

ALMAR Executive Summary

Background

As part of a community partnership with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and residents of Boulder County, the Early Care and Education Council of Boulder County commissioned a community assessment to determine child care and early learning needs and preferences of Latinos in Boulder County Colorado. One of the broader goals that the Council has embarked upon is to narrow the dramatic achievement gap that separates white students and minority students in Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley school districts.

The research was driven by the notion that Latino children coming from low socio-economic backgrounds do not participate in the licensed system of early care and education within Boulder County. This lack of participation has deprived Latino children of opportunities to engage in comprehensive child development activities. The causes for the lack of participation have included factors such as the costs for care, the lack of trust in the current system, uncertainty about immigration policies, and oftentimes parents concurrently holding several minimum wage jobs. The feeling has been that Latino families instead rely on family members to care for their children (i.e., kin care). The impact of avoiding licensed care, (i.e., early childhood learning opportunities), has been the emergence of developmental gaps that are rarely, if ever, closed. This gap manifests itself in the form of lower academic achievement in school, more health related problems, and other developmental issues. The ECE Council, the Knight Foundation, and other interested community groups/members therefore have set out to identify those early intervention strategies that would help prevent or close these gaps.

Purpose and Research Question

The overall goal of the project was to identify strategies for improving the school readiness of low-income Latino children in Boulder County. In order to achieve this goal the following research question was adopted: What are the strategies to bridge best practices for comprehensive child development and the preferences and early learning needs of Latino families?

School Readiness Overview

In 2000, the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) identified three components of school readiness: 1) readiness in the child; 2) schools' readiness for children; and 3) family and community supports and services that contribute to children's readiness. As presented, these school readiness components are comprised of two types, conceptual and process. The Readiness in Children component is conceptual, (i.e., it relates to the dimensions making up the ideal profile or structure for having a child prepared to enter school). The components, Readiness of Schools and Family and Community Supports for Children's Readiness, are process in nature (i.e., they provide a series of strategies and processes to be deployed by the schools, families, and communities respectively). Key to the success of a community's effort to increase the level of school readiness for Latino children is to develop a set of relationships and processes or bridging strategies that integrate all components within the appropriate context. Since the focus of this study was the use of the child care system, the research group adopted this school readiness model for this system.

Review of the Literature

Consistent with the three components of school readiness described above, the NEGP also identified five dimensions of school readiness that appear across the broad array of the literature (Reconsidering Children's Early Development and Learning: Toward Common Views and Vocabulary. 2000). These dimensions each contain a substantial body of research that explore the foundations of learning and provide practitioners and policy makers with frameworks within which to implement programs or strategies that have demonstrated successful outcomes. These five dimensions for school readiness include:

- *Child Health Status.* This includes infant health, periodic screenings, childhood immunizations, nutrition, dental and mental health and disabilities.
- *Social and emotional development.* This includes a child's view of self and his/her ability to interact with others. To a certain extent, emotional and behavioral problems are closely related to child health.
- *Approaches to learning.* This includes a child's inclination to use skills, knowledge and capacities.
- *Cognition and general knowledge.* This includes knowledge about objects - about particular objects and knowledge about differences between objects. It includes phonemic, spatial and numeric awareness. This dimension consists of the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are presumed to be developmental precursors to conventional forms of reading and writing and the environments that support these developments. This dimension also includes many skills that relate to vocabulary, the ability to rhyme, and letter recognition.
- *Language development.* This includes verbal language and emerging literacy. Verbal skills include listening, speaking, and word recognition. It also includes print awareness.

Of the five dimensions presented, *approaches to learning* has not received a great deal of attention in the literature. It is significant that the Panel suggested that school readiness be viewed as a multi-faceted and inter-related process and that local strategies be comprehensive and multi-faceted. This is consistent with the results of this study.

The literature review provided an overview of existing models that have proven their efficacy through empirical testing. In some cases the literature identified models that were focused exclusively on outcomes for Latino children. In other cases, the models did not disaggregate the data for Latino children, but did identify emerging and promising practices that might be applicable (with modifications) to Latino children. These caveats are identified in the report. Finally, these models are included as guideposts for the creation of investment strategies for future early childhood program funding.

Methodology

Data Collection

The project design included collecting information through focus groups and home visits on the needs and preferences of Latino parents, licensed child care providers, unlicensed child care providers, and community agencies in Boulder, Lafayette and Longmont Colorado. Specifically, the data collected related to the strategies perceived to be effective in bridging the gap between

best practices and needs and preferences of Latino families. A total of thirteen focus groups were convened with representatives from the aforementioned focus group type in each community. One focus group consisted exclusively of fathers. In addition ten individual home interviews were conducted with parents. The research team conducted the majority of the focus groups and home interview in Spanish.

The research team in partnership with the ECE Council developed interview guides and protocols for each focus group type. The questions were drawn from various constructs embedded in the literature. Highly qualified facilitators conducted group and individual home visits and tape-recorded the sessions for later verbatim transcription. The written transcripts became the qualitative data set.

Data Analysis

There were four types of analyses conducted in this project:

1. A constant comparative method of analyzing the transcripts from the focus groups and home visits that produced the various emergent categories (i.e., constructs that contain the ideas, concepts, principles emanating from the participants' discussions). Using this method three research associates reviewed the data and proceeded through a process of establishing inter-rater reliability. From this method came the list of categories (i.e., themes).
2. A break down of the emergent categories by School Readiness Components. The School Readiness Component model provided a framework for analyzing the categories. Using this framework the researchers placed the categories into one of three school readiness components.
3. A break down of the emergent categories by Community (Boulder, Lafayette, and Longmont), i.e., a method of placing the categories into the appropriate community or combination of communities; and
4. A break down of the emergent categories by Group (Parents, Licensed Providers, Unlicensed Providers, and Community Agencies), i.e., a method of listing the categories within each group or combination of groups.

Findings

There were 53 total categories (themes) identified including some duplications. Of these, there were 44 distinct (non-duplicated) categories. The findings are reported from three perspectives: 1) The three School Readiness Components; 2) Categories By Boulder County Community (Boulder, Lafayette, and Longmont); and 3) Categories By Groups.

School Readiness Components

Figure 1 below provides a breakdown of the categories (themes) by the school readiness components.

Figure 1: Breakdown of Themes By School Readiness Component		
Readiness Component		
Readiness in Children 1) Language 2) Language, Bilingualism,	Readiness of Schools 1) Communication between home and school	Family and Community Support for Child's Readiness 1) Accessibility in health insurance

Biculturalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Cultural differences 3) Experiential training 4) Gaining family trust 5) Importance of being bilingual 6) Important skills needed to be caregiver 7) Lack of diversity 8) Training 9) Trust in the current system 10) Trust with the current system 11) Learning is purposeful in child care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Anti immigrant sentiment 3) Barriers 4) Child care: special needs and health 5) Community connections 6) Differences in family values: socioeconomic 7) Differential services 8) Discrimination 9) Domestic violence issues 10) Family pressures 11) Immigration 12) Kincare 13) Lack of legal status 14) Low rates 15) Medical issues 16) Mental health 17) Parent involvement in reading 18) Parent involvement: assets and barriers 19) Parental education 20) Physical and dental health 21) Prenatal health 22) Preventative health 23) Problems of being undocumented 24) Providing care for Latinos 25) Racial attitudes 26) School materials and supplies 27) School/Vaccine dilemma 28) Transportation 29) Trepidation about using licensed child care: immigration 30) Trust 31) Valuing education in children
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Readiness of the Child.

The findings indicated that the respondents (specifically licensed providers and Longmont parents) identified two dimensions that fell into this component: *language development* (in English and Spanish), *bilingualism and biculturalism* and emotional development, (i.e., the child's feeling states regarding self and others - important to developing self efficacy, ability to comprehend others, and ability to express one's own feelings).

The findings in the area of readiness of the child to participate and compete in mainstream school systems indicated that the needs and preferences of Latino families and their children are no different than other families and children. However, the approach in becoming ready for school may differ. For the Latino child the need for early learning strategies that accommodate his/her linguistic and cultural values is important. Both groups (i.e., providers and parents) recognized this, but from different perspectives. For the parents the issue was one of providing the chance for their children to learn English, maintain their native language, and become bicultural (i.e., function proficiently in both cultures). For the service providers it was recognizing the idea that these principles are important, and lamenting the fact that the provider staff could not offer such services at the present time.

School's Readiness for Children

Approximately one fourth of the categories fell into the component related to the School's Readiness for Children - the school's ability to meet the needs of the child. These categories generally relate to areas such as communication between home and school, trust in the system, and training.

With respect to school's readiness for children, it appears that childcare centers are also struggling with how to best meet the cultural and linguistic needs of the children in Boulder County. The findings indicate that there is not an adequate supply of bilingual teachers (i.e., proficient in English and Spanish) to meet the increasing demand for these types of services. There is also a lack of adequate materials in the classroom to stimulate children in their native language. The lack of Spanish books and adequate materials for teachers and childcare providers to send home with the children does not allow for parents to work with their children in the home environment. Language differences also affect the ability of the parents to navigate an unfamiliar system.

The perception is that there is a linguistic and cultural gap between licensed care providers and the Latino families. This can lead to uncertainty and subsequently to mistrust on the part of the part of the parents. Such a lack of trust of the system then becomes one reason for Latino families to choose family members to care for their children. Moreover, the families feel, at times, that they lack the formal education and confidence to provide a stimulating and learning environment for the children.

Family and Community Supports

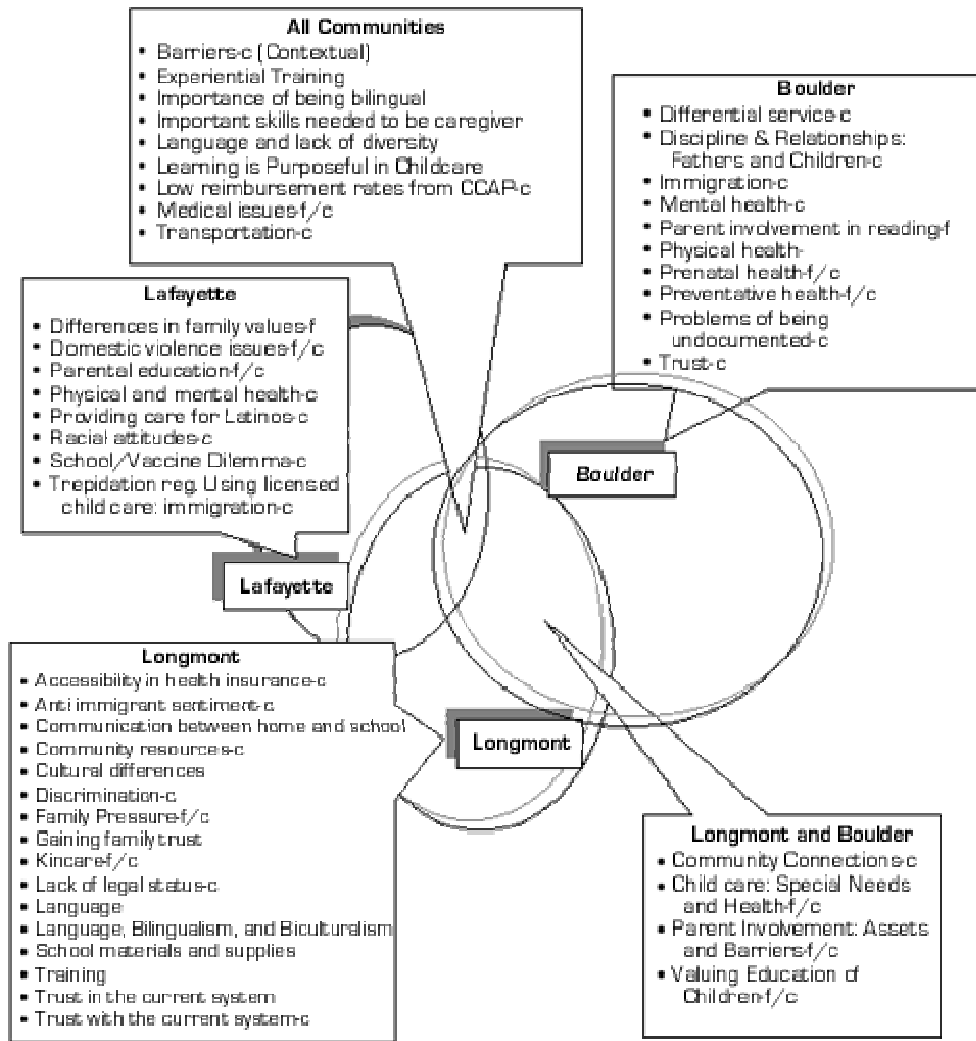
This component focuses on having the families and community coordinate their activities to; 1) ensure that children have access to quality preschool programs; 2) encourage parents to be the child's first teacher and develop skills for working with their children; and 3) ensure that children have the nutritional, physical, and health care needed. More than 70 percent of the categories fell into the third component. These findings indicate that generally most respondents viewed the family and community as the primary vehicles for preparing the child for school. The essence of having schools ready and having families and communities/neighborhoods supporting such readiness oftentimes is social, cultural, and political. This means that leadership and management strategies are more likely to be at the forefront in the thinking of school readiness. That is, parents and community members are less likely to ask the question "What should a child prepared for school look like?" and more likely to ask the question "How can I/we help in preparing the child for school?" In breaking down the categories within the Family and Community Support Readiness component, there were three subcategories: Family (i.e., those affected by the family); Community (i.e., those affected by the community); and Family/Community (i.e., those categories that tended to fall into the type of support most likely provided by a blend of both). The family and community supports and services necessary for school readiness do not exist to the degree necessary to address poor child outcomes for Latino children in Boulder County. Findings indicate similar problems faced by the county's childcare providers. There are several inter-related factors that contribute to the low utilization rates of current childcare systems by Latinos: 1) The high cost of childcare is probably the strongest predictor of low utilization rates of Latino families in the current childcare system (Costs); 2) Another contributing factor is the lack of access to programs due to the various programmatic

criteria set forth for entrance into those programs, i.e., birth certificates, social security numbers, etc. (Access); 3) Other issues include community and social factors such as a general lack of trust towards mainstream childcare and social service providers and feelings of second-class status by Latinos in the community; 4) Socio-cultural factors include the lack of effective communication between and among the key players involved in social and cultural exchanges, cultural and language differences, and the difficulty in navigating the childcare system.

Categories by Boulder County Community

When analyzed by community, there was a consensus by all that being bilingual, having the requisite training and skills for caring for children, being culturally sensitive, and appreciating the learning that occurs in childcare were important needs and preferences for preparing Latino children for school. There were also concerns about real and perceived barriers between the families and the schools. When looking at individual communities, the concerns and focus in Boulder, for example, were on issues primarily related to developmental issues (physical health, mental health, prenatal care, etc.). Those in Lafayette revolved around racial issues, immigration issues, and differences in family and school values. The Longmont issues focused on language and cultural issues, immigration, and trusting the current system. Figure 2 below provides a breakdown of the responses across communities.

Figure 2: Breakdown of Focus Groups By Location: Boulder, Lafayette, & Longmont



Those categories that fell into the Family and Community Support Components were listed by one of the three types of subcomponents: Family Support (F); Community Support (C); or a combination of the two (F/C). For example, Anti Immigrant Sentiment was identified as a Community Support (C) issue. Kincares was identified as a Family Support (F) issue. Valuing education of children was identified as a combination of Family and Community (F/C) issues.

Categories by Group Type

There were six group types involved in the focus groups and/or home visits: 1) licensed child care providers - homes; 2) licensed child care providers - centers; 3) unlicensed child care providers; 4) Latino fathers; 5) parents (focus group and home visits); and 6) community agencies. Figure 3 below provides a breakdown by the various groups.

Figure 3: Breakdown of Issues By Groups		
Community Agencies	Parents	Licensed Providers: Homes
1) Accessibility in insurance-c	1) Childcare: Special Needs and	1) Community resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Anti immigrant sentiment-c 3) Communication between home and school- 4) Differences in family values: socioeconomic-f 5) Differential Services-c 6) Domestic violence issues-f 7) Gaining family trust 8) Kincafe-f 9) Mental health-c 10) Parental education-f/c 11) Physical and dental health-f/c 12) Prenatal health-f/c 13) Preventative health-f/c 14) Problems of being undocumented-c 15) Providing care for Latinos-c 16) Racial attitudes-c 17) School materials and supplies-f/c 18) School/Vaccine dilemma-c 19) Trepidation about using licensed childcare: immigration-f/c 	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Language, bilingualism, and biculturalism 3) Parent involvement in reading-f 4) Trust with current system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Cultural differences 3) Discrimination-c 4) Family pressures-f 5) Lack of legal status-c 6) Language 7) Low rates of reimbursement from CCAP-c 8) Medical issues-f/c 9) Training 10) Transportation-c 11) Trust in the current system <hr/> <p>Licensed Providers: Centers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Language and lack of diversity
<p>Fathers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Child care: Special needs and health-c 2) Discipline & relationships: Fathers and children 3) Immigration-c 4) Parental Involvement: Assets and barriers-f/c 5) Trust-c 6) Valuing education of children-f/c 	<p>Common to Parents and Fathers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Community connections-c 2) Child care and special needs 3) Parental involvement: Assets and barriers 4) Valuing Education of Children 	<p>Unlicensed Providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Barriers-c 2) Experiential Training 3) Importance of Being Bilingual 4) Important Skills Needed to be Caregiver 5) Learning is Purposeful in Child care

The common themes with all childcare providers revolved around language and cultural differences. The fathers focused on parental involvement with their children in school. They also voiced concern about immigration and trusting the system. One major finding among fathers was the concern for the health and special needs of children. The parents overall also expressed the needs and preferences of Latino children as being connected to language and cultural issues, their involvement with their children in areas such as reading, and trust of the childcare system. The concerns and recommendations of community agencies fell primarily into categories of social, health, legal, and economic issues, (i.e., communication between home and school, health care, and immigration). The childcare providers generally raised issues related to care giving, language, cultural differences, and reimbursement rates for their services.

Contextual/Environmental (Exogenous) Factors

The analysis of the categories (themes) also produced another factor separate from those in the School Readiness model. That is, there was a set of themes that related to contextual or environmental factors originating outside (i.e., exogenous to) the childcare system. These themes (and their causes) are outside the control of the childcare system, but potentially impact it. For example, the anti-immigrant sentiment in the community falls out of the control of the childcare system, but impacts the family's desire to have their children participate in formal childcare programs. Figure 4 below includes an analysis that breaks down the categories by Endogenous

Factors (i.e., those issues that originate inside the childcare system) and Exogenous Factors (i.e., those issues that originate outside the childcare system). The analysis provides an ecological breakdown of the categories.

Figure 4: Contextual/Environmental (Exogenous) Factors

School Readiness Components		Endogenous Variables (Originating from within Childcare System)					Exogenous Variables (Originating from outside the Childcare System)
		Developmental Dimensions					
		Child Health	Socio-Emotional	Learning Approaches	Cognition	Language Development	Contextual/ Environmental
Boulder	<i>Readiness of Child</i>	Physical health					
	<i>Readiness of School</i>						
	<i>Family & Community</i>						
	<i>Family</i>			Parental involvement in reading	Parental involvement in reading		
	<i>Community</i>		-Discipline & Relationships Fathers and Children -Mental health				-Differential service -Immigration -Problems of being undocumented -Trust -Community connections
	<i>F/C</i>	-Prenatal health -Preventative health -Child Care: Special Needs and Health	-Child Care: Special Needs and Health				-Parental Involvement: Assets and Barriers -Valuing Education of Children
Lafayette	<i>Readiness of Child</i>						
	<i>Readiness of School</i>						
	<i>Family & Community</i>						
	<i>Family</i>						-Differences in family values
	<i>Community</i>	-Physical & Mental Health -School vaccine dilemma	Physical & Mental Health				-Providing care for Latinos -Racial attitude -Trepidation reg. immigration
	<i>F/C</i>		-Domestic violence		-Parental education		-Domestic violence -Parental education
Longmont	<i>Readiness of Child</i>					-Importance of being bilingual -Language -Language, Bilingualism & Biculturalism	-Communication between home and school -Language, Bilingualism, & Biculturalism
	<i>Readiness of School</i>		-Kincare		-Kincare		-Cultural differences -Gaining family trust -Kincare
	<i>Family & Community</i>						
	<i>Family</i>						-School materials and supplies -Training
	<i>Community</i>	Accessibility in health insurance					-Accessibility in health insurance -Anti immigrant sentiment

							-Experiential Training -Community resources -Discrimination -Lack of legal status -Trust in the current system -Community connections
	F/C	-Child Care: Special Needs and Health	-Family Pressure				-Parental Involvement: Assets and Barriers -Valuing Education of Children
All Communities	Readiness of Child						
	Readiness of School			-Learning is Purposeful in Childcare	-Language & lack of diversity	-Importance of being bilingual	-Experiential training -Important skill to be caregiver -Language & lack of diversity
	Family & Community						
	Family						
	Community						-Barriers -Low reimbursement rates from CCAP -Transportation
	F/C	-Medical issues					

There were 59 categories listed including the categories that fell into more than one component or dimension. This number also includes the ten themes where all three communities agreed. Of these, 35 (59.3%) fell into the contextual/environmental (exogenous) area. That is, almost sixty percent of the categories fell into those areas that are outside the control of the childcare system. A question for these findings is that if three out of every five themes emerging from the groups are issues originating outside the childcare system, "How does this affect the resource allocation strategy?"

A breakdown of the categories by developmental dimensions (i.e., Child Health, Socio-emotional, Learning Approaches, Cognition, and Language Development) indicates that there were 24 of the categories falling into these dimensions. Of these twenty-four, nine (37.5% of the total) fell into the Child Health dimension. This was followed by the Socio-emotional dimension that included five (20.8% of the total). Therefore, within the endogenous variable (i.e., those factors originating within the childcare system) the greatest concern related to issues related to child health. When analyzed by community, the results show that more than forty percent (40.6%) of the categories came from the Longmont community, followed by those from Boulder (24.7% of the total); Lafayette (18.6% of the total); and almost seventeen (16.9%) percent where the three communities were in agreement.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Overall, several major conclusions can be drawn from the study. Among them are:

- More than 70% of the categories fell into the School Readiness components related to Family and Community Support for Child's readiness implying that the majority of the respondents felt that the issues related to school readiness are tied more to family and community than pedagogy (i.e., "What can I/we help in preparing the child for school? rather than "What should a child prepared for school look like?")

- Approximately one quarter of the categories fell into the components related to focusing preparing schools/child care providers for school readiness. These issues related to areas such as understanding the cultural background of the child, gaining family trust, etc.--- implying more concern about outreach than pedagogy.
- Respondents in all communities identified categories related to family and community and preparing schools as areas needed for school readiness.
- Fifty three percent (53%) of the childcare providers' (licensed and unlicensed) categories fell into the School Readiness Component related to Readiness of Schools.
- Given that the preponderance of categories fell into the readiness components related to Readiness of Schools and Family/Community Support---both process related components---bridging strategies should focus on collaboratives among all groups. This approach would leverage the perceptions, the values, and experiences of the respondents among all the groups and within all the communities.
- Approximately sixty percent of the categories (themes) emerging from the group findings fell into the exogenous-related categories (i.e., those themes/issues that originate outside the childcare system, but have an impact on the system). Therefore, any follow up resource allocation strategy should include a strategy that balances exogenous-related methods with those that are endogenous-related (i.e., originating within the childcare system). This does not imply that there should be an equal number of exogenous and endogenous methods, but that any gains desired through endogenous-related methods are not undermined by exogenous factors.

Recommendations

This study identified many positive developments in the area of early care and education within Boulder County. It also brought to light some of the challenges that the changing demographics are creating within the existing early care and education system. Some of the recommendations are directly related to the implementation of existing program models that have demonstrated success in improving child outcomes for Latino children in other communities. Some recommendations are more directly related to creation of strategies that could begin a cross-cultural dialogue that could help close the academic achievement gap of Latino children in Boulder County. Underlying the effective implementation of both programs and strategies is the development of a clear language policy that can create a framework within which Non English Language Learners are viewed as an asset. It is not within the purview of this study to suggest the components of such a policy.

Yet another important consideration is the fact that many of the recommendations that emerged from both the literature review and the data analysis do not lend themselves to any of the domains of school readiness. Rather, the recommendations fall into the Contextual/Environmental (Exogenous) factors described above. Accordingly, we have added a domain of environmental/contextual factors. Given these factors the related recommendations suggest some strategies that should be considered as precursors to or impinging upon the effective implementation of program models or programs. Further, some of the recommendations are applicable to multiple domains.

Child Health

- Home Visitation Programs. Develop home visitation programs that focus on improving child health status and on family literacy. (Child Health and Language Development)

Social and Emotional Development

- Develop English as a Second Language Classes. Increase opportunities for Latino families to learn English. (Social/emotional; Language Development)
- Train-the-trainer. Develop a "training the trainers" model wherein teachers can learn how to work with the parents. This mentor model should include training teachers to learn from parents. (Social/emotional)

Cognition and General Knowledge

- Establish Parent-Teacher Activities/Programs. Create group dynamics to strengthen the communication between parents and teachers. (Cognition; Social/emotional; Language Development)
- Train parents on Literacy. Train parents with limited English, stressing reading books or sharing oral history so that a literate environment is created in the home. (Cognition; Language Development)

Language Development

- Develop Intergenerational Family Literacy Programs wherein extended family members can participate in the education of family members. (Language Development).
- Develop Spanish Language materials. Provide materials in the Spanish language to families. (Language Development)
- Library Outreach. Develop a Library Outreach Program where families and children are encouraged to visit the library. Provide books in Spanish. (Language Development)

Contextual/Environmental

- Develop Partnerships: Develop partnerships involving families, childcare providers, and community agencies that focus on building bridging strategies that deal with the question, "How can I/we help in preparing the child for school?" (Contextual/Environmental)
- Develop Partnerships: Develop partnerships with health and dental care providers that would provide access to health care for the children.
- Build trust (*confianza*) between/among childcare and service providers and the broader community: The use of an asset-based approach should be adopted as the cornerstone for building the relationships necessary to utilize the gifts bestowed upon the community. Inventorying the existing assets in the community can be an effective strategy for building relationships. (Contextual/Environmental)
- Analyze language policy issues. Inventory the linguistic practices and policies within community and early childcare agencies that serve the immigrant Latino and to the extent feasible and encourage the development of practices and policies that can meet the needs of this population. (Contextual/Environmental)

- Provide Cultural Competency Training. Provide ongoing cultural competency training for community service agencies, educational and social service providers, and childcare providers. (Contextual/Environmental)
- Conduct community outreach. Celebrate all cultures within the community. Coordinate cultural awareness dialogue between/among communities and service providers. (Contextual/Environmental)
- Hire Bilingual/Bicultural Professional Staff. Encourage community agencies and childcare agencies to recruit and retain bilingual/bicultural staff at all levels of agencies' staff. Where necessary, provide significant additional compensation for bilingual competency. (Contextual/Environmental)
- Hire Interpreters. Establish minimum standards for interpreter training, competency, and other continuing education efforts. Make a concerted effort to increase and foster appropriate training relative to the services being offered through national conferences, information clearinghouses, technical assistance and start-up grants. Provide courses designed to train providers to work with interpreters. Encourage the use of trained interpreters and reimburse them for their services. (Contextual/Environmental)
- Offer Language Skills Training for Existing Staff. Support the development of bilingual skills for all staff members at community and childcare agencies serving immigrant Latino families. Offer Spanish classes as part of childcare licensing. Establish clear goals and realistic expectations for Spanish language courses, including idioms. (Contextual/Environmental)
- Create a Community Phone-Based Interpreter Network. In partnership with community, medical and childcare agencies, establish a network of phone-based interpreters that can assist in providing translation services for monolingual Spanish-speaking Latino families. (Contextual/Environmental)
- Offer Written Translator Services. Develop a resource and referral-type of system that assists community and childcare agencies with Spanish language written materials such as intake forms, consent forms and educational materials. (Contextual/Environmental)
- Develop Systems 101 Classes. Develop training programs that provide families with skills on how to navigate the many systems that are available in Boulder County. These classes would be in Spanish and description of services, eligibility criteria, service provider location and transportation information would accommodate the children and families. (Contextual/Environmental)

In the final analysis, Boulder County has many challenges but also has the infrastructure and desire to develop the necessary programs to meet the needs of its burgeoning Latino population. The county, under the guidance of the Early Care and Education Council, is taking a proactive approach to addressing the poor child outcomes for Latino children. This study provides the first in-depth analysis of school readiness for Latino children from the perspective of the families affected. It is anticipated that the results of the needs assessment will guide decision-making around Knight Foundation grants to the community for school readiness over the next five years and will assist the Boulder ECE Council in ensuring that its efforts are relevant to Latino families.