

# LATINO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ACROSS PRESCHOOL TYPES: A COMPARISON OF HEAD START AND PUBLIC PRESCHOOL



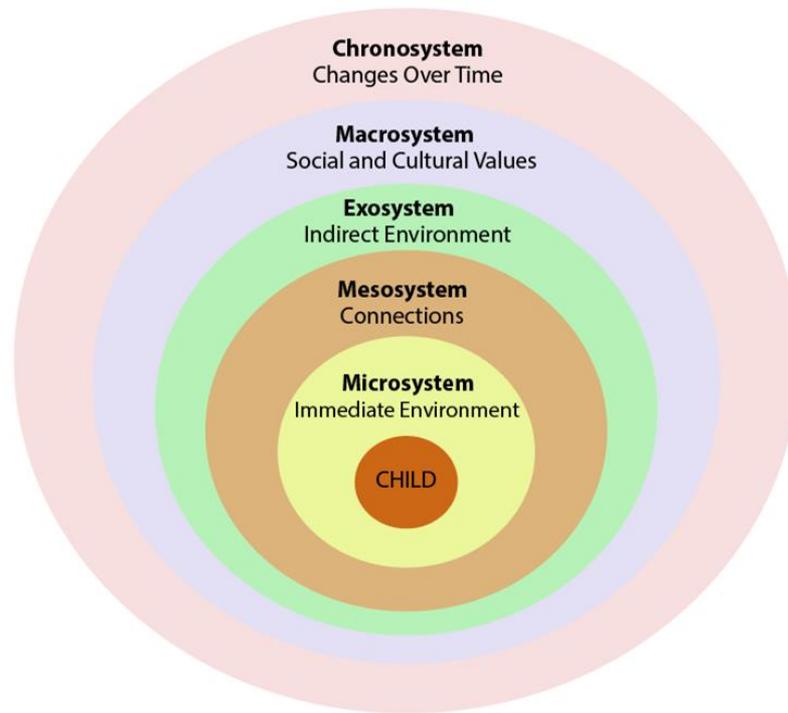
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# BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL THEORY

- Children's immediate and distal environments and interactions are key contributors to their development (*Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998*).
- Bronfenbrenner categorized the environment or external influences into five different levels (*Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998*).



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<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/07/6-facts-about-americas-students/>



# THE MESOSYSTEM: HOME-SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

- The mesosystem: connections between microsystems that support children's optimal development.
- Home-school connections is realized through family engagement (*McWayne & Melzi, 2014*).
- **Family Engagement** = the diverse ways families participate in their children's learning (*McWayne & Melzi, 2014*).



# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



- High levels of family engagement is highly supportive of children's academic engagement and performance.



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/70368812905285490/>

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



- Engagement is often defined from a particular perspective (i.e., monolingual English-speaking European American families) and does not capture engagement behaviors unique to other ethnic groups (*Cooper et al., 2010; Farver et al., 2006; Wong & Hughes, 2006*).

## Attending Parent Teacher Conference



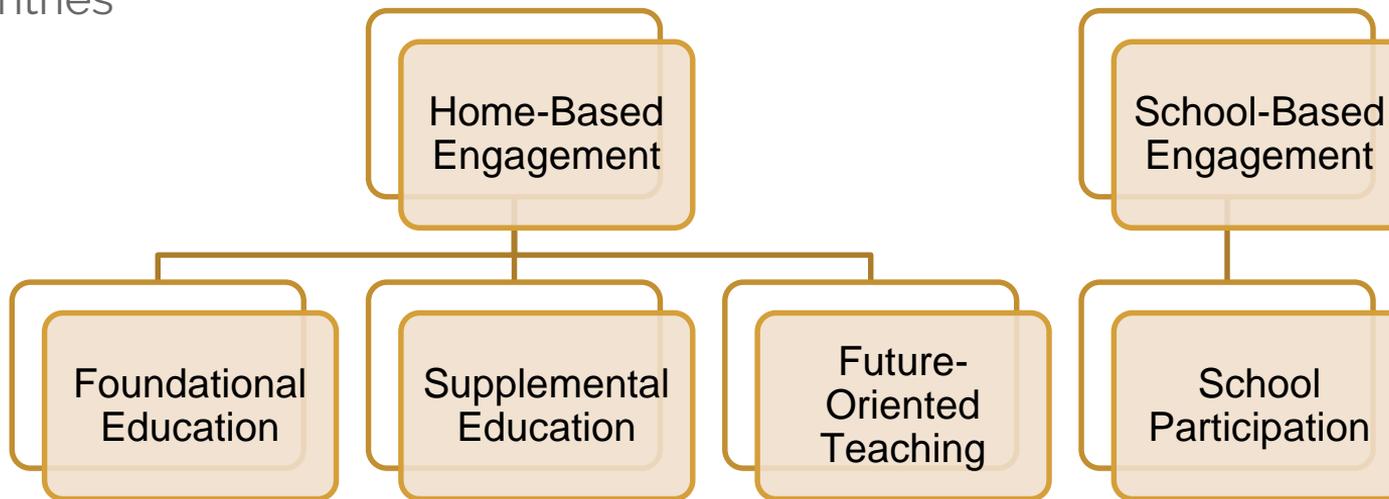
## Participating in School Activities at Home





# A BROADER DEFINITION OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- Using culturally-grounded approaches and mixed methods in a series of studies, **McWayne & Melzi (2013, 2014, 2016)** conceptualized family engagement, in particular for immigrant families from Latin American countries



# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN LATINO FAMILIES



- More involved in children's education at home rather at school (*Billings, 2009; McWayne, Melzi et al., 2013*)
- Acts as protective factor against stressors associated with poverty.
- Helps decrease existing academic disparities between children from under-resourced and affluent communities (*McWayne, Melzi, Limlingan & Schick, 2016*)



[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/faces\\_2009\\_child\\_outcomes\\_brief\\_final.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/faces_2009_child_outcomes_brief_final.pdf)

# FOSTERING ENGAGEMENT IN FAMILIES



- Children from immigrant, low-income communities often attend preschool through federally or state-funded initiatives, such as Head Start or local public schools (*Greenberg et al., 2016*).



<https://www.foodbanknyc.org/advocate/60602cba6bf5bcdbb753d1bb6a5c292-jpg/>

# IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



- Investigating best ways to foster family engagement earlier is critical for **low-income families from immigrant backgrounds**, as poverty places children at risk for school underachievement
- Preschool years is critical as it is often their first contact for families with the U.S. educational system (*McWayne & Melzi, 2014*).



<https://www.foodbanknyc.org/advocate/60602cba6bf5bcdbbb753d1bb6a5c292-jpg/>

# TWO DISTINCT APPROACHES TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



- Developed on Bronfenbrenner's theory of child development (i.e., whole child approach).
- Focus on child's academic wellbeing as well as parents own development (two-generation approach).



- Focus on child's wellbeing over that of parents.
- However, there is "the family and community engagement team" whose goal is to expand efforts to support families engagement practices in education.

# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES



## Gap In Research

- Limited research on family engagement during the preschool years and especially of low-income immigrant families



## Research Question

- Are there differences in the levels of engagement between families whose children attend Head Start versus those who attend public preschool?



## Hypothesis

- Parents whose children attend Head Start will show higher levels of family engagement.

# PARTICIPANTS



- Data were drawn from a larger study investigating Latino children's language and literacy development (**Melzi, Schick & Scarola, 2018**).
- 172 primary caregivers (97% parents).
- 7 preschools serving mostly (> 65%) children from Latino immigrant backgrounds and low-income communities in New York City.



4 Head Start centers (n= 89)



3 Public preschools (n= 83)

# PARTICIPANTS



- Primary caregivers had a mean age of 32.41 (ranging from 20-72 yrs of age).
- On average they had a high school education ( $M = 11.6$  years;  $SD = 4.37$ ).
- About 50% had daughters.

Demographic Characteristic	Percentage Outcome
Employment	46% full time 20% part time 33% does not work outside the home
Home Language	39.5% Spanish 17.4% English 43% Spanish-English bilingual
Country of Origin	33% Dominican Republic 15% Mexico 33% United States 21% Other Latin American countries
Number of people living with child	$M=3.81$ ( $SD= 1.45$ )

# PROCEDURE



- As part of the larger project, folders containing various forms were sent to parents via children's backpacks



<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/07/6-facts-about-americas-students/>

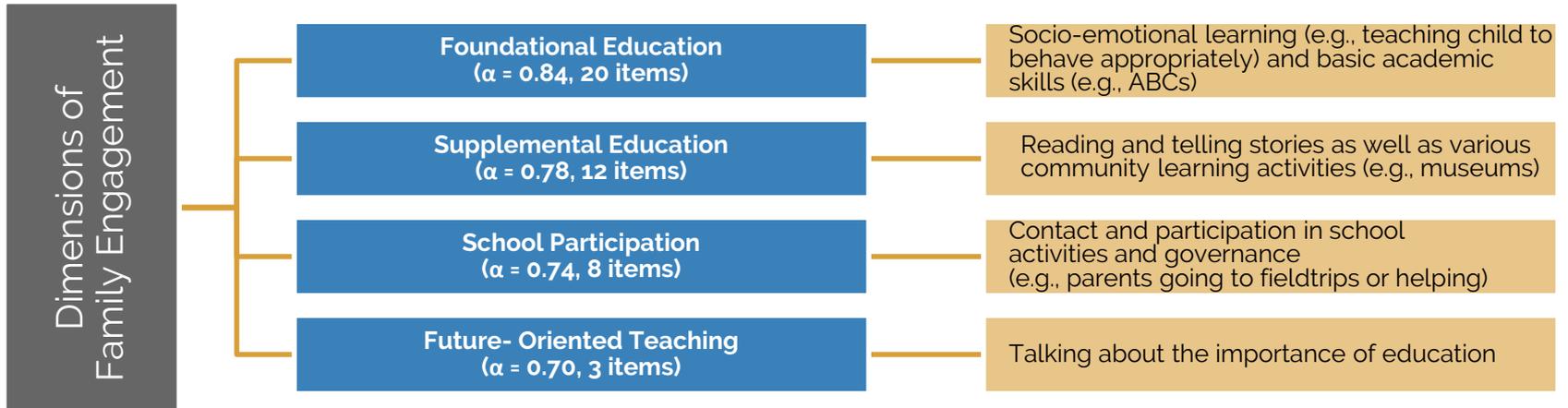


<https://www.target.com/p/2-pocket-paper-folder-red-pallex/-/A-18785909>



# MEASURES

- Demographic questionnaire about family and child.
- *Parental Engagement of Families from Latino Backgrounds* (PEFL-English) or *Participación Educativa de Familias Latinas* (PEFL-Spanish; **McWayne & Melzi, 2014**).



# STATISTICAL ANALYSIS



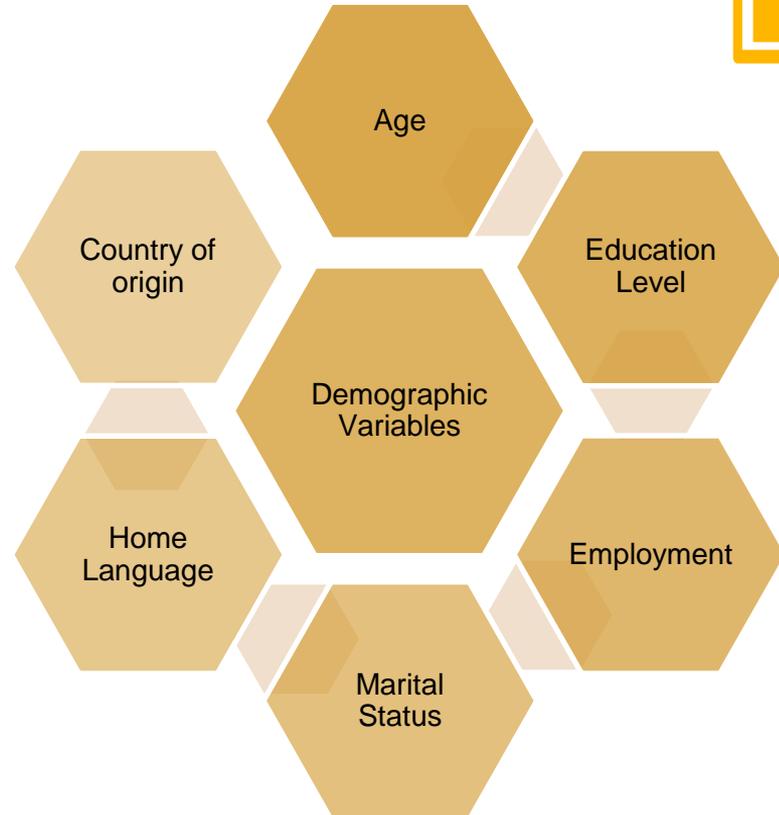
- Used SPSS to conduct two levels of analyses:
  - **Preliminary Analyses:** A series of inferential statistics (e.g., MANOVAs or zero-order correlation) were run depending on nature of the demographic variable (i.e., categorical or continuous).
  - **Main Analyses:** Multivariate analyses of covariance.



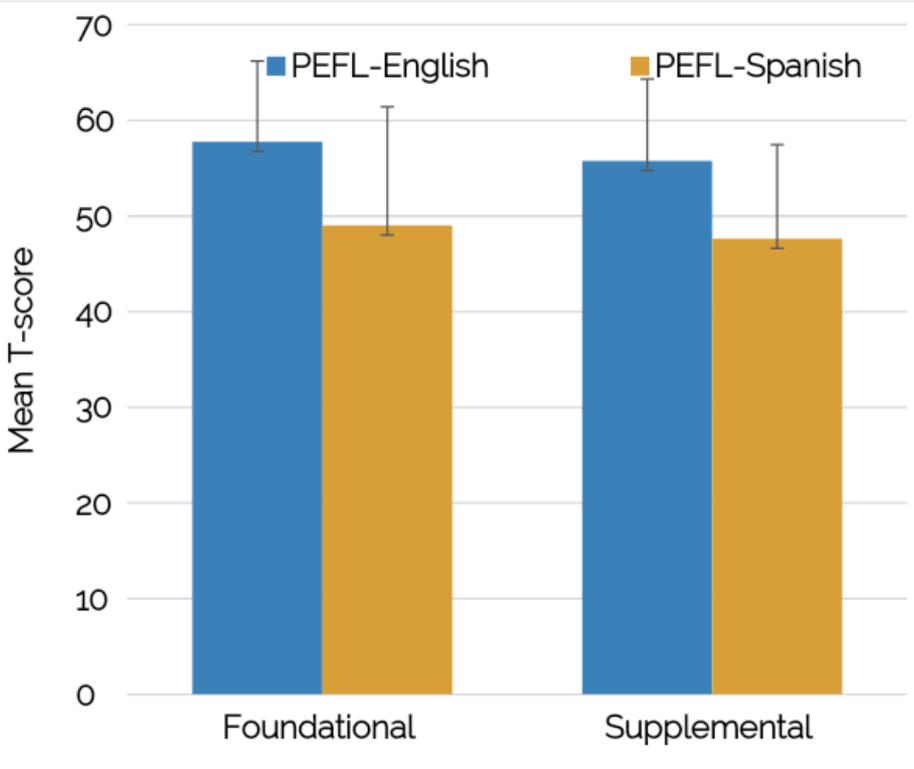
# RESULTS – INITIAL ANALYSIS



- **Task:** To determine which demographic variables needed to be controlled for in final analysis.
- Examined relation between 6 key demographic variables and family engagement dimensions.



# RESULTS OF INITIAL ANALYSIS



$F(1, 166) = 32.54, p < .001, \eta^2 = .16$

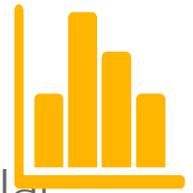
- Significant differences between by language preference.
- Years of formal education has positively and significantly related to:
  - Foundational engagement ( $r = .19, p < .05$ )
  - Supplemental engagement ( $r = .33, p < .00$ )

# RESULTS – MAIN ANALYSIS

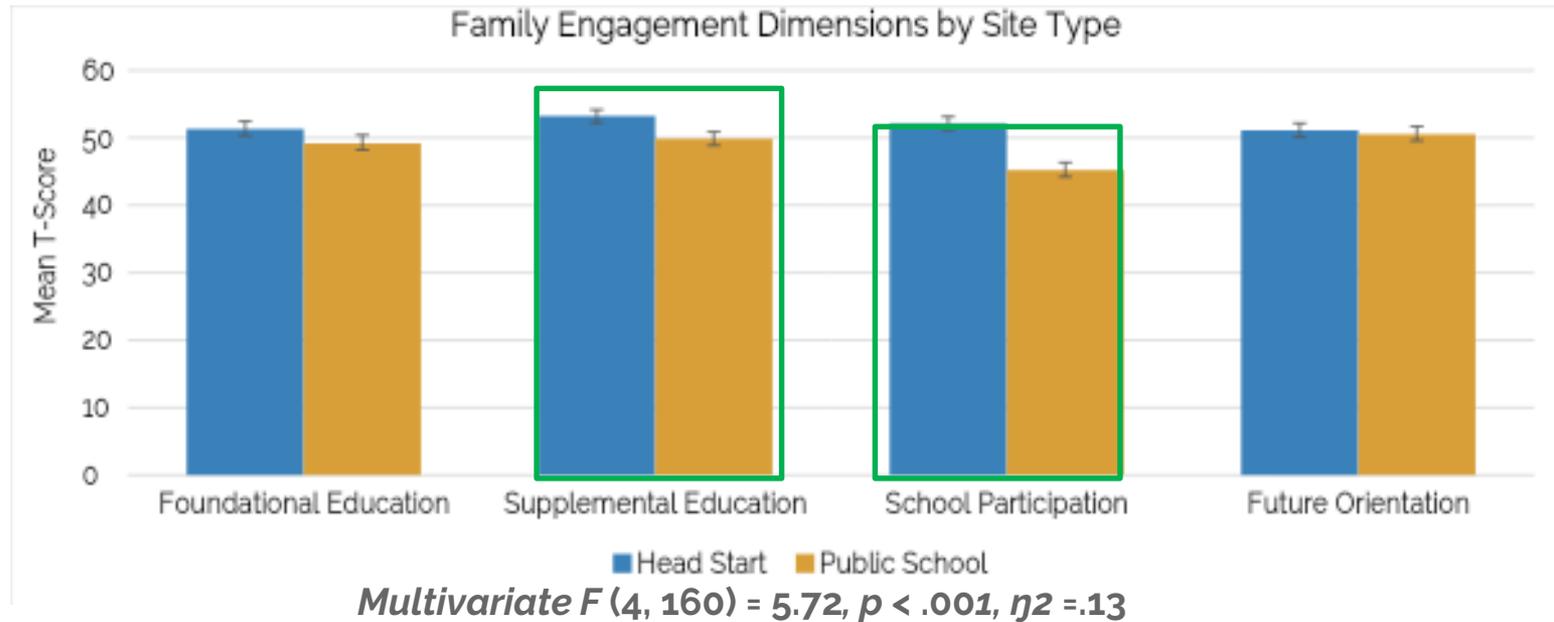


- **Task:** Answered the main research question through a multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVA).
  - **Dependent variables:** family engagement dimensions
  - **Fixed variables:** site type
  - **Covariates:** years of education and language preference

# RESULTS – MAIN ANALYSIS



- Head Start families reported higher levels of engagement, in particular supplemental,  $F(1,163) = 5.73, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$  and school participation,  $F(1,163) = 20.15, p < .05, \eta^2 = .11$ .





# SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- Latino families who are more comfortable in **English** and have **more years of formal education** report higher levels **foundational and supplemental education**.
- Controlling for demographic variables, **Head Start families reported higher levels of family engagement**, in particular of **supplemental education** (i.e., reading to children, going to museums) and **school-based engagement**.



# CONCLUSION



## Hypothesis:

- Parents whose children attend Head Start will show higher levels of family engagement



## Results showed:

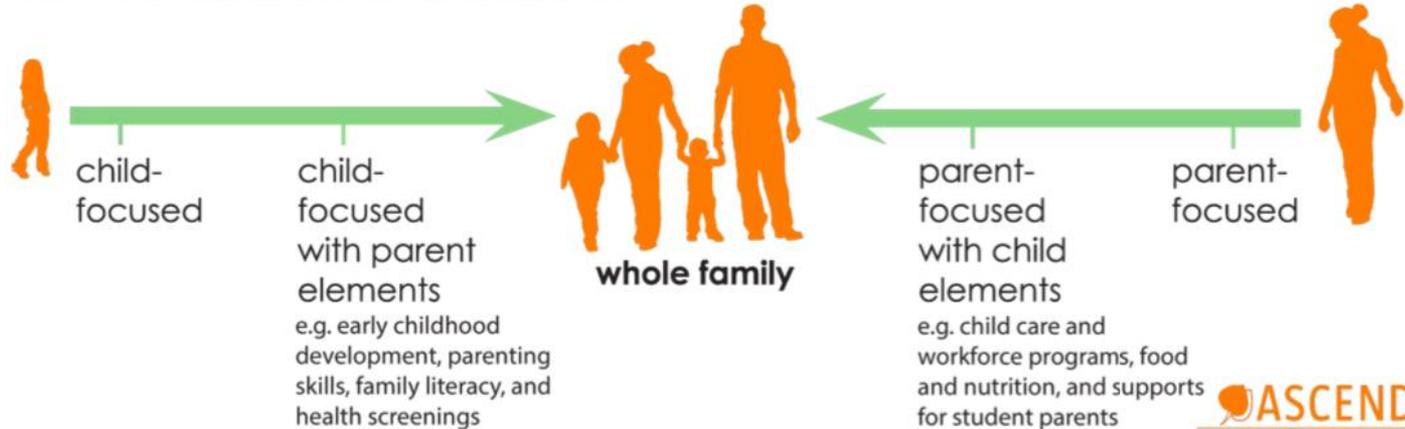
- Head Start caregivers having higher levels of supplemental engagement and school participation

**HYPOTHESIS  
SUPPORTED**

# DISCUSSION

- Results suggest that a **two-generation, whole-child approach** is more supportive of the family engagement of immigrant families from low-income communities.

## The Two-Generation Continuum



# DISCUSSION



- In public preschool, Latino parents reported **less welcoming experiences** at their child's school (Martínez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004)
- Qualitative evidence suggest that conflict over **language differences**, shared values in socialization, and **differing conceptualizations** of what makes children successful in school contribute to these discontinuities (Fuller et al.,1996).



<http://www.clipartpanda.com/categories/significance-clipart>

# DISCUSSION



- Reasons why parents are not engaged in ways school expects them to be:
  - Language barrier
  - Recency in immigration; lack of familiarity of US educational school sys.
  - Work schedule
  - Lack of educational resources



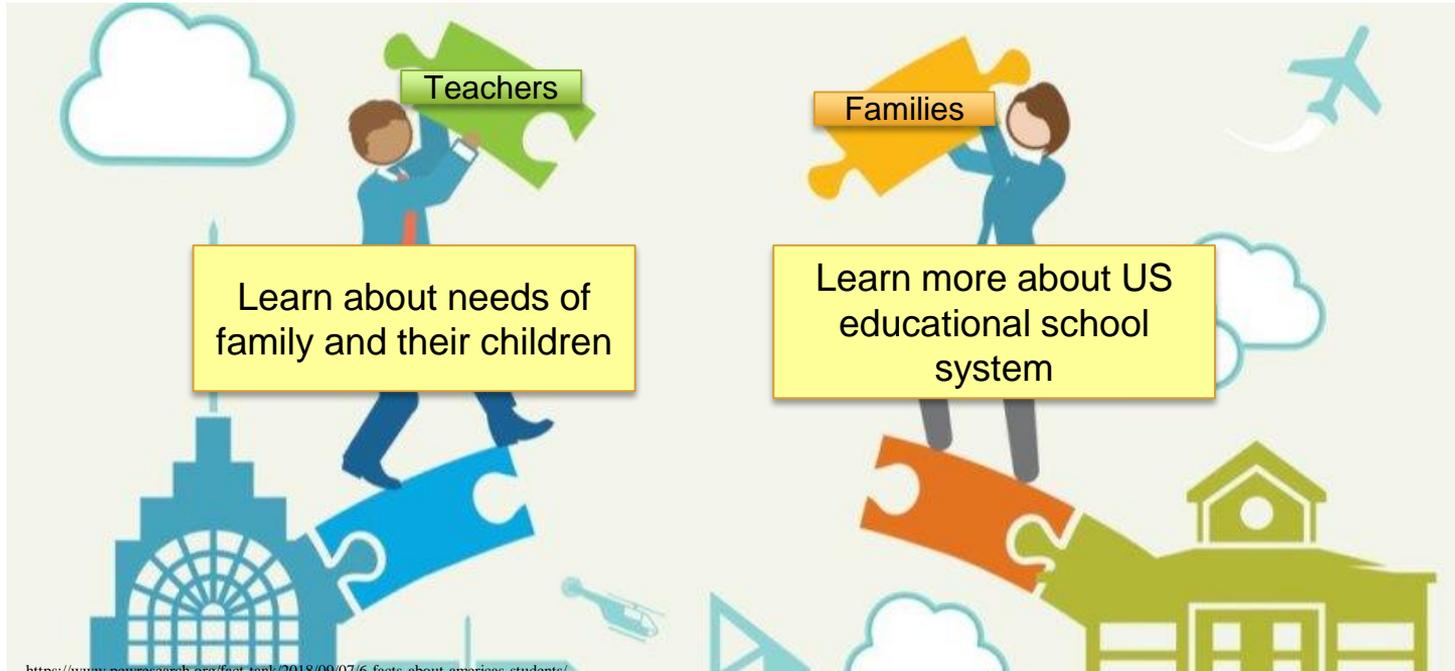
<https://ed.stanford.edu/news/stanford-gse-program-provides-school-interpreting-rural-district>

*Wong & Hughes, 2006*

# DISCUSSION



- More communication between families and teachers to learn about needs of family and their children.

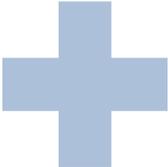


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# DISCUSSION



Two generational  
and whole child  
approach



Have a more  
welcoming  
environment and  
programs that  
support family  
engagement  
practices



Head Start families  
support communit  
y learning  
and participate  
more in school  
activities

# SIGNIFICANCE



- Findings are a first step towards evaluating what school-based factors that support family engagement practices.



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# FUTURE RESEARCH



- More is needed to see how engagement levels relate to child school outcomes.
- Longitudinal study to see whether or not engagements levels will change over time.



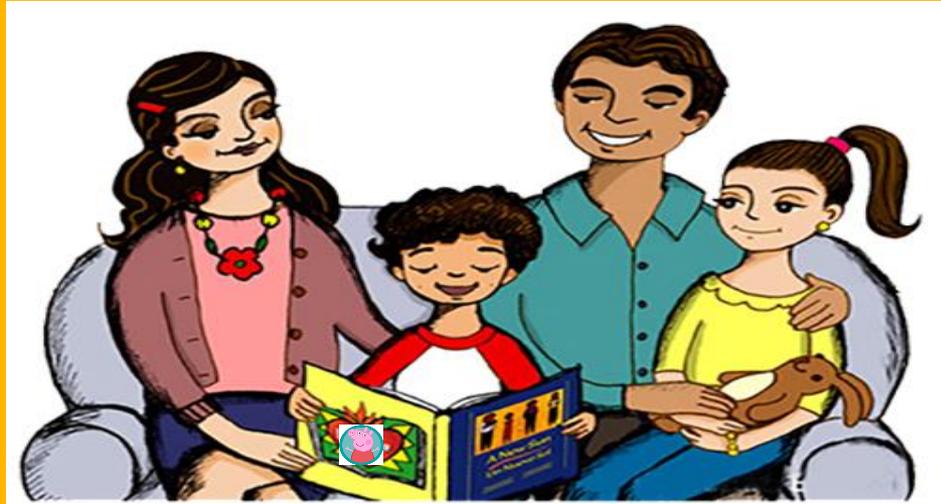
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**Any questions?**