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Parent Self-Advocacy:
Supporting Intentional Responses
to Misinformation About
Early Bilingualism



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UnidosUS is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that serves as the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Since 1968, we have challenged the social, economic, and political barriers that affect Latinos through our unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an [Affiliate Network](#) of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico. We believe in an America where economic, political, and social progress is a reality for all Latinos, and we collaborate across communities to achieve it.

For more information on UnidosUS, visit www.unidosus.org or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [X](#).

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Latino Infant Initiative

Parent Self-Advocacy:
Supporting Intentional
Responses to Misinformation
About Early Bilingualism

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. LATINO PARENTS/FAMILIES

Overwhelmingly, Latino parents want their children to be bilingual, to speak, read, and write well in both English and Spanish. Latino families want their children to do well in school and to graduate from college. We know this from multiple Latino parent focus groups we conducted in 2022, from discussions with our affiliate organizations that operate ECE programs, and from data contained within the National Latino Family Survey (N = 1300) conducted during the fall of 2022 in collaboration with Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors and BSP Research.

2. MISINFORMATION ABOUT EARLY BILINGUAL DEVELOPMENT

Latino families should be fully supported to accomplish their goals for the bilingual development and school success of their children. Unfortunately, they often encounter misinformation and negative messages regarding early bilingual development, *specifically the belief that young children are “confused” if they grow up with two languages*. In a national survey of Latino families (N = 750) with young children conducted during the fall of 2023 in collaboration with BSP Research, **38% of Latino families whose children receive speech therapy reported being told by the therapist to stop or reduce speaking Spanish to their child.**

3. RESPONDING TO MISINFORMATION

Parent and family self-advocacy can be based on three foundations: (i) families’ beliefs and values; (ii) national and federal organizational position statements and standards; and (iii) extensive scientific evidence.

Additionally, early childhood education (ECE) programs working with Latino families can create spaces in which actual or potential examples of misinformation or negativity can be discussed and intentional responses, based on parents’ beliefs and other information, can be developed.

UnidosUS offers this approach to support Latino parents and families to understand the evidence on early bilingual development and prepare to advocate for their children effectively and confidently.



“ To say to you exactly what she [the child’s speech therapist] said [to me]: ‘Try speaking to him [the child] in English. Don’t bring in any Spanish right now...She’s like, ‘right now, you don’t want to bring in any Spanish...you don’t want to confuse him...’”

— UnidosUS’s parent focus group participant, July 12, 2022, San Antonio, TX



LISTENING TO LATINO FAMILIES

This topic brief is intended to support both Latino* families that want to raise their children to be bilingual beginning in infancy and programs that want to assist them. It confronts the common myth that young children become confused when learning two languages simultaneously. This misconception contradicts the beliefs and values of many Latino parents, the stated principles of early childhood organizations, and extensive research findings on early childhood bilingualism.

Based on data collected by UnidosUS and its partners, Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors and BSP Research,[†] Latino families *overwhelmingly* want their children to:

- Become fully bilingual, able to read and write in both Spanish and English.
- Develop school-readiness skills and experience school success.
- Graduate from high school and college.

Latino families of young children also strongly support increased investments in early childhood education (ECE) systems and services — especially for bilingual programs and increased compensation for the ECE workforce.²

* The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race. This document may also refer to this population as “Latinx” to represent the diversity of gender identities and expressions that are present in the community.

† The brief is based upon three sources of data on Latino families with young children (see Appendix A)

- Our Latino parent focus group findings. In 2022, UnidosUS conducted five focus groups with Latino parents (n = 32) of children under the age of three years.
- Our 2022 National Latino Family Survey (conducted with our partners BSP Research and Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors), which involved 1,300 Latino parents who have children under the age of six years or who were expecting children.
- Our national survey conducted by BSP Research in September 2023 included 750 Latino participants of families with young children.

MISINFORMATION ABOUT EARLY BILINGUAL DEVELOPMENT

Unfortunately, Latino families often encounter misinformation and negative messages regarding the bilingual development of their children. The basic message is that children are “confused” when they grow up with two languages. The implication of the message is that parents and family members should stop or reduce speaking to their children in Spanish. Latino families encounter this message in family, school, and/or community settings.

In a more elaborate version, the misinformation is presented as: families should minimize or abandon their home language in favor of English so that their child can be successful in school. The misconception is that the development of Spanish “takes away” from English language development, reading success, and school achievement. In UnidosUS’s perspective, this message constitutes **language suppression**: *communication that recommends or results in the loss of a child’s home language.*

These messages constitute *misinformation* because a large body of scientific evidence **contradicts** the idea that home languages “get in the way” of learning English and school success. Instead, the reverse is indicated: a report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine identifies *the importance of children’s home language proficiency for their acquisition of English and their school success.*

The report includes two essential findings:

- Children are born with the capacity to learn two languages easily.
- Children can and should learn English, but not at the expense of their home language.³



Regrettably, although the strong body of scientific evidence on children’s capabilities for successful bilingual development continues to expand, **misinformation remains widespread.**

Competing Information within the ECE Landscape



Misinformation: Children are “confused” by multiple languages.

Scientific evidence: Children are capable of successfully developing multiple languages.



UNIDOS US'S PARENT FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

In two focus groups conducted in San Antonio in 2022, in collaboration with UnidosUS's affiliate AVANCE, three participants informed UnidosUS that their child's speech therapists recommended that they stop speaking Spanish to their child.

- Participant A: *"The speech therapist will say, 'It's better to talk one language, instead of confusing him [the child] with both.'"*
- Participant B: [Interposing] *"I was told the same thing."*
- Participant C: *"To say to you exactly what she [the speech therapist] said [to me]: 'Try speaking to him [the child] in English. Don't bring in any Spanish right now.... She's like, '**right now, you don't want to bring in any Spanish...you don't want to confuse him** since he's just starting to hear.'"*

In two focus groups conducted by UnidosUS in Chicago, in collaboration with our affiliate Gads Hill Center, parents stated that they were "familiar with the idea" that young children are "confused" by two languages. All participants (n = 9) told us that they do not believe this information to be true; each participant stated that it is "very important" to them that their child becomes bilingual.

In our focus group with Latino parents in Wilmington, DE, in collaboration with our affiliate Latin American Community Center, parents told us that they were familiar with the idea that children are "confused" by two languages. Several parents told us that they "used to" believe this; one parent stated that they believe this now "to some extent."

LATINO FAMILIES' EXPERIENCES WITH SPEECH THERAPISTS

UnidosUS's most recent national survey, conducted with BSP Research in August through September 2023, included 750 Latino families with young children.

The survey included four questions related to families' experiences with speech therapists:

1. Has your child ever been seen by a speech therapist?
2. How would you describe the relationship your child's speech therapist has established with you and your family?
3. How would you describe the relationship your child's speech therapist has established with your child?
4. Has the speech therapist ever told you to stop speaking Spanish to your child, or to reduce how much Spanish you speak with your child?

Appendix A contains additional information on the survey.



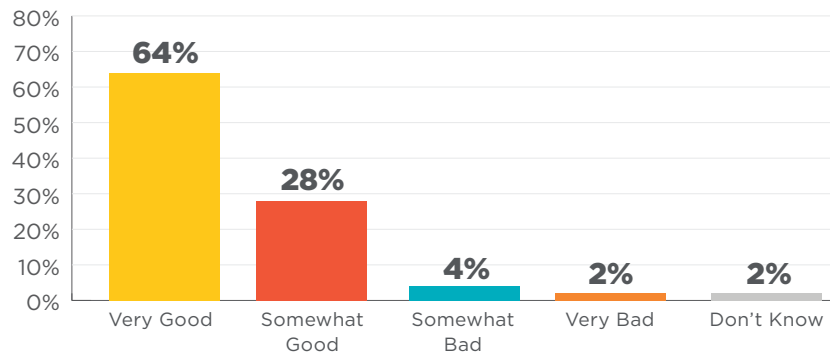
POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Overall, 19% of survey respondents reported that their child had been seen by a speech therapist. Responses demonstrated positive experiences with their child’s speech therapists:

- 95% of respondents agreed that their child has a good relationship with their speech therapist.
- 91% of respondents agreed that their family has a good relationship with their child’s speech therapist.

These results are consistent with the information gathered during UnidosUS’s parent focus groups. Program administrators and classroom teachers mentioned good working relationships with the speech therapists contracted by their programs.

Figure 1: How would you describe the relationship your child’s speech therapist has established with you and your family?

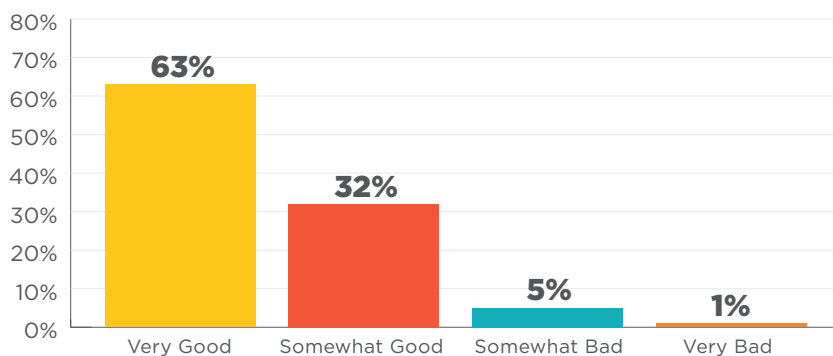


August 28–September 8, 2023 N=750 (+/-3.6%)

Source: BSP Research

19%
of Latino parents have had their child see a speech therapist.

Figure 2: How would you describe the relationship your child’s speech therapist has established with your child?



August 28–September 8, 2023 N=750 (+/-3.6%)

Source: BSP Research

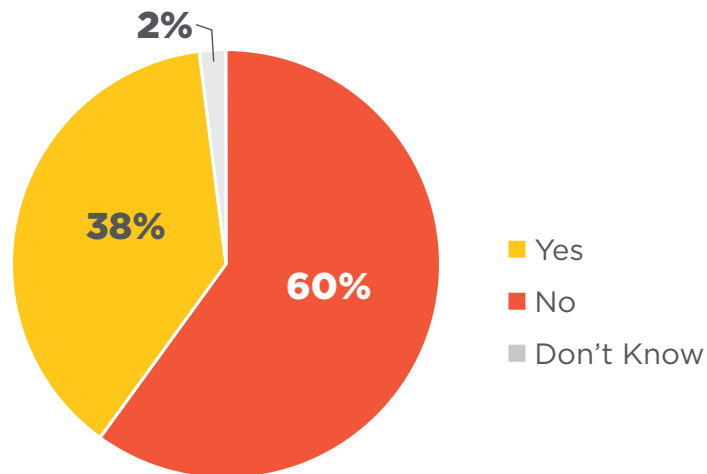
95%
of respondents have reported that their speech therapist has a good relationship established with their children.

DUAL LANGUAGE MISINFORMATION

Unfortunately, good relationships between speech therapists and Latino children and families do not necessarily preclude misinformation about early bilingual development.

The fourth question in our survey asked: Has the speech therapist ever told you to stop speaking Spanish to your child, or to reduce how much Spanish you speak with your child? Here, 38% of Latino families reported that the speech therapist recommended that they stop or reduce speaking Spanish to their child. This data confirms our extensive, previously gathered anecdotal evidence that misinformation about early multilingual development is widespread.

Figure 3: Has the speech therapist ever told you to stop speaking Spanish to your child, or to reduce how much Spanish you speak with your child?



August 28–September 8, 2023 N=750 (+/-3.6%)

Source: BSP Research

Notably,

38%

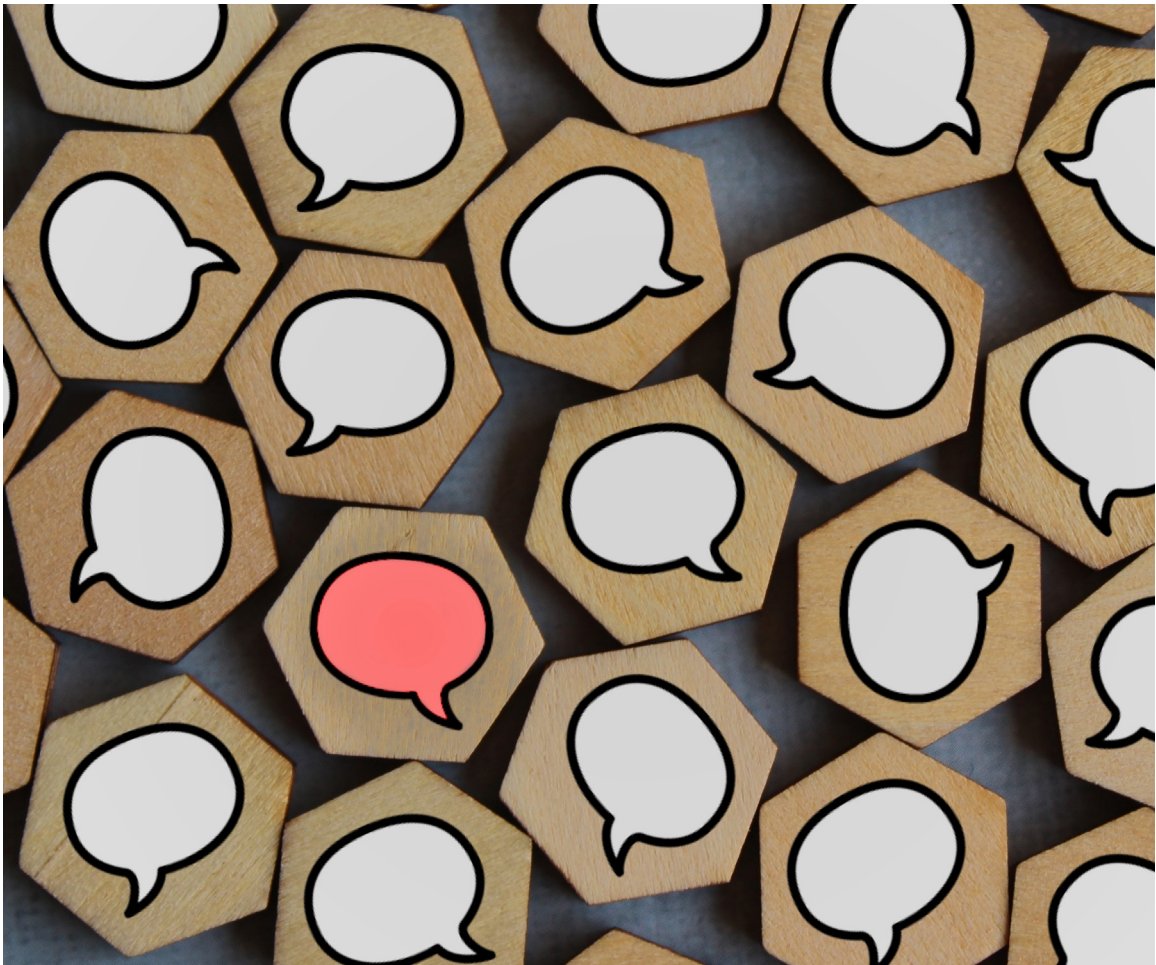
of Latino parents with children who have seen a speech therapist have been told to either stop or reduce the amount of Spanish they speak with their child.



MISINFORMATION: HOW HARMFUL?

Misinformation and negative messages can influence how children are raised, how families spend their time, whether and where children attend preschool programs, and possibly how children and families experience speech therapy, early intervention, or other early educational experiences.

For young dual-language learners (DLLs), their home language serves as their foundation for learning about themselves, their families, and the larger world. It is the context of their identity formation and social-emotional development. It is also a key influence on children's communication and learning, *including many specific cognitive skills that are essential for reading success.*⁴ **To minimize or take away a child's home language is to remove their source of continued cognitive development, learning, and identity formation.**



It is critically important that early childhood education systems and services are informed by the historical and current instances of language suppression against Latino and other language minority communities.

SUPPORTING INTENTIONAL RESPONSES TO MISINFORMATION ABOUT EARLY BILINGUALISM

Given that misinformation regarding early bilingual development is common, UnidosUS identifies an approach to parent self-advocacy based on three foundations:

1. Extensive scientific evidence, reviewed by the National Academies of Sciences.
2. Families' beliefs and values.
3. Organizational position statements and standards.

Taken together, the three foundations provide Latino parents and family members with a solid basis to respond to misinformation about early bilingual development confidently and effectively. It is important to note that the following approach is not intended to be used as a script, but as a guide for reflection, planning, and action. For Latino families who want their children to become bilingual, we offer the following approach:

Parent Self-Advocacy: 3 Steps

- Step 1:** Informing Yourself through Reliable Sources while Recognizing Misinformation.
- Step 2:** Delivering the Response.
- Step 3:** Reflecting on the Response and Ongoing Communication.

STEP 1: INFORMING YOURSELF THROUGH RELIABLE SOURCES WHILE RECOGNIZING MISINFORMATION

Negative messages and misinformation about early bilingual development are common. Parents and family members have the basis for powerful and informed responses when they experience this.

This includes:

- Extensive scientific evidence.
- Their own beliefs and values.
- Organizational position statements, standards, and regulations.





Parents must inform themselves about early bilingualism. However, this can be challenging, considering misinformation is so widespread. Therefore, parents should try to learn from reliable sources by looking for research studies and national organizations that provide science-backed information.

Scientific Evidence

Scientific evidence **contradicts** the idea that home languages “confuse children” and “get in the way” of learning English and school success.

Instead, the reverse is indicated: the report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine points to the *importance of* children’s home language proficiency *for* their acquisition of English and their school success. The report includes the following key points:

- Children are born with the capacity to learn two languages.
- Learning and language development begin **before** birth.
- Children do not benefit by minimizing or eliminating their home language.
- **Children can and should learn English, but not at the expense of their home language.**⁵

There is extensive research evidence available to support Latino parent self-advocacy. Here, we present some of the main scientific findings on bilingual developmental research:

- **Children have the capacity to learn two languages.** “Current research supports the view that infants possess the biological ability to acquire two languages without jeopardizing their long-term competence.”⁶

- **Babies start learning languages while in the womb.** Newborns are able to differentiate between the sounds from the languages that their mother spoke while they were in the womb, versus other languages.⁷ Therefore, if they can already differentiate their languages before birth, they can also do it later in development. Thus, bilingual babies are not confused.⁸
- **Bilingualism does not cause language delays.** Bilingual babies can show a different language learning path than monolinguals, especially when only one language is considered. This is because they can learn each of their languages at a different speed depending on who speaks each language to the child, how much and in which contexts. Therefore, when evaluating language development in bilingual infants and children, all language abilities must be considered. When both languages are taken into account, bilingual children show the same language knowledge (or sometimes even more) than children learning only one language.⁹
- **Children with developmental delays or disabilities can also grow up bilingual.**¹⁰ Studies show that children with developmental delays (such as language delays, autism¹¹ or down syndrome¹²) can learn multiple languages. In fact, bilingualism may have a positive impact on these children's social interactions because if they speak the multiple languages of their families, they will have more opportunities to practice their language and social skills. Those children might need to receive therapy in the multiple languages that they are learning.¹³
- **“Suppressing a child’s minority language or cultural pattern of language use is not necessary** for a child to learn a majority language and culture and could have negative effects on a child’s socioemotional wellbeing.”¹⁴ Not being able to efficiently communicate with some of their family members and fully connect with their identity and heritage could affect their wellbeing.¹⁵
- **Learning a home language is not detrimental for the society language.** On the contrary, bilingual children can transfer knowledge from one language to the other. Thus, improving the skills of the home language can be beneficial for the society language, and it can improve school outcomes. For example, a study shows that Spanish-spoken abilities help children’s reading skills in English.¹⁶ Thus, bilingualism can lead to one language supporting the development of the other language!
- **Bilingualism has lifelong benefits.** Research shows that bilingualism can be beneficial across many different domains; from cognitive to social and cross-cultural advantages. “Bilingualism is associated with lifelong benefits for children that grow with two or more languages.”¹⁷



Beliefs and Values

Parents' beliefs and values are a strong basis for responding to misinformation. As Fred Genesee and colleagues point out, language plays a crucial role in how parents socialize their children.¹⁸

Parents and family members use language to accomplish a wide range of parenting tasks, such as comforting children; setting expectations for behavior; explaining rules and consequences of behavior; presenting and explaining cultural norms and expectations; sharing personal and family information; and many others.

It is therefore essential that parents use the language (or languages) that they prefer and are more proficient in. *Expecting or advising parents to minimize or eliminate their preferred language in favor of another undermines parents' and family members' ability to relate to and communicate with their child.*

Parents and family members who want their children to be bilingual should feel encouraged and supported to express their beliefs and values.

Organizational Position Statements

Several organizations, including the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Office of Head Start, have written position statements and/or standards and regulations that can be useful to support Latino parent self-advocacy.

National Association for the Education of Young Children

In their 1995 Position Statement, NAEYC emphasized that: "While children maintain and build upon their home language skills and culture, children can organize and develop proficiency and knowledge in English. Bilingualism has been associated with higher levels of cognitive attainment (Hakuta and García 1989) and does not interfere with either language proficiency or cognitive development... **Bilingualism should be viewed as an asset and an educational achievement.**"¹⁹



The Office of Head Start

The Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) define standards and minimum requirements for all Head Start services.²⁰ They apply to both Head Start (3 to 5 years old) and Early Head Start (under 3 years old) programs.

According to the HSPPS, teaching practices for dual language learners, **“must recognize bilingualism and biliteracy as strengths and implement research-based teaching practices that support their development.”**²¹

The HSPPS state that:

- i. For an infant or toddler dual language learner, *include teaching practices that focus on the development of the home language, when there is a teacher with appropriate language competency, and experiences that expose the child to English;*
- ii. For a preschool age dual language learner, *include teaching practices that focus on both English language acquisition and the continued development of the home language; or,*

Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs

First published in 1991, the Head Start “Multicultural Principles for Early Childhood Leaders” directly address the importance of a child’s home language. Principle number 6 states:

“Effective programs for children who speak languages other than English *require continued development of the first language* while the acquisition of English is facilitated.”²²

STEP 2: DELIVERING THE RESPONSE

Parents can respond to misinformation in different ways. These options include asking questions, making statements, or using some combination of questions and statements. UnidosUS presents a selection of sample questions and statements based on our discussions with parents, teachers, and program administrators at our affiliates that operate ECE programs.

Sample Questions

- Why is it necessary for me to stop speaking Spanish to my child?
- Are you familiar with the National Academy of Sciences report of 2017?
- Are you telling me that my child should not be able to speak with their grandparents?
- It is important for my family to raise my child bilingually. Can you think about ways to promote both languages, so they can also be supported in your setting?

Sample Statements

- “Sorry, but you are misinformed.”
- “Excuse me, but we want our child to be bilingual.”
- “It’s important to my family to raise our child to learn both Spanish and English.”
- “My family’s home language is a resource. We don’t want to give it up. According to the National Academy of Sciences report, it’s not necessary for my child to lose our language to learn English or to do well in school.”

STEP 3: REFLECTING ON THE RESPONSE AND ONGOING COMMUNICATION

When parents or family members respond to instances of misinformation, they may find themselves engaging in ongoing conversations or communication.

In this situation, UnidosUS recommends the following:

1. Remember to keep the focus on the importance of the parents’ beliefs.
2. Confront misinformation with research-based evidence.
3. Keep coming back to the core argument.



PARENT SELF-ADVOCACY: WHAT CAN PROGRAMS DO?

ECE programs can create spaces to proactively prepare parents and family members, and community partners to confront misinformation about early bilingual development.

ECE programs can:

1. *Create spaces* where parents and family members can describe and discuss experiences with misinformation.
2. *Inform, prepare and empower* parents and family members to respond to misinformation and advocate for appropriate educational services and experiences for their child(ren), using multiple sources of information.

Key Messages for Latino Families

- Parents/families that want to raise their children to be bilingual should be supported in this belief.
- Strong home language development between birth – age 5 years is a foundation of reading and school success in English.
- Parents/family members can promote bilingual children’s reading success through daily strategies like talking and reading to their child in their home language – starting even before birth.

Creating Spaces: Building on Latino Parents' Beliefs and Values

- Latino parents want the best for their child(ren). They value education, including skills development and fostering a strong moral and personal character.
- ECE program staff can create spaces to begin and then sustain conversations about parents' beliefs and values regarding their children, including bilingual development. These spaces can be located within a program's existing family engagement offerings: parent meetings, home visiting, socialization experiences, or parent-teacher conferences.
- Parents and family members can be encouraged to speak about their goals and aspirations for their children. Parents who express the desire to raise their children to be bilingual should be encouraged and affirmed in their beliefs. During these conversations, program staff can inquire about parents' and family experiences with negative messages and misinformation regarding bilingual development.

Preparing and Empowering Parents: Experiencing and Processing Misinformation

ECE programs can play a crucial role in helping parents confront misinformation:

- Within safe spaces, ECE program staff, parents and family members can discuss and reflect on their experiences with negative messaging and misinformation.
- For example, conversations can examine possible or actual examples of the “advice” to stop speaking Spanish: What did the person say? How did they say it? What might be said?
- Invite parents and family members to discuss their reactions to the “advice” — how did it feel to hear what was said? What non-verbal communication was involved and how did it impact the situation?
- Other questions to consider: What reasons or explanations did the person provide? Was there any reference to research evidence of scientific studies of bilingual development?
- Programs can also provide parents with examples of research evidence and organizational statements that support their values and beliefs.

CONCLUSION

Latino families place immense value on raising their children to be successful in school and to be bilingual.²³ However, they frequently encounter significant challenges in achieving this goal. Misinformation suggesting that early bilingualism is confusing or harmful for children remains widespread.

Latino families encounter negative messages and misinformation about early dual language development in many different settings and contexts. For example, 38% of Latino parents of children who have been seen by a speech therapist reported they were told to stop or reduce how much Spanish they speak to their child.²⁴

The good news is that parents and families have a strong basis to respond effectively to misinformation. Their belief in the benefits of bilingualism forms a strong foundation for responding to misinformation. Additionally, substantial scientific evidence and policy standards from early childhood organizations endorse both children's capabilities for multilingual development and the advantages of bilingualism. Together, these sources provide parents with a solid foundation to advocate for bilingualism when confronted with misguided advice.

Studies show all children have the natural ability to become fluent in two languages without hurting their development.²⁵ Suppressing a child's home language is unnecessary and potentially harmful.²⁶ In fact, research shows strong home language skills help children learn a second language like English.²⁷ Neuroscientists confirm that childhood bilingualism is positively associated with lifelong social, intellectual, and reading benefits.²⁸ In summary, evidence clearly shows early bilingualism fully supports young children's growth.

Additionally, major early childhood organizations like the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)²⁹ and Head Start³⁰ have clear policies and rules that recognize bilingualism as a strength. Families can confidently cite this to support their bilingual goals.



To support families, early childhood programs can create spaces for parents to discuss their experiences with misinformation and to prepare empowered responses. By confronting myths with facts, parents can overcome the challenges of encouraging and developing their child's home language proficiency.

Because of the damage that misinformation about early bilingualism can cause, it is also critically important that ALL early childhood education systems and services; all programs and all personnel, are informed by the scientific evidence on early bilingual development. They should also be aware of current instances of language suppression, particularly against Latino communities.

This brief equips Latino families wanting to raise their children bilingually with information to respond to misinformation, express their beliefs, and support the development of their children. It highlights the resources parents have available to advocate for their children's optimal development and education. Our goal is to empower families to respond to language suppression and champion bilingualism's lifelong benefits starting in infancy.



ENDNOTES

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APPENDIX A

UnidosUS's Parent Focus Groups:

- **Participants:** n = 32; 30 women; 2 men
- **Age range:** 22-44
- Parent of at least one child under the age of 3 years, enrolled in a UnidosUS affiliate organization (AVANCE, San Antonio, Texas; Gads Hill Center, Chicago, IL; or Latin American Community Center, Wilmington, DE).
- **Country of Origin:** 17 participants born in Mexico; 15 in the United States.
- Attended groups conducted in the language of their choice (three groups conducted in Spanish, 2 groups conducted in English).

BSP Survey, September 2023

- The survey was conducted with a sample of **Latino parents and primary caregivers of children 8 years of age or younger** (N = 750/ +/- 3.6%) across the nation.
- The research design included an oversample of Latino fathers/grandfathers to allow for comparisons to be made between fathers and mothers.
- **Field Day:** August 28 – September 8, 2023.
- Data was collected through a **blended approach** including web-based and telephone interviews (both landlines and cell phones) in either Spanish or English.

APPENDIX B

Misinformation: How Common?

UnidosUS disseminated the findings from our parent focus groups to audiences around the United States, including at state and national conferences and in conversations with our affiliate organizations.

- National Head Start Association Parent and Family Conference, December 15, 2022. Our workshop presentation featured the quotes from the San Antonio focus groups. We asked participants if they had ever had a similar experience — in a room of about 45 people, more than a dozen people raised their hands.
- Teacher focus group at UnidosUS’s affiliate Adelante Mujeres (Forest Grove, Oregon), February 21, 2023. In our teacher focus group that included 24 teachers from our affiliate Adelante Mujeres, we also presented the parent quotes from the San Antonio focus groups. We asked participants if they had ever had a similar experience — or knew of anyone who had been told that two languages cause “confusion.” One teacher said that “the same thing” had happened to her cousin and her niece, who began speech therapy when the child was five years old. When we asked if the teacher knew how her cousin responded, the teacher replied: “My cousin told her ‘Sorry, you are misinformed.’”
- New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children Conference, April 1, 2023. We presented the speech therapist’s quotes from San Antonio and asked participants if they had ever had a similar experience or knew of anyone who had. In a room with 30 participants, 14 people raised their hands. One Latina mom of an 18-month-old baby shared that her home visitor told her that if she speaks Spanish to her baby, he will get behind in his speech development. Her baby is in early intervention and, luckily, the speech therapist told her that this advice was “incorrect,” so she continued to speak Spanish to her baby.
- Region 9 Head Start Family Engagement Conference, October 26, 2023. We asked the audience of the “A Special Opportunity: Latino Fathers of Infants and Toddlers” presentation whether they had heard that children get confused when growing up with two languages. Nearly everyone in the room with 40 participants raised their hand.

APPENDIX C

UnidosUS conducted a focus group with 24 ECE teachers at our affiliate Adelante Mujeres, in Forest Grove, Oregon (February 21, 2023).

When we shared quotes from the San Antonio parent focus group, one of the teachers stated that her cousin had the same experience with a speech therapist when her child [the teacher's niece] was three years old. That is, the speech therapist told the cousin to stop speaking Spanish to her child.

When we asked: “How did your cousin respond?”

we were told: “My cousin said: “Sorry, you are misinformed.”

Other teachers from Adelante Mujeres provided the following reflections and suggested responses, including:

- “The ‘advice’ separates parent(s) from the child.”
- “This is destroying connections between parent and child.”
- “In order for culture to be meaningful, there must be a personal connection. The ‘advice’ takes away the connection.”
- “This cuts off the child from their culture. It destroys identity. Losing language means *losing who the child is.*”



APPENDIX D

National Survey of Latino Parents with Young Children August 28–September 8, 2023 N=750 (+/-3.6%)

Has your child ever been seen by a speech therapist?

- Yes = 19%

How would you describe the relationship your child's speech therapist has established with you and your family?

- Very good **64**
- Somewhat good **28**
- Somewhat bad **4**
- Very bad **2**
- Don't know **2**
- TOTAL GOOD **91**
- TOTAL BAD **7**

How would you describe the relationship your child's speech therapist has established with your child?

- Very good **63**
- Somewhat good **32**
- Somewhat bad **5**
- Very bad **1**
- Don't know **0**
- TOTAL GOOD **95**
- TOTAL BAD **5**

Has the speech therapist ever told you to stop speaking Spanish to your child, or to reduce how much Spanish you speak with your child?

- Yes **38**
- No **60**
- Don't know **5**

NOTES
