		Social Cooperation (Teachers' Report)			Interaction (Teachers' Report)		Independence (Teachers' Report)	
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Father												
yes	13	30.10	3.90	28.62	3.75	14	29.79	5.91	23.38 [†]	7.67	28.18 [†]	4.88
no	34	29.38	4.31	29.69	3.54	34	28.29	7.06	19.86	7.53	25.64	4.90
Sibling												
yes	36	29.44 [†]	4.12	28.81	3.82	37	29.57	6.72	22.19	8.38	27.30	5.31
no	11	31.36	3.23	29.27	3.38	11	28.64	4.37	22.91	5.20	27.91	3.86
Relative												
yes	26	29.88	4.15	28.58	3.87	26	30.04	5.61	22.69	7.33	27.31	4.98
no	21	29.90	3.87	29.33	3.50	22	28.55	6.93	21.95	8.32	27.59	5.10
Nonrelative												
yes	13	30.15	3.63	29.69	2.81	14	26.57 ^a	7.40	19.93	6.91	26.86	5.04
no	34	29.79	4.16	28.62	3.97	34	30.50 ^b	5.49	23.25	7.91	27.68	5.01

Note: Rows with subscripts which differ (a and b) have means which differ from each other at $p < .10$, [†] $< .15$.

Table 32. Differences in Children’s Social Skills by Weekday Parenting Activity

Weekday Parenting Activity	Social Cooperation (Mothers’ report)		Independence (Mothers’ Report)		Social Cooperation (Teachers’ Report)		Interaction (Teachers’ Report)		Independence (Teachers’ Report)			
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Active and Social Play												
yes	25	29.92	3.86	28.92	4.29	26	28.61	5.51	21.73	8.00	27.19	4.92
no	22	29.86	4.21	28.90	2.96	22	30.23	7.01	23.09	7.49	27.73	5.16
Conversation												
yes	26	30.58	4.17	29.96 ^a	3.42	26	27.77 ^a	6.68	22.58	6.36	26.96	4.63
no	21	29.05	3.67	27.62 ^b	3.67	22	31.23 ^b	5.18	22.09	9.23	28.00	5.43
Going Out												
yes	21	29.29	3.57	28.38	4.04	22	30.86	5.31	23.55	8.43	27.86	5.43
no	26	30.38	4.30	29.35	3.39	26	28.08	6.75	21.35 [†]	7.08	27.08	4.65
Media												
yes	16	27.88 ^a	3.83	28.44	3.71	17	30.00	6.57	23.59	7.43	27.71	4.80
no	31	30.94 ^b	3.71	29.16	3.72	31	29.00	6.12	21.68	7.91	27.29	5.15
Pre-academic												
yes	22	30.23	3.73	28.77	3.66	23	27.70 ^a	7.15	21.35	6.60	26.26 [†]	4.90
no	25	29.60	4.252	29.04	3.78	25	30.88 ^b	4.90	23.28	8.66	28.52	4.90

Note: Rows with subscripts which differ (a and b) have means which differ from each other at $p < .10$, [†] $< .15$.

Table 33. Differences in Children's Social Skills by Weekend Parenting Activity

Weekend Parenting	Social Cooperation (Mothers' Report)		Independence (Mothers' Report)		Social Cooperation (Teachers' Report)		Interaction (Teachers' Report)		Independence (Teachers' Report)			
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Active and Social Play												
Yes	12	31.33 ^a	2.93	30.42 ^a	3.00	13	29.38	5.50	23.54	7.10	28.31	4.68
No	35	29.40 ^b	2.21	28.40 ^b	3.80	35	29.34	6.55	21.91	7.99	26.11	5.11
Household												
Yes	15	31.67 ^a	2.64	30.13 ^a	2.95	16	29.63	5.45	20.63	8.77	26.94	4.77
No	32	29.06 ^b	4.26	28.34 ^b	3.90	32	29.22	6.66	23.22	7.13	27.59	5.14
Personal Skills												
Yes	12	26.50 ^a	3.75	27.25 ^a	4.22	12	25.67 ^a	8.10	19.42 [†]	8.44	25.75	5.82
No	35	31.06 ^b	3.39	29.49 ^b	3.37	36	30.58 ^b	5.03	23.33	7.33	28.00	4.62
Religious												
Yes	21	29.10	3.88	28.43	4.34	21	28.14	7.05	20.14 ^a	8.54	26.19 [†]	5.39
No	26	30.54	4.02	29.31	3.10	27	30.30	5.45	25.07 ^b	6.68	28.41	4.50
Visiting												
Yes	22	30.59	3.32	29.10	3.42	22	29.95	5.85	23.27	6.94	28.05	4.18
No	25	29.28	4.47	28.76	3.97	26	28.85	6.60	21.58	8.37	26.92	5.60

Note: Rows with subscripts which differ (a and b) have means which differ from each other at $p < .10$, [†] $p < .15$ according to Dunnett's multiple comparison procedures.

Figure 1. The Developmental Niche

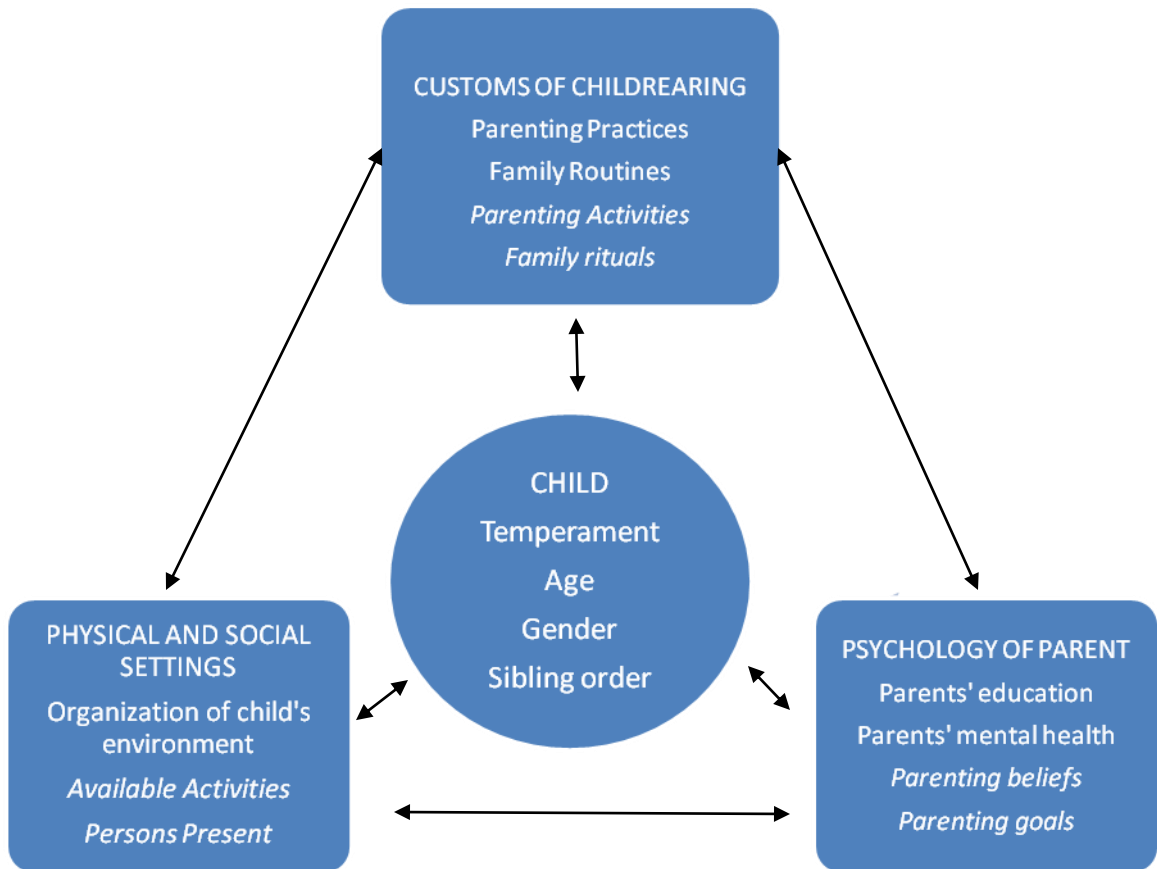
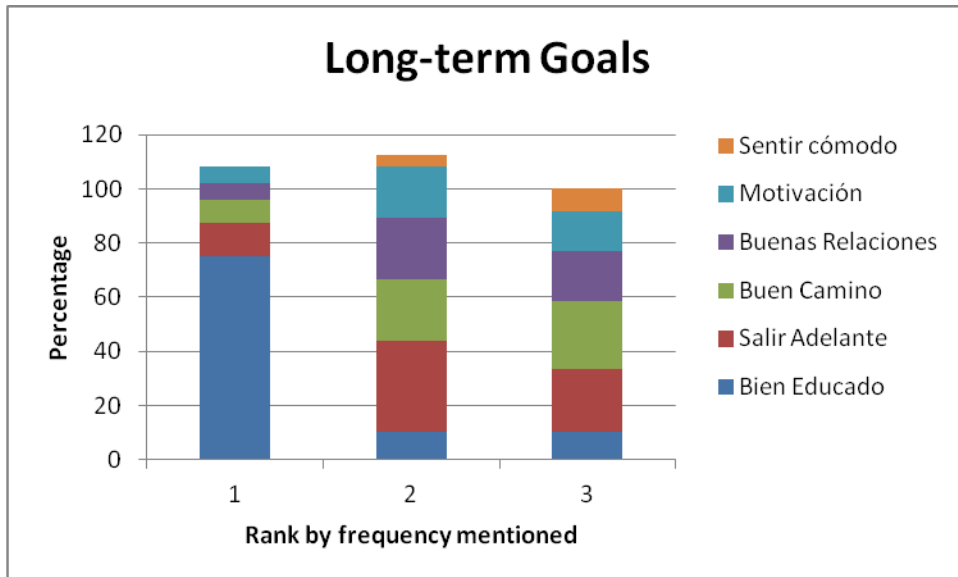
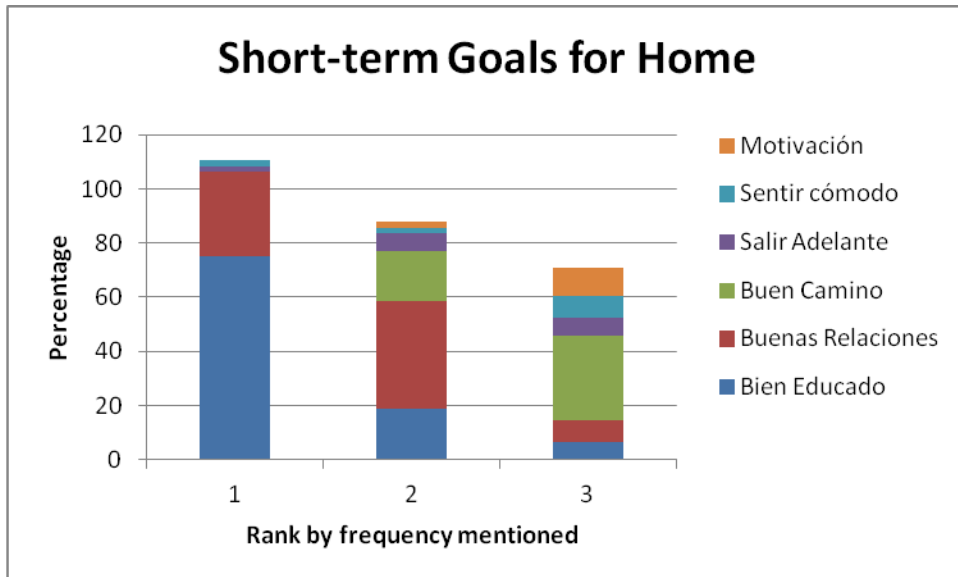


Figure 2. Mothers' Long-Term Goals



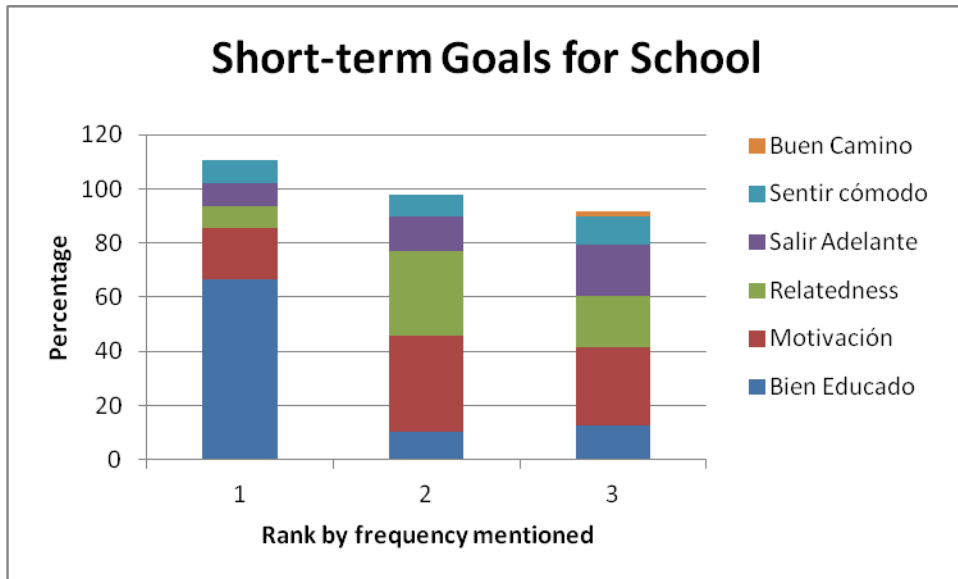
Note: Percentages can surpass 100% because multiple goals could share a rank if mothers' percentages of responses for these goals were the same.

Figure 3. Mothers' Short-term Goals for Home



Note: Percentages can surpass 100% because multiple goals could share a rank if mothers' percentages of responses for these goals were the same.

Figure 4. Mothers' Short-term Goals for School



Note: Percentages can surpass 100% because multiple goals could share a rank if mothers' percentages of responses for these goals were the same.

Appendix A: IRB Approval

2/22/12

Renewal Application Approval



1204 Marie Mount Hall
College Park, MD 20742-5125
TEL 301.405.4212
FAX 301.314.1475
irb@umd.edu
<http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB>

Renewal Application Approval

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL ADDRESS AS IT IS UNMONITORED

To: Principal Investigator, Dr. Brenda Jones Harden, Human Development
Student, Nicole Denmark, Human Development

From: James M. Hagberg
IRB Co-Chair
University of Maryland College Park

Re: IRB Protocol: 09-0054 - Socialization for Learning: Examining Pathways from Mothers' Socialization Goals to Children's

Approval Date: February 09, 2012

Expiration Date: February 20, 2013

Application: Renewal

Review Path: Expedited

The University of Maryland, College Park Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office approved your Renewal IRB Application. This transaction was approved in accordance with the University's IRB policies and procedures and 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. Please reference the above-cited IRB Protocol number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

Recruitment/Consent: For research requiring written informed consent, the IRB-approved and stamped informed consent document will be sent via mail. The IRB approval expiration date has been stamped on the informed consent document. Please note that research participants must sign a stamped version of the informed consent form and receive a copy.

Continuing Review: If you intend to continue to collect data from human subjects or to analyze private, identifiable data collected from human subjects, beyond the expiration date of this protocol, you must submit a Renewal Application (<http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/renewal.html>) to the IRB Office 45 days prior to the expiration date. If IRB Approval of your protocol expires, all human subject research activities including enrollment of new subjects, data collection and analysis of identifiable, private information must cease until the Renewal Application is approved. If work on the human subject portion of your project is complete and you wish to close the protocol, please submit a Closure Report (<http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/closure.html>) to irb@umd.edu.

Modifications: Any changes to the approved protocol must be approved by the IRB before the change is implemented, except when a change is necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the subjects. If you would like to modify an approved protocol, please submit an Addendum request (<http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/addendum.html>) to the IRB Office.

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks: You must promptly report any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others to the IRB Manager at 301-405-0678 or jsmith@umresearch.umd.edu

Additional Information: Please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 if you have any IRB-related questions or concerns. Email: irb@umd.edu

The UMCP IRB is organized and operated according to guidelines of the United States Office for Human Research Protections and the United States Code of Federal Regulations and operates under Federal Wide Assurance No. FWA00005856.

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Appendix B: Teacher Informed Consent Form

Title: Socialization for Learning

Introduction: I state that I am at least 18 years of age, in good physical health, and wish to be a part of a research project being done by Dr. Brenda Jones Harden in the Department of Human Development at the University of Maryland, College Park. By signing this form, I agree to participate in the study.

Purpose: I understand that this project is being done to understand parenting processes and children's development in Central American immigrant families. I understand that the information may help schools and Head Start programs to better support the learning of children whose families have immigrated from Central American.

Procedures: I have been told that I will complete a short demographic questionnaire, and complete developmental questionnaires for all the students in my classroom who are participating in the study. I understand that I do not have to answer all questions and can decide not to participate at any time.

Confidentiality: I understand that all information collected in this study is confidential. I am assured that the only people who will know about my opinions or responses will be the researchers on Dr. Brenda Jones Harden's Socialization for Learning Study. My information cannot be shared with anyone other than the research staff. I have been told that my name will not be identified at any time, and that the information I give will be part of a large set of information

Risks: I have been told that this project will have little risk for me. I know that there may be a chance that someone will learn information about me, although the research team will try extremely hard not to let this happen.

Benefits: I understand that this project will not help me personally. I understand that this study will help the research director, local elementary schools, and Head Start programs learn more about providing services for Central American immigrant families and their young children. I know that I can ask questions or decide not to participate at any time. I may also request a copy of the results of this study.

Contact Information: I have been told the name and contact information of the project director: Brenda Jones Harden, PhD, Department of Human Development, University of Maryland, 3304 Benjamin Building, College Park, MD 20742, (phone) 301-405-2580.

If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I may contact the Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland (phone) (301) 405-0678.

TEACHER'S SIGNATURE _____
DATE _____

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

Title: Socialization for Learning

Introduction: I state that I am at least 18 years of age, in good physical health, and wish to be a part of a research project being done by Dr. Brenda Jones Harden and Nicole Denmark in the Department of Human Development at the University of Maryland, College Park. By signing this form, I agree to participate in the study, and give permission for my child's participation

Purpose: I understand that this project is being done to understand parenting processes and children's development in Central American immigrant families. I understand that the information may help schools and Head Start programs to better support the learning of children whose families have emigrated from Central America.

Procedures: I have been told that I would be involved in 1 ½ - 2 hour session at my child's school. I understand that during the visits, my child and I will be videotaped during a play time, that I will be audiotaped while I answer some questions, and that I will give answers to several questionnaires. I understand that I may answer questions in English or Spanish. I understand that I do not have to answer all questions and can decide not to participate at any time.

Confidentiality: I understand that all information collected in this study is confidential. I am assured that the only people who will know about my opinions or responses will be the researchers on Socialization for Learning Study. My information cannot be shared with anyone other than the research staff. I have been told that my name will not be identified at any time, and that the information I give will be part of a large set of information. I have been told that if the researchers are concerned about any abuse or neglect of my child, that they have to by law report their concerns to the local child protective services agency.

Risks: I have been told that this project will have little risk for me. I know that there may be a chance that someone will learn information about me, although the research team will try extremely hard not to let this happen.

Benefits: I understand that this project will not help me personally. I understand that this study will help the research director and Head Start learn more about providing services for Central American immigrant families and their young children. I know that I can ask questions or decide not to participate at any time. I may also request a copy of the results of this study.

Contact Information: I have been told the name and contact information of the project director: Brenda Jones Harden, PhD, Department of Human Development, University of Maryland, 3304 Benjamin Building, College Park, MD 20742, (phone)

301-405-2580. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I can contact The Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland (phone) (301) 405-0678.

MOTHER'S NAME _____ CHILD'S NAME _____

MOTHER'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Appendix D: Participant Screener

Mother's Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Mother's Country of Origin: _____

Mother's Age: _____

Did mother give verbal consent to be contacted? Yes No

Please return to Nicole Denmark if mother was born in Central American country (i.e., El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua), mother is 18 years of age or older, and if mother gives verbal consent to be contacted.

Appendix E: Contact Information Sheet

Mother's Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Mother's cell phone: _____

Mother's home phone: _____

Other relatives phone: _____

Child's schedule: half day preschool full day preschool full day Head Start

Appendix F: Household Information

MOTHER'S INFORMATION

1. How old are you now? _____ years.

2a. Tell us about your work, are you

. Employed.....1

. Unemployed.....2

If Employed answer 2b

2b. How many total hours a week do you work? _____ hours

3. How many years of school have you completed?

None: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12..... _____ years

. College.....13 14 15 16..... _____ years

Graduate study..... _____ years

4. What is the highest degree, diploma, or certificate that you have received?

Highest degree	Check
GED	
HS Diploma	
Vocational Certificate	
Associate	
Bachelors	
Masters/Doctorate	
N/A	

INFORMATION ABOUT "CHILD"

5. What is CHILD'S date of birth?

_____/_____/_____
 Mo Day Year

6. Is CHILD a boy or girl?

Boy.....1

Girl.....2

7. When did your child begin preschool/ Head Start?

_____/_____/_____
 Mo Day Year

INFORMATION ABOUT OUR FAMILY

8) Household Members—*Add Mother's name to list*

Name of Household Member	Relationship to You	Age

9. Do you have other children under the age of 18 years old who are not living with you?

Yes.....1
 No.....0

If Yes answer 10a-10c

10a. How many children are living away from you?....._____children
 10b. Who is taking care of them? _____
 10c. Where are they living? _____

10. How many people are living in your home?....._____people

11. How many rooms do you have in your apartment/house (counting kitchen, bathroom, etc.)?_____rooms

12a. What language do you generally use at home to speak with CHILD?

Spanish only.....	1
mostly Spanish, some English.....	2
50/50.....	3
mostly English, some Spanish.....	4
English.....	5
Other: _____.....	0

12b. What language does CHILD generally speak to you?

Spanish only.....	1
mostly Spanish, some English.....	2
50/50.....	3
mostly English, some Spanish.....	4
English.....	5
Other: _____.....	0

12c. Do you have trouble communicating with CHILD due to language problems (either because he/she does not speak enough [language or origin] or you don't speak enough English?)

All the time.....	1
Frequently.....	2
Sometimes.....	3
Rarely.....	4
Never.....	5

INFORMATION ABOUT PARTNER

13. What is your current marital status?

Single.....	1
Married.....	2
Divorced.....	3
Separated.....	4
Widowed.....	5
Partnered.....	6

14a. Tell us about your partner's work, which of the following best describes his employment status?

Employed.....	1
Unemployed.....	2

If yes go to 14b

14b. How many total hours a week does he work? _____ hours

15. How many years of school has he completed?

None: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12..... _____ years
 College.....13 14 15 16..... _____ years
 Graduate study..... _____ years

16. What is the highest degree, diploma, or certificate that he has received?

Highest degree	Check
GED	
HS Diploma	
Vocational Certificate	
Associate	
Bachelors	
Masters/Doctorate	
N/A	

INCOME and PERCEIVED ECONOMIC WELLBEING (New Hope Project)

17. Some immigrants send money home to family and friends. Does some of your income go to support family or friends in your country of origin?

Yes.....1
 No.....0

18. In a typical month, what was the total amount of money you lived on? \$_____

19. How many people lived off that money?....._____people

20. In the past 12 months, has there been a time when you and your immediate family

	No	Yes
20a. Were without telephone service for any reason?	0	1
20b. Didn't pay the full amount of the rent or mortgage?	0	1
20c. Were evicted from your home for not paying the rent or mortgage?	0	1
20d. Had service turned off by the gas or electric company, or the oil company wouldn't deliver oil because payments were not made?	0	1
20e. Had someone who needed to see a doctor or go to the hospital but didn't go?	0	1
20f. Had someone who needed to see a dentist but didn't go?	0	1
20g. Had to borrow money from friends or family	0	1

21. Which of the following statements best describes the food eaten in (PRIOR MONTH)?

Was there . . .

- Enough of the kinds of food you want.....4
- Enough, but not always the kinds of food you want to eat.....3
- Sometimes not enough to eat, or.....2
- Often not enough to eat?.....1

Appendix G: Adapted Socialization Goals Interview

****Interview to be audiotaped****

In this part of the study, we're looking at mothers' views about children, what they like and what they don't like. First, I'm going to ask you a couple questions about what you'd like for your own child(ren), and then I'm going to ask you to describe some children you know.

1) Okay, first, I'd like you to think about your own child(ren). Most mothers, when they have a child, have some idea about what sorts of qualities they would like them to possess--what kind of person they'd like them to grow up to be. When you think about your own child, what sorts of qualities would you really like him/her to possess as he/she grows older?

If mother seems confused by question, the following prompts can be used:

- **What kinds of personality traits would you like them to possess, or what ways would you like them to behave?**
- **It can be either personality traits, or behaviors--whatever you'd like to see him/her grow to possess.**

If mother's responses need expansion, the following prompts can be used:

- **Could you tell me more about what you mean by _____?**
- **Could you give me an example?**
- **What else?**
- **Anything else you can think of?**

2) Okay, great. Now I'd like you to think again about your own child(ren). Again, most mothers when they have a child have some idea about what sorts of qualities they would really not want their child(ren) to possess. When you think about your own child(ren) growing up, what are some of the qualities or behaviors you'd really not want to see him/her come to possess as he/she grows older?

If mother seems confused by question, the following prompts can be used:

- **What kinds of personality traits would you not like them to possess, or what ways would you not want them to behave?**
- **It can be either personality traits or behaviors-- whatever you wouldn't like to see him/her grow to possess**

If mother's responses need expansion, the following prompts can be used:

- Could you tell me more about what you mean by _____?
- Could you give me an example?
- What else?
- Anything else you can think of?

3) Okay, you told me before about some of the qualities you'd like to see your own child come to possess. I'd like you to think what these qualities would look like in the way children behave. What would the beginnings of these qualities look like in the way children act in school?

If mother seems confused by the question, the following prompts can be used:

- Can you think of a specific child? It can be any child that you know, including your own child.
- Could you just describe the way that child acts in school child for me, or at least what it is about that child that you like?
- Can you think of specific things that this child has done that are good examples of what you like about his/her personality or behavior in school?

If mother's responses need expansion, the following prompts can be used:

- Could you tell me more about what you mean by _____?
- Could you give me an example of when this child was _____?
- What else?
- Anything else you can think of?

4) Okay, you told me before about some of the qualities you'd like to see your own child come to possess. I'd like you to think what these qualities would look like in the way children behave. What would the beginnings of these qualities look like in the way children act at home or with family?

If mother seems confused by question, the following prompts can be used:

- Can you think of a specific child? It can be any child that you know, including your own child.
- Could you just describe that way that child acts at home or with his parents/family?
- Can you think of specific things that this child has done that are good examples of what you like about his/her personality or behavior at home or with parents/family?

If mother's responses need expansion, the following prompts can be used:

- Could you tell me more about what you mean by _____?
- Could you give me an example of when this child was _____?
- What else?
- Anything else you can think of?

Appendix H: Daily Routines

*****Interview to be Audiotaped*****

Now, I am going to ask you about your child's daily routines. Knowing about your child's typical day is important in learning what routines and activities may be occurring in the home.

1. Tell me about a typical weekday for your child, especially his routine at home after school.

Walk us through a typical day.....

Prompts

- A. What does your child like to do at home after school?
- B. Describe your dinnertime hour.
- C. How about the bedtime routine? What does he/she do?
- D. Who does your child spend time with after school?

2. Tell me about a typical weekend day for your child

Walk us through a typical weekend day.....

Prompts

- A. What does your child like to do on the weekend?
- B. Describe any breakfast, lunchtime, or dinner routines.
- C. How about the bedtime routine? What does he/she do?
- D. Who does your child spend time with on the weekend?
- E. How are weekend days different from week days?

Appendix I: Family Ritual Questionnaire

I am going to read you some descriptions of family routines and traditions. Every family is different in the types of routines and traditions that they follow. In some families routines are traditions are very important but in other families there is a more casual attitude towards routines and traditions.

I am going to talk to you about a particular family activity. Think about how your family acts or participates during these events. I will read two statements and I want you to tell me which one is most like your family. After choosing the statement that is most like your family, decide if the statement is really true or sort of true.

There are no right or wrong answers to each statement, so please try to choose the statement that most closely describes your family.

Dinnertime

Think about a typical dinnertime in your family.

FOR OUR FAMILY				FOR OUR FAMILY	
Really True	Sort of True		BUT	Sort of True	Really True
A	B	1. Some families regularly eat dinner together.		Other families rarely eat dinner together.	C D
A	B	2. In some families everyone has a specific role and job to do at dinnertime		In other families people do different jobs at different times depending on needs.	C D
A	B	3. In some families dinnertime is flexible. People eat whenever they can.		In other families everything is scheduled; dinner is at the same time every day.	C D
A	B	4. In some families, everyone is expected to be home for dinner.		In other families you never know who will be home for dinner.	C D
A	B	5. In some families people feel strongly about eating dinner together.		In other families it is not that important if people eat dinner together.	C D
A	B	6. In some families dinnertime is just for getting food.		In other families dinnertime is more than a meal; it has a special meaning.	C D
A	B	7. In some families there is little planning around dinnertime.		In other families dinnertime is planned in advance.	C D

WEEKENDS

Think of a typical weekend with your family.

FOR OUR FAMILY					FOR OUR FAMILY	
Really True	Sort of True				Sort of True	Really True
A	B	1. Some families rarely spend weekends together.	BUT	Other families regularly spend weekends together.	C	D
A	B	2. In some families everyone has a specific job to do on the weekend.	BUT	In other families there are no assigned jobs on the weekend.	C	D
A	B	3. In some families there are set routines and regular events on weekends.	BUT	In other families there are set routines and regular events on weekends.	C	D
A	B	4. In some families, everyone is expected to come to weekend events.	BUT	In other families people come and go as they please.	C	D
A	B	5. In some families weekends are casual; there are no special feelings about them.	BUT	In other families there are strong feelings about spending weekend time together as a family.	C	D
A	B	6. In some families spending time together at weekend events is special.	BUT	In other families there are no special family weekend events.	C	D
A	B	7. In some families there is much discussion or planning around discussions.	BUT	In other families there is little discussion or planning around weekends.	C	D

Appendix J: Permission to Include Excerpts of Published Material in
Dissertation

1



Institute for Child Study/Department of Human Development & Quantitative Methodology
3304 Benjamin Building
College Park, MD 20742-1131

Melanie Killen, Ph.D.
Office: 301.405.3176
Email: mkillen@umd.edu

February 21, 2011

Dean Charles Caramello
The Graduate School
Lee Building

Dear Dean Caramello:

Nicole Denmark is a doctoral student in our department in Developmental Science. I am writing to confirm that Nicole Denmark's dissertation committee has approved the inclusion of methodology and findings from the publication below in her dissertation manuscript. In addition, I approve of this inclusion as well.

Denmark, N., & Jones Harden, B. (2011). Un día en la vida: The everyday activities of young children from Central American immigrant families. *Early Child Development and Care*, DOI:10.1080/03004430.2011.630073.

Her dissertation advisor is Dr. Brenda Jones Harden, Associate Professor, Department of Human Development and Quantitative Methodology.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Melanie Killen, Ph.D.
Professor of Human Development and Quantitative Methodology
Director of Graduate Studies

References

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