



National Latino Family Report 2023

*A comprehensive study of the economic and social issues facing
Latino families with children prenatal through five years old.*



Abriendo Puertas
Opening Doors

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BSP RESEARCH



Latino Family Voices: Creating a Better Future for Our Children

The current political and economic climate feels uncertain, at best. The lack of predictability in the future is a throughline concern for Latino families. They are worried about their children’s future and the stability of the institutions and programs that are intended to support their prosperity.

However, families have a clear understanding of their strengths—and the solutions needed to thrive.

In our recent survey, Latino families have demonstrated strong support for education. They are calling for more resources to help their children develop bilingually and are clear that early care and education programs must incorporate cultural responsiveness.

In this survey of 1,300 Latino families with children aged prenatal to five, we found that parents consume news and media from a diverse spectrum of platforms and providers, making this group well informed of the issues their families face at the community, national, and global levels.

The Latino population in the U.S. grew 23% between 2010 and 2020, from 50.5 million to 62.1 million. Slightly more than half (51.1%) of the total U.S. population growth in that decade came from growth in the Latino population.^[1]

This demographic represents the future of U.S. voters, taxpayers, and consumer power. Latinos are well aware of their current status and place within the country, yet they share deep concerns about the future. A vast majority are troubled by the belief that they will not be able to provide a good future for their children.

However, Latino families have not lost faith in our institutions to help solve the many complex issues we face in society. On the contrary, they want the government and policymakers to aggressively tackle challenges such as underachieving education systems, rising costs of living, climate change, and gun violence. Latino families have expressed strong support for expanding dual-language early education programs and for safety net programs like Medicaid or creating new ones like government-established savings accounts for children and a guaranteed basic income.

Despite the complexities of our times, Latino families want us all to create a better future for our children.

^[1] <https://www.census.gov/>



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A survey of 1,300 families was conducted by BSP Research in partnership with Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors and UnidosUS in October 2022. The study represents parents of children aged prenatal to five, with a robust oversample of parents with children prenatal to three years old. See [Survey Methodology](#) for more.



Early Education

Latino families across the nation are calling for better educational opportunities. As the fastest-growing population in the United States, Latino families understand the importance of preparing their children for the twenty-first century.

Our survey found that **early childhood education, racial history, and bilingualism** were the top priorities and concerns for parents. As our global economy grows, multilingualism is a highly valuable job skill, as well as an important aspect of Latino heritage. A majority of families want their children to learn about race and racial history in school.

Early Childhood Development & Education

Studies have shown that participation in high-quality early childhood education programs has longitudinal, multigenerational effects. Children who attend these programs perform better academically,^[2] stay in school longer,^[3] have lower rates of depression,^[4] exhibit better physical health, and earn higher salaries.^[5]

For **one in five families with children under five years old who reported having a child diagnosed with a learning disability**, early detection and care is especially important.

The top four issues Latino families want the government to address are child safety (see *Security & Safety* section for more), access to quality child care, cost of college, and access to pre-K programs. These education programs are often financially out of reach, which is contributing to the academic performance gap.



Families with children under five years old report having a child diagnosed with a learning disability

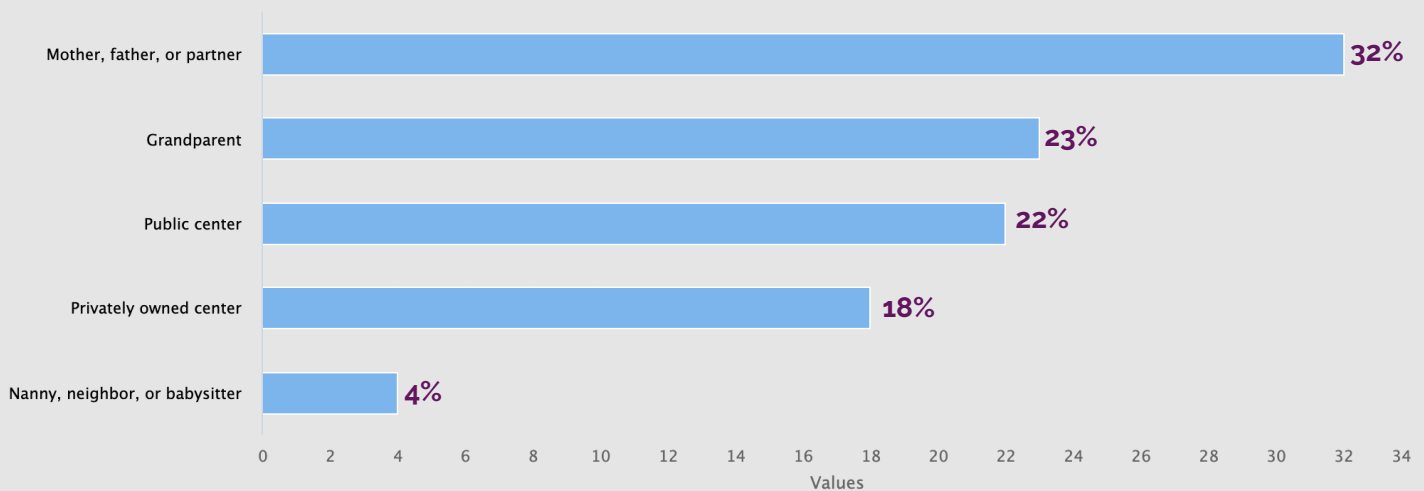


Of Latino families have **not** received any child care since their children's birth



Of Latino families rely on a parent or family member for child care

Source of child care for Latino families



[2] *Brookings Institute, 2013*

[3] *National Bureau of Economic Research, 2021*

[4] *American Economic Journal, 2014*

[5] *Journal of Human Resources, 2017*

Top 5 issues Latino families want the government to address about early childhood development and education



Child Safety



Access to quality child care



Cost of college tuition



Access to quality pre-k



Access to bilingual programs



Most critical skills for child development, according to Latino families



Communication and expression



Problem solving



Cultural and historical education



Vocabulary



Speaking more than one language



Social/emotional development



Motor skills

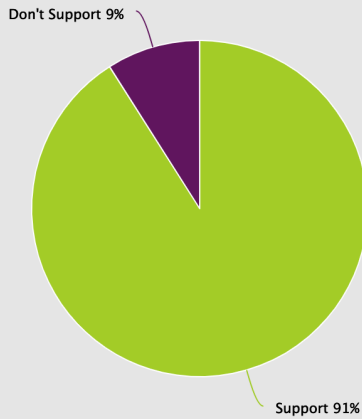


Reading comprehension

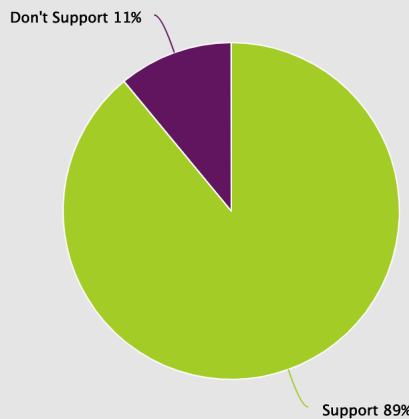
A study from the National Bureau of Economic Research calculated that a dollar invested in **early childhood programs pays off more than nine times in terms of benefits to society.**^[6] Benefits include higher academic achievement, higher earning potential, lower incarceration and crime rates, and improved health outcomes.

Latino family support for investment in early childhood development and education

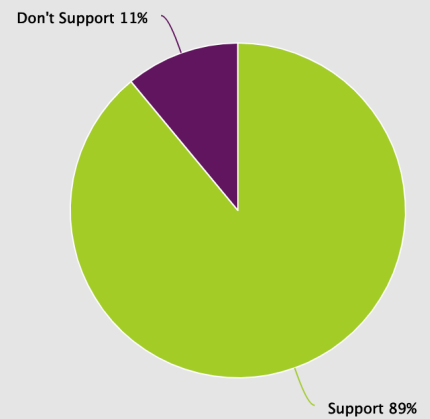
Higher pay for early childhood educators



More funding and expanded subsidies for Head Start programs



More funding for family engagement/resources that support child learning and development



“Quality child care is when they can look at your child as an individual and not as a group. It makes a big difference when a child is acknowledged.”

- Yolanda Garnica
Hayward, CA

Read Yolanda's Story

Most important factors when considering child care:



Quality

Good reputation and skilled caregivers



Hours of Operation

Accommodating parent schedules



Cost

Affordability

[6] https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w29004/w29004.pdf

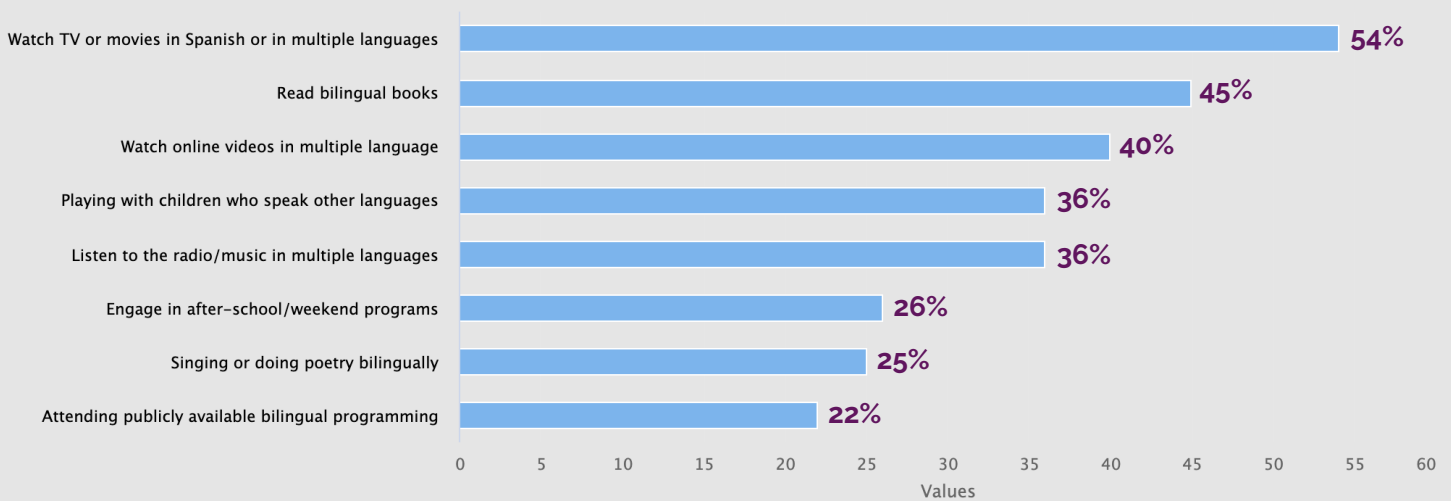
Language, Culture & Race

More than three-quarters of the total English learner population in the U.S.—5.1 million students—are Latino, and a similar proportion speak Spanish at home.^[7] Our survey found that **85% of families value and nurture Spanish language learning** at home.

Nine in ten survey respondents agree that **early care and education programs should recognize and value diverse cultures** and home languages other than English.

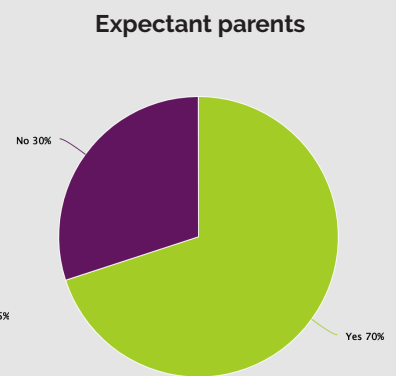
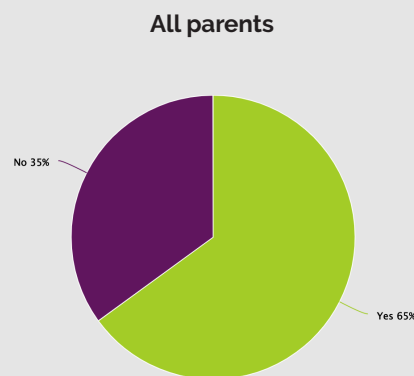
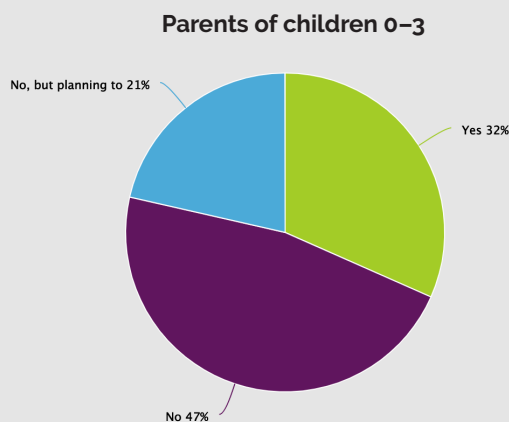
The families in our survey stressed an **urgent need for more bilingual early education programs** for their children under the age of five.

How Latino families support their child's Spanish language development



Latino children enrolled in bilingual, language immersion, or dual-language programs

Latino families who would enroll their child in a bilingual program if it were available



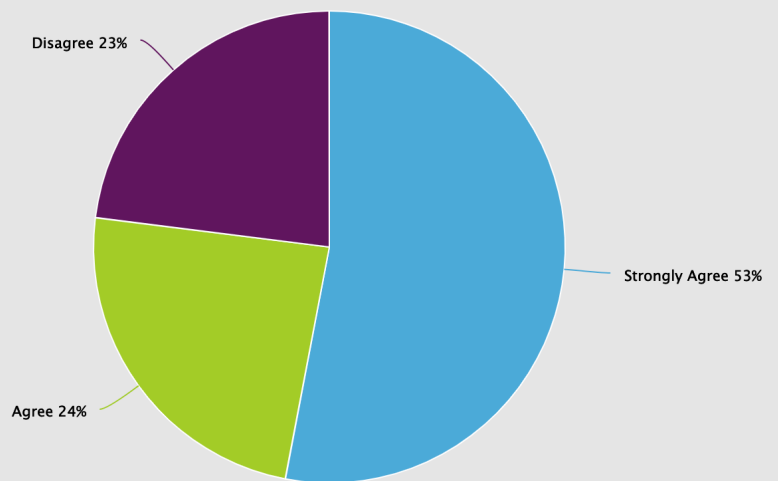
^[7] https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_204.27.asp

Research has shown that access to quality bilingual programs early in life is essential. By 8th grade, bilingual learners have been shown to outperform monolingual peers in reading, math, and attendance.^[8] However, currently, **only 27% of families report having their children enrolled in a bilingual program** in the earliest years.

The pandemic has taken a major toll on Latino student performance, widening the academic achievement gap. Between 2019 and 2021, UnidosUS found that Latino students in 3rd through 8th grade saw greater declines than their non-Latino white peers on interim math (Latino scores fell by 13 points) and reading (fell by 9 points).^[9]

Declining academic outcomes have not gone unnoticed by Latino families. Parents are paying special attention to the discourse around curriculum changes—such as the debate over discussing the history of racism in schools. **A majority of Latino families support teaching about race and racism in public schools.**

Children should learn about race and racism in public schools



"We try to give our girls more of what we didn't have growing up.

I always try to volunteer because if my girls see me taking part in how I want to make a difference in the community then they will hopefully pay that forward."

- Jennifer Torres
Brooklyn, New York

[Read Jennifer's Story](#)

^[8] <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/English-learners-in-Chicago-public-schools>

^[9] https://www.unidosus.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/UnidosUS_Latino-Education_2022.pdf



Mental Health

The past two years of COVID-19-related trauma, loss, and financial stress have created an enormous rise in mental health issues among Latino families. The American Psychology Association found that **Latinos were the most likely to report dangerously high levels of stress** compared with their white counterparts and other people of color.^[10]

Stress is a major barrier to early learning and development. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which include toxic stress in households, can negatively affect children's brain development and other response systems. Research has found that high-stress environments at home and in the classroom impair memory retrieval^[11] and attentiveness while increasing argumentativeness and impulsivity.^[12]

^[10] <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2020/report>

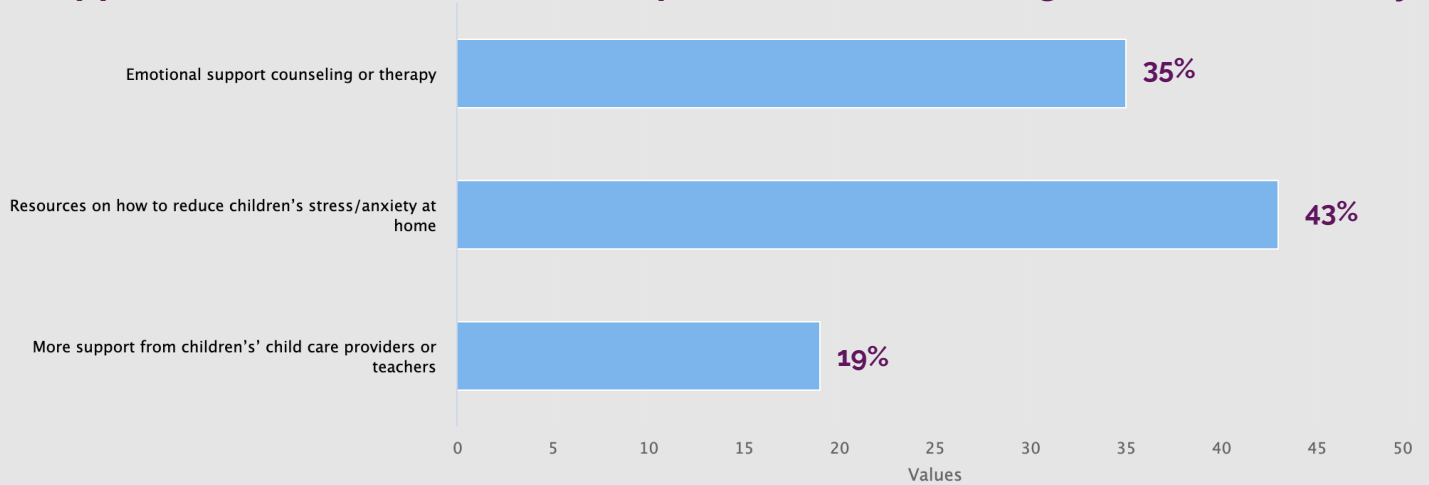
^[11] <https://www.nature.com/articles/npjscilearn201611>

^[12] https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/how-much-does-stress-affect-learning/2011/06/08/AGJCtrNH_blog.html

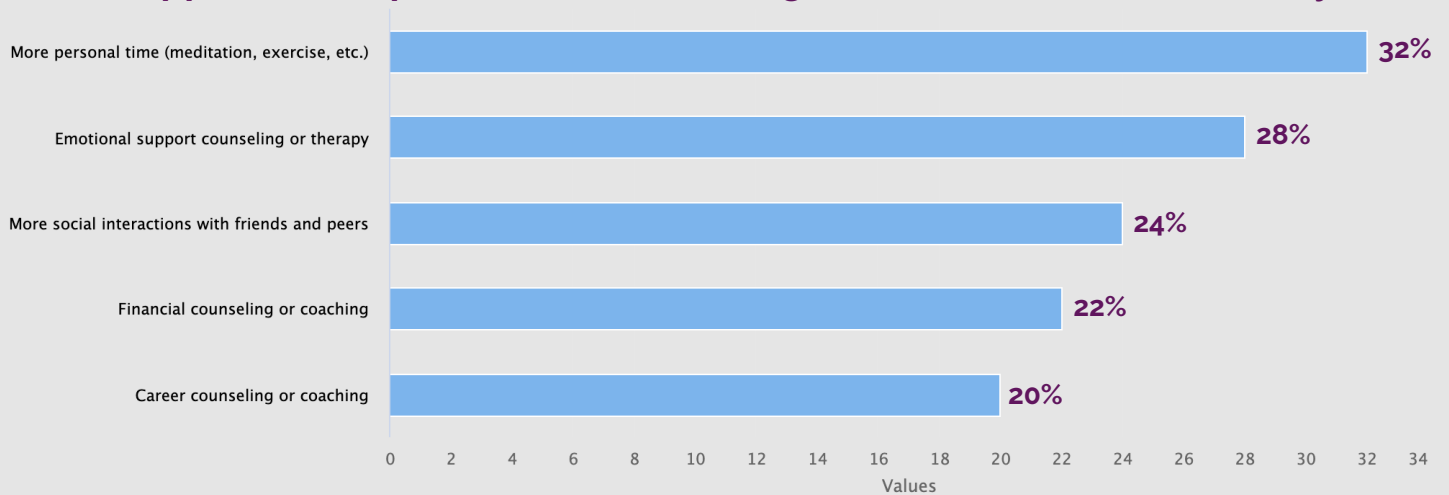


Latino parents are concerned about the mental health of their children and themselves. Our survey found that families have clear ideas about what could help. They are calling for **more funding for infant mental health services, supports for reducing anxiety in the household, and counseling and emotional support.**

Support Latino families need to help their children manage stress and anxiety

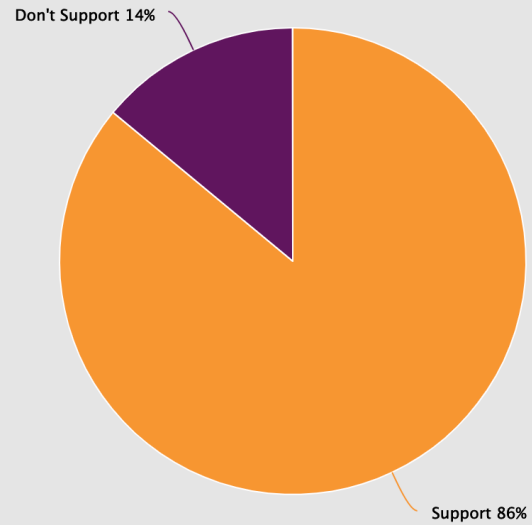


Support Latino parents need to manage their own stress and anxiety



When mental health programs have adequate funding, the rates of depression and stress decrease. Research from Salud America! Found that community-rooted engagement programs such as home visiting, bilingual social workers, and mental health training have promising results for improving mental health among Latino students and families.^[13]

Latino families that support more funding for infant mental health services



"Andrew struggles with trauma. However, he didn't qualify for therapy because he wasn't a MediCal recipient.

If we could have helped Andrew when he was younger, it could have made a big difference."

- Yolanda Garnica
Hayward, California

[Read Yolanda's Story](#)

^[13] <https://salud-america.org/healthy-minds-research/>



Credit: Ryan Rodrick Beiler

Security & Safety

Throughout our survey, Latino parents expressed worry about the uncertainty of both the financial and physical security of their children and themselves. Financial stability is difficult, with most families stating they are concerned that they cannot afford basic expenses because of the rising costs of living.

Also, families have raised concerns over physical security with global issues like climate change that affect droughts, fires, and other natural disasters, as well as localized problems like gun violence and racism, both of which many Latino families have experienced first-hand.

Additionally, Latino families are looking to the government to stabilize these security concerns in the future.

Financial Security

Latino families believe the leading issues they face are the rising costs of living and inflation. **Sixty percent of the families surveyed are concerned that they will not be able to keep up with basic expenses** in the coming years. They also understand the government's role in providing potential solutions to the current financial crisis and look to government response as a possible solution.

A majority of Latino families believe that the top issues the government should address are related to the economy and cost of living.

Top 5 issues Latino families want the government to address



Economy **21%**



Rising cost of living/
inflation **20%**



Improving wages
and income **18%**



Education **17%**



Gun violence & mass
shootings **15%**

Younger parents (under 35)



Reducing housing prices **14%**
(ranked in top 5)

Expectant Families



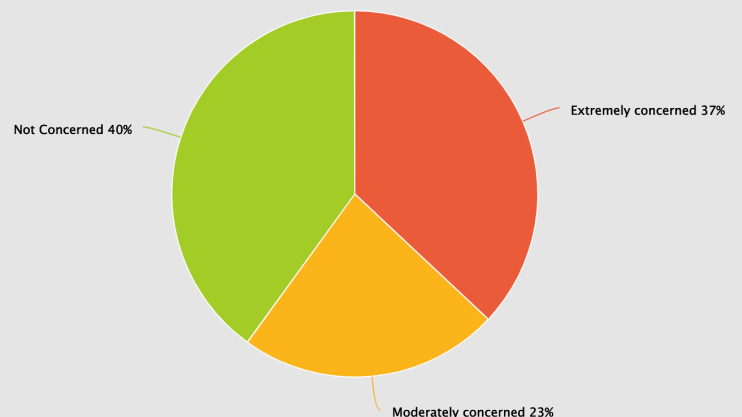
Access to quality child care and
early learning **16%**
(ranked 3rd along with Education,
Protecting Immigrant Rights,
Discrimination/Racial Justice)

Spanish home language-respondents



Addressing gun violence
and mass shootings **29%**
(ranked 2nd)

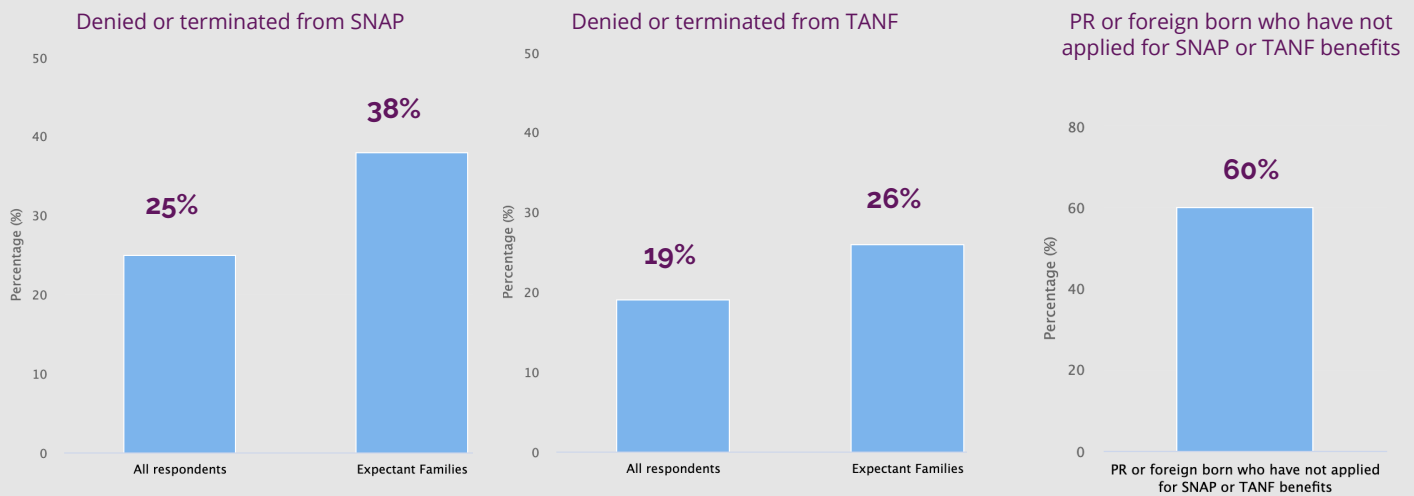
Latino families concerned about keeping up with basic expenses like rent/mortgage or utilities





Credit: Ryan Rodrick Beiler

Challenges Latino families face receiving public benefits



Physical Safety

Existential physical safety issues are front of mind for Latino families, specifically gun violence within their communities. The majority of families are concerned about gun violence, with **18% having first-hand experience with gun violence** within a school or public setting.

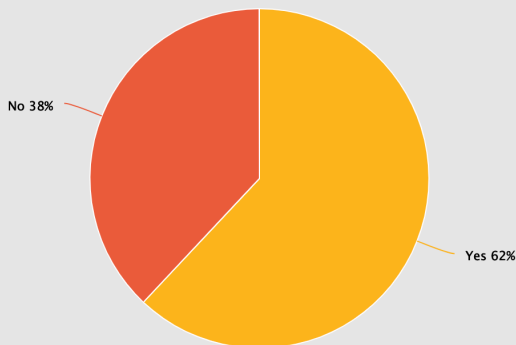
The concern of physical safety related to firearms affects how Latino parents raise their children, with

62% extremely concerned that their child could be a victim of a mass shooting at some point in their life.

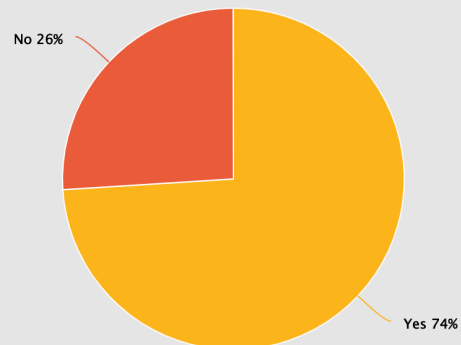
Moreover, Latino families believe that policymakers should take aggressive steps toward reducing the number of mass shootings and have better laws covering gun sales.

The majority of Latino families believe policymakers should take aggressive measures to reduce gun violence

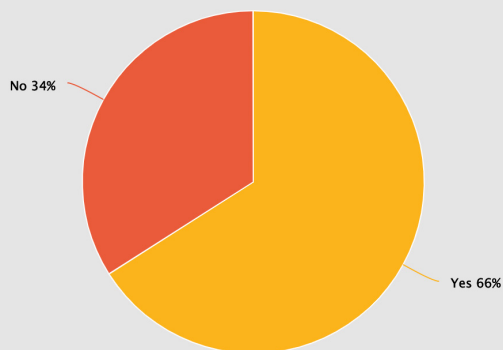
Concerned their child could be a victim of a mass shooting



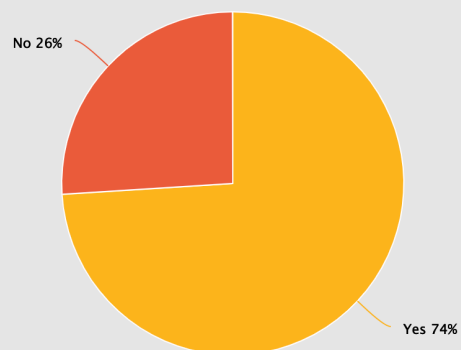
Believe it is very important that policymakers take more aggressive steps to reduce the number of mass shootings.



Want laws covering the sales of guns to be stricter.



Believe that there should be mandatory, universal background checks for all firearm sales.





Opportunity

Although Latino families are deeply concerned about the American economy, they have clear opinions about what government and other social programs can help their families get a leg up. They are concerned about accessing more upward mobility opportunities to build generational wealth for their children's futures.

Our survey heard a resounding call for **wider federal safety nets** and **pathways to better career opportunities**.

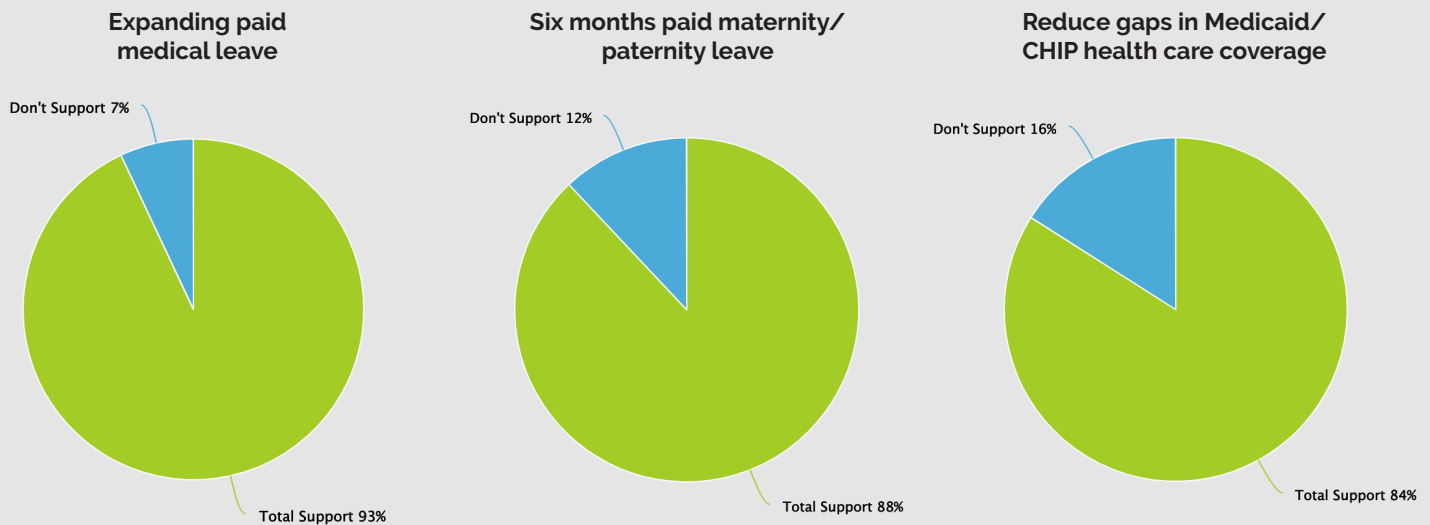
Federal Policies

Latino families responded with **strong support for sick pay, parental leave, and expanded health coverage.** The Center of Budget and Policy Priorities writes, “The United States is alone among wealthy countries in its lack of a national paid leave program.”

Latino families are less likely to be able to afford to take unpaid time off, which exacerbates the nation’s high rate of income inequality.

The benefits of paid leave have been well documented. Paid time off for maternity/paternity leave **improves early childhood development, increases fathers’ involvement, and eases financial stress.** Similarly, paid medical leave **reduces financial insecurity and stress.** Paid time off also helps businesses by improving retention and productivity and can boost labor force participation.^[14]

Federal aid programs that Latino families support



In addition to short-term solutions such as health care and paid leave, Latino families are open to progressive, long-term solutions to building generational wealth for their families.

An overwhelming majority of respondents support federal saving accounts for children and guaranteed

basic income (GBI) programs. GBI programs offer no-strings-attached payments to help fund basic expenses. Government-funded children’s savings accounts are established at birth and are used later in life for retirement, college, to help purchase a first home, or to start a business.

^[14] <https://www.cbpp.org/research/economy/a-national-paid-leave-program-would-help-workers-families>



"I have a full-time position as a school counselor on the horizon.

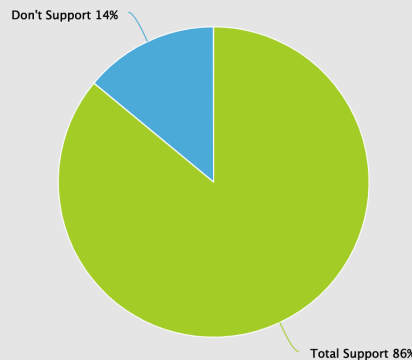
Finding affordable child care will be difficult, but this would be my dream job. I'm determined to make it happen."

- Melanie Cardenas
San Antonio, Texas

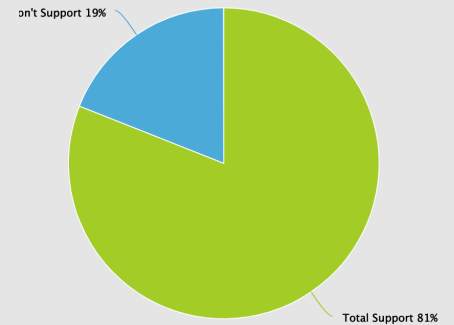
Read Melanie's Story

Long-term public programs that Latino families support

Expanding paid medical leave



Six months paid maternity/paternity leave



Evidence has consistently demonstrated that GBI programs have positive outcomes for low- and middle-income households. A meta-analysis from Stanford University found that **GBI programs lead to a measurable decrease in poverty**, increased school enrollment and attendance, and improved physical and mental well-being.^[15]

In 2019, there were 82 children's savings account programs across the United States. A study examining programs' effectiveness 10 years after accounts were established found that participating families had **higher savings and higher expectations that their children would attend college**. The study also found that families who were enrolled for seven years **saved over four times more of their own money** on average than families who were not enrolled.^[16]

[15] https://basicincome.stanford.edu/uploads/Umbrella%20Review%20BI_final.pdf

[16] <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-10>

Upward Mobility

The 2023 National Latino Family Report heard a resounding call for more support for working families—but parents are not looking for handouts. Twenty percent of respondents requested **more career counseling and coaching**, and 25% supported **more job skill development tools**.

The time and space to pursue higher education is a key determining factor in upward mobility and higher-paying job opportunities. Worryingly, our study found that **10% of respondents were forced to postpone or quit their education** or career-related expenses because of inflation and the rising costs of living.

Quitting or staying in school has important intergenerational effects. A study of first-generation college students found that **children whose parents attended college are more likely to attend university**—and graduate.^[17]

Our study found that Latino parents are craving more access to career coaching and resources for upskilling in the workforce. This could help families attain higher levels of education for themselves and their children.

^[17] <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2018421>

10%

of Latino parents postponed or quit their education because of the rising costs of living

Solutions for Latino upward mobility



Goal-setting tools for education & job skills development **25% support**



Career counseling or coaching **20% support**





About This Study

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Survey Methodology

On behalf of Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors and UnidosUS, BSP Research collected opinions from 1,300 Latino parents and primary caregivers of children 5 years of age or younger, including expectant families, using a blended data collection approach that included online surveys and live telephone interviews conducted via landlines and cell phones. The survey was available in English or Spanish and carried an overall +/- 2.7% margin of error, with larger margins for the subsamples. Upon completion, the data were weighted to match the U.S. Census ACS for parents and grandparents of Latino origin. The survey was conducted from September 6 to October 4, 2022, and included oversamples for both New Mexico and Los Angeles County.

