## Title

Parent-Teacher Partnership Satisfaction of Latino Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder



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# Parent-Teacher Partnership Satisfaction of Latino Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Education

by

Lindsay Gail Hauptman

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Parent-Teacher Partnership Satisfaction

of Latino Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

by

Lindsay Gail Hauptman

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Connie L. Kasari, Chair

Productive parent-teacher partnerships have been linked with beneficial student and family outcomes, such as increased academic improvement, classroom engagement, and quality of life. This study explored characteristics of Latino parents of elementary school-aged children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as which child-related and parent interaction-related factors predicted parents' satisfaction with parent-teacher partnership levels. Qualitative responses were also coded and analyzed. Participants included 94 Latino parents who completed the Family-Professional Partnership Survey in a metropolitan area in California. Characteristics of the parents were evaluated using descriptives, correlations, and ANOVAs. The association between child-related and parent involvement-related factors with partnership satisfaction mean scores and partnership satisfaction subscale mean scores were evaluated using multiple linear regressions. Qualitative responses were coded using inductive, open coding. Codes were then

applied to data. Participants were a diverse group of parents, with varied educational and generational experiences. Through self-report, parents had relatively high stigma, home involvement, school involvement, and partnership satisfaction scores. Results indicated that child improvement and parent-teacher communication frequency positively related to partnership satisfaction scores and the family partnership satisfaction subscale. Child improvement was significant, as well as a communication frequency by age interaction for the child partnership subscale. Qualitative results indicated that parents felt disconnected with their child's teacher when the teacher dismissed the child's needs and were not prepared to work with their child. Parents felt connected with teachers when they understood their child's needs and included their child. Overall, parents were relatively satisfied with partnerships, but qualitative responses indicate more work can be done to connect parents and teachers.

The dissertation of Lindsay Gail Hauptman is approved.

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Thank you to all the parents who participated, for whom this study was conducted. I am glad you were willing and able to share your experiences with me. I hope this study is able to make the partnership-building experience easier for all parents, creating a mutually beneficial educational environment for all parents, students, and teachers.

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## Introduction

Diagnosis rates of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a developmental disorder manifesting in symptoms such as social communication deficits and restricted and repetitive behaviors (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013), have been increasing over the years—currently estimated to affect 1 in 59 children in the United States, and about 12,000 students within Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD; "Autism Support / School Site Support," n.d..; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018). At the same time, not only are children with ASD one of the largest groups of students with disabilities receiving special education services in the country, but Latino families also accounted for 71% of students accessing special education services within LAUSD as of 2006 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018; Hernandez, Harry, Newman, & Cameto, 2008). Population changes make it especially important for educators to understand how to partner with Latino parents of children with ASD in order to work together to optimize family and child outcomes (Downer & Myers, 2010; Zablotsky, Boswell, & Smith, 2012).

One way to provide educators with information about how to partner with parents is to present them with information about how parents perceive parent-teacher partnerships. Parents' satisfaction ratings of partnerships can assist teachers in the form of providing them with information about what is functional and not functional within their partnerships. Understanding more about what partnerships and trust mean to parents could assist professionals in learning effective ways to reach out to families and build relationships, while avoiding common barriers to partnership development (Blue-Banning et al., 2004). Overall, providing teachers with information about partnership satisfaction for infrequently studied communities may assist teachers in finding ways to make parents feel more like they are part of a team (Turnbull, Blue-Banning, Turbiville, & Park, 1999).

## Parent-Teacher Partnerships

Partnerships are collaborative relationships that depict a situation in which all of the stakeholders can work together to improve the life of the child (Murray, Ackerman-Spain, Williams, & Ryley, 2011). A partnership is defined as "mutually supportive interactions between families and professionals, focused on meeting the needs of children and families" (Summers et al., 2005b p. 66). The idea of a partnership can also be considered an aspect of family-centered practice in the medical field, in that it focuses on home and community working together to benefit all parties (Kovacs, Bellin, & Fauri, 2006).

Partnerships are even encouraged through laws related to education, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which urges parents and school staff to work together to plan services and goals for parents' children with disabilities (IDEA, 2004; Blue-Banning, Summers, Frankland, Nelson, & Beegle, 2004; Zetlin, Padron, & Wilson, 1996). For formal school processes, such as the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting, it can be important for parents to attend and participate to determine goals, services, etc. for their child (Fish, 2008; IDEA, 2004). Because parents are experts of their own children, both parents and school staff have vital information to contribute (Hughes, Valle-Riestra, & Arguelles, 2008). Working in collaboration with teachers and school staff can increase parents' chances to gain and maintain appropriate services for their child, as well as build positive relationships between the two groups (Fish, 2008).

### Benefits of Productive Partnerships

There are many benefits to having productive partnerships. For instance, collaborative, positive parent-school relationships can help avoid more divisive legal actions within schools, and have been linked with higher ratings of parent empowerment in Latino and White parents of

children with ASD, and in parents of children with disabilities (Burke, Rios, Garcia, & Magaña, 2018; Dunst & Dempsey, 2007). Partnerships and partnership satisfaction have also been linked with student classroom engagement, families' quality of life, lower stress levels in mothers, and higher levels of empowerment (Burke & Hodapp, 2014; Dunst & Dempsey, 2007; Hsiao, Higgins, Pierce, Whitby, & Tandy, 2017; Hughes & Kwok, 2007). Mutual sharing of information, perspectives, and suggestions allow parents to feel heard, and parents and teachers to collaborate on best strategies for each student, thus benefitting student academic outcomes (Blue-Banning et al., 2004; Hughes & Kwok, 2007; Walker, 2016). Furthermore, having schools and parents working together has also been included among national recommendations for teaching children with ASD, including action such as allowing input from parents, giving parents information about ASD and services, and teaching them skills to help them continue working with their child at home (National Research Council, 2001). Overall, productive interactions between parents and teachers can be considered very important to parents and their children, and could lead to increased satisfaction in partnerships (Hughes et al., 2008).

**Consequences of Neglected Partnerships**

Neglected partnership development can be detrimental to the parent-teacher collaborative relationship. Nurturing partnerships are important, as there can be a feeling of an imbalance of power between parent and teacher in which the teacher has the authority and the parent feels helpless (Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000). In these instances, such as during meetings, parents may not feel like they have the knowledge or power to advocate for their child (Eskow, Summers, Chasson, & Mitchell, 2018; Wang, Mannan, Poston, Turnbull, & Summers, 2004). Parents also can feel that teachers do not want their input (Lawson, 2003). Feelings of an imbalance of power, as well as a lack of collaborative communication, can lead to a lack of trust

in partnerships (Blue-Banning et al., 2004; Pruitt, Wandry, & Hollums, 1998). Furthermore, teachers who seem unengaged in partnerships may also seem like they are not invested in the student or family (Munn-Joseph & Gavin-Evans, 2008). Overall, poorly developed partnerships could discourage parents from working with their child's teacher, and make them feel less satisfied with their partnerships.

## Parent Satisfaction

### Defining Parent Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction is defined as "the extent to which services gratify the client's wants, wishes, or desires" (Lebow, 1983, p. 212), and is "rooted in an individual's perception of a particular experience" (McNaughton, 1994, p. 32). Additionally, satisfaction is an important aspect of treatment and service outcomes that is measured across research fields, including special education research (e.g., Bitterman, Daley, Misra, Carlson, & Markowitz, 2008) and ASD intervention research (e.g., Renty & Roeyers, 2006).

### Importance of Parent Satisfaction

When children are the consumers, parent satisfaction ratings can inform researchers about elements of a service such as parents' opinions on quality of the program, child improvement, and experiences with staff (Riley, Stromberg, & Clark, 2005). Parent opinion regarding education is especially relevant within ASD education experiences, as young children with ASD may not express their own satisfaction with their program because of possible language deficits (Martin et al., 2003). Including parents' perceptions of programs in decisions in developing and improving those programs establishes partnerships between the programs and the parents, makes parents feel included, gives staff more information about parents' service experiences, allows for

culturally relevant services to be developed, and is the foundation for providing family-centered care (Murphy, Lee, Turnbull & Turbiville, 1995; Turnbull et al., 1999).

### Outcomes Related to Partnership Satisfaction

Parent-teacher partnership satisfaction is the focus of this study, which is illustrated by parents' perceptions of the quality of their partnerships, and has been previously linked with several outcomes that indicate positive life experiences. Overall, parent-teacher partnership satisfaction has been high in past studies that were not focused on ASD or Latino families (e.g., Summers et al., 2005a; Summers et al., 2007). For parents of children with ASD specifically, parent-teacher partnership satisfaction has been positively associated with quality of life and academic improvement (Eskow et al., 2018; Hsiao et al., 2017). Partnership satisfaction also negatively relates to level of parent advocacy and stress for children with disabilities (Burke & Hodapp, 2014; Burke & Hodapp, 2016). Thus, partnership satisfaction is related to important family outcomes, as both parents and teachers strive to help children improve in skills, and improve families' lives, together.

## Manifestation of these Factors in the Context of Latino Families

### ASD and Latino Families

Both alongside and within ASD increasing in prevalence is the growing Latino community. The Latino population was estimated to make up 17.8% of the population of the United States in 2016, and it has also been projected that the Latino population in the United States will double in size by 2050 (Ortman & Guarneri, 2009; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Latinos make up about 48.5% of the Los Angeles population, and, as was previously mentioned, Latino students make up the largest group of students accessing special education services within LAUSD (Hernandez et al., 2008; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). At the same time, the number of

Latinos diagnosed with ASD has increased in prevalence by almost 3 times in size from 2000-2006 (currently estimated to affect 14 per 1000 children), despite racial/ethnic diagnostic disparities (CDC, 2018; Pedersen et al., 2012). Gathering more information about Latino parents with children with ASD is imperative in order to be able to serve these families (Blue-Banning, Turnbull, & Pereira, 2002).

**Barriers to ASD diagnoses and services for Latino parents.** Barriers exist for Latino parents that limit their access to information about ASD, as well as access to diagnosis and treatment-related resources and services. Perceived stigma pertaining to mental health issues and ASD can delay diagnosis and treatment for children. Parents may be hesitant to bring up concerns with health care or educational professionals because of fear of judgment or feelings of shame, especially in the Latino community (Zuckerman et al., 2014a). Latino parents may believe that others think that they are bad parents or their child is spoiled (Zuckerman et al., 2014b). Levels of perceived stigma can be higher in less acculturated families, such as, for instance, families that are newer to the United States and that speak limited English (Zuckerman et al., 2018). Less acculturated families may also not know about their rights as parents, or rights to services to which their child should have access (Zuckerman et al., 2014b). Additionally, language barriers can make processes such as speaking with professionals, receiving and understanding information, or scheduling appointments more difficult (Blanche, Diaz, Barretto, & Cermak, 2015; Zuckerman et al., 2014b). Furthermore, especially in the recent political climate, immigrant families may be less likely to speak with professionals so as not to draw attention to their immigration status, perhaps delaying necessary services for their child (Magaña, Parish, & Son, 2016). Lastly, an overall lack of information about ASD in the Latino community can prevent parents from identifying possible symptoms, thereby delaying diagnosis

and accessing services (Zuckerman et al., 2014b). Barriers that cause delays in treatment such as these can make successful trajectories for children more difficult, as early intervention is key in ASD (Kasari et al., 2005).

As a result of these barriers, Latino children, when compared with White, non-Latino children, are less likely to be diagnosed with ASD, are often misdiagnosed with other disorders as opposed to ASD, are typically diagnosed with ASD about 2.5 years later, and receive fewer services (Liptak et al., 2008; Magaña et al., 2013; Magaña et al., 2016; Mandell, Listerud, Levy, & Pinto-Martin, 2002; Mandell et al., 2009; Overton, Fielding, & de Alba, 2007). Because of these disparities, creating appropriate and easy opportunities for parents to share and receive important information, such as through teachers, is vital to optimize child outcomes (Magaña et al., 2016).

**Latino Families and Partnerships**

Overall, there has been limited research on Latino parents' experiences with parent-teacher partnerships. Researchers found that partnership ratings of Latino parents of children with ASD were positively related to parent empowerment levels (Burke et al, 2018). They also found that there were no significant differences in parent-teacher partnership ratings between Latino parents of children with ASD and White parents of children with ASD, although these families had been in an advocacy intervention program, which may have affected their perception of partnerships (Burke et al., 2018). One study that aimed to educate Latino parents about the school system, partnership, parent-teacher communication, and more, found that post-intervention, parents were more likely to have a meeting with the teacher (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001). Parents in this study also indicated they were more likely to initiate communication with teachers and be involved in helping their child with their homework, showing that parents were

willing to learn and engage in partnership-promoting behavior with teachers, even if it was new to them. Additionally, perceptions of partnership roles for Latino parents themselves have been found to be positively related to self-efficacy for involvement, positive school climate, as well as home involvement (Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011). Because of the relations of both partnerships and partnership satisfaction to potentially beneficial outcomes, parents and teachers should aim for productive partnerships, especially if parents are willing to initiate partnership-related actions. However, little is known about what contributes to Latino parents' partnership satisfaction.

When Latino parents feel that they are accepted by the education community, it makes it easier to be an active member in their children's education and collaborate with teachers (De Gaetano, 2007). Despite the difficulty that some Latino parents have of forming partnerships with teachers, many parents still desire a collaborative relationship (Carreón, Drake, & Barton, 2005; Harry, 1992; Jones, 2003; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, & Hernandez, 2003). In fact, several qualitative studies have shown that Latino parents are willing to and want to engage in partnership-related activities, such as communicating and collaborating with teachers, in order to help both their children with special needs and typically developing children (Burke et al., 2019; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; De Gaetano, 2007; Salas, 2004). Actions such as these can be especially important when ensuring that a child with special needs is receiving the care they need can take additional effort and commitment (Hughes et al., 2008). Furthermore, since parents know their child better than anyone, they can provide helpful information once connected with teachers (Harry, 1992). Unfortunately, forming a partnership with teachers can be difficult for Latino parents for various reasons.

**Latino Families: Barriers to Partnerships**

While some Latino parents may already see themselves as partners in the parent-teacher relationship (e.g., Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011), some parents have a difficult time feeling like an equal partner to the school staff with whom they have contact (Blue-Banning, Turnbull, & Pereira, 2000; Hill & Torres, 2010; Ramirez, 2003). Although Latino parents may be in communication with teachers, they still may not feel like they are in an equal position of authority as the school staff during formal processes, such as the IEP meeting. This may be because parents may lack knowledge of the school system or teachers' expectations, may feel like they have less power compared to the teacher, or may not want to be seen as disrespectful to school staff (Carreón et al., 2003; Gonzalez & Ayala-Alcantar, 2008; Harry, 1992; Hill & Torres, 2010; Quezada, Diaz, & Sánchez, 2003). Qualitative studies have also found that parents have experienced discrimination from teachers, and do not always feel that teachers respect and listen to them (Ramirez, 2003; Salas, 2004). Parents also have a difficult time communicating with teachers if they do not share the same language, and teachers' use of jargon can also be challenging for parents to understand (Hughes, Valle-Riestra, & Arguelles, 2002). Thus, even if Latino parents want to partner with teachers, it can be challenging.

These potential roadblocks highlight the importance of asking parents about their experiences, in order to allow educators to explore what is currently working or not working with their students' parents, and use that information to foster a deeper and more productive partnership in order to assist students with ASD. Parents' experiences with barriers and discomfort regarding encounters with teachers highlights the need to understand what Latino parents need from teachers in order to build partnerships. Because of the importance and benefits of partnerships to the families of children with ASD, it is important to understand parents'

experiences and needs in order to establish, maintain, or improve partnerships (Eskow et al., 2018; Gonzalez & Ayala-Alcantar, 2008; Hsiao et al., 2017; Peña, 2000).

## Theoretical Framework

Within Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems framework, he describes interacting and overlapping systems within a person's life as contributing to their development. This includes relations with their familiar environments (microsystem), relations between microsystems of family, school, and peers (mesosystem), community environments that impact child development and mesosystems, such as parents' place of work (exosystem), and societal systems within a person's life, such as cultural, social, or educational systems (macrosystem) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Downer & Myers, 2010). A child's development is dependent not only on these microsystems, such as home life or school life, but also on interactions and contributions of those microsystems to form the mesosystem (Hoover-Dempsey, Whitaker, & Ice, 2010). In this case, we are referring to the parent-teacher partnership mesosystem, in which both microsystems work together productively to make contributions to the child's development and academic outcomes (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2010). Characteristics of the family/home context, such as parent beliefs, impact the parent-teacher partnership, as parents contribute to and participate in that mesosystem (Downer & Myers, 2010). Understanding parents' perspectives on what contributes to build the parent-teacher partnership could assist in building and enhancing the mesosystem (Downer & Myers, 2010). Partnerships are vital, as parents and teachers can be more beneficial to students together than apart; collaborations and respectful partnerships within the home-school mesosystem indicate that both parties are working together to maximize child development (Downer & Myers, 2010; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2010).

## Variables Related to Partnership Satisfaction for Parents of Children with ASD

### Parent Involvement in School

Parent involvement often includes multiple dimensions of tasks, as demonstrated in Epstein's (2010) parent involvement framework, which designates elements of involvement such as school involvement (e.g., volunteering at school) or communication (e.g., between parent and school). Parent involvement is especially relevant within special education, as special education-related laws such as the IDEA (2004) require parents to be present and participating members in their child's education (unless parents waive these rights), as was previously mentioned. Essentially, the IDEA itself formally encourages both parent participation in their child's education, as well as the development of partnerships (Drasgow et al., 2001; Goldman & Burke, 2017; Zetlin et al., 1996). Increased parent involvement within these contexts may allow parents to feel like more of a partner, and therefore increase their partnership satisfaction.

While Latino parents may be incorrectly labeled as being uninterested in being involved in their child's education, research indicates that Latino families do value education, as well as their involvement in and commitment to their child's school experience (Hughes et al., 2008; Ryan et al., 2010). More specifically, teacher communication, attending meetings, making choices for their child, and having their child achieving both academic and social goals have all been found to be important to Latino parents for both typically developing children and children with disabilities, albeit challenging at times (Hughes et al., 2008; Ramirez, 2003; Ryan et al., 2010; Salas, 2004; Valencia & Black, 2002). However, family-to-family variations as well as cultural variations regarding the definition of parent involvement may sometimes result in conflicting perceptions of whether or not a parent is involved, potentially deflating partnerships (Harry, 2008; Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999; Kalyanpur et al., 2000).

**Relations between Partnership Satisfaction and Parent School-Based Involvement**

Although parent satisfaction and parent involvement can be bidirectional, this study is concentrating on researching the satisfaction and involvement relation in which involvement is the predictor (Fantuzzo, Perry, & Childs, 2006; LaForett & Mendez, 2010; Laws & Millward, 2001; Park & Holloway, 2013). Parents' school-based involvement in this sense refers to activities relevant to the school or their child's education to which parents may attend or contribute (Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000). In terms of school-related involvement, parents can visit their child's classroom, have meetings with their child's teacher, join school organizations, etc. (Walker et al., 2011). Previous research has found parents' perceptions of their relationship with their child's kindergarten teacher have been positively associated with teacher-reported parent school involvement levels, while controlling for race/ethnicity (Nzinga-Johnson, Baker, & Aupperlee, 2009). Additionally, parents' satisfaction with Head Start services has been positively associated with parents' school-based involvement (LaForett & Mendez, 2010). Parent perception of school-based involvement has also been positively associated with general school satisfaction among parents of children with Down syndrome and in typically developing children (Laws & Millward, 2001; Park & Holloway, 2013). These findings indicate that parents' school-based involvement could also be related to partnership satisfaction, as these activities could give parents opportunities to get to know their child's teacher.

**Relations between Partnership Satisfaction and Parent-Teacher Communication**

Another construct that can fall within the broader category of parent involvement is parent-teacher communication. Communicating with the teacher can help initiate mutually established goals for the child, as well as help inform parents as to which strategies to use at home (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). Frequency of parent-teacher contact has been

significantly and positively associated with parents' perceptions of parent-teacher relationships through interaction, early intervention service satisfaction, educational experience satisfaction, parents' feelings of school comfort, and parent-teacher relationship quality (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Ames, De Stefano, Watkins, & Sheldon, 1995; Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000; LaForett & Mendez, 2010; McWayne, Campos, & Owsianik, 2008). Communication is a cornerstone to building partnership, making it vital to understanding how frequency of communication relates to partnership satisfaction (Blue-Banning et al., 2004)

**Language**

Because communication is imperative to developing partnerships between parents and teachers, it can be difficult and disheartening if teachers and parents do not speak the same language (Blue-Banning et al., 2004; Salas, 2004). Translators can be difficult to find, and it can also be challenging for parents to find helpful information in their primary language (Hill & Torres, 2010; Zuckerman et al., 2014a). Additionally, English may be used at school meetings or other events, perhaps limiting some parents' willingness to attend, as well as parents' full understanding of the content of the meetings (Peña, 2000). Issues such as these could make it challenging for parents who are not fluent English speakers. However, the many bilingual teachers in Los Angeles might counteract some of these barriers for parents ("Spanish-speaking teachers getting special training to meet California's demand," 2017).

**Relations between Partnership Satisfaction and Language**

Through qualitative studies, some parents who primarily speak Spanish have expressed frustration when they are not able to communicate with teachers (Burke et al., 2019; Salas, 2004). Additionally, when compared to English-speaking Latino participants, Spanish-speaking Latino participants were less satisfied with interactions with health care providers (Morales,

Cunningham, Brown, Liu, & Hays, 2001; Villani & Mortensen, 2014). Presumably, having a challenging time communicating with teachers might result in a similar manner. Language is an important tool to build trust and partnership, and should be explored in relation to teachers.

**Child Age**

Child and family service and education needs develop and change over time (Summers et al., 2005a). Academic goals, vocational and transition planning, and amount of scaffolding in lessons are just a few of the elements that may develop and change as children advance in grades. Between changes of the needs of families with children with ASD, as well as parents' changes in their own expectations of their child's teachers, alterations in parents' perceptions regarding their relationship with their child's teacher and school may be made from one school year to the next (Spann, Kohler, & Soenksen, 2003; Summers et al., 2005a).

**Relations between Partnership Satisfaction and Child Age**

Partnerships are difficult to maintain as children get older (Epstein, 2010). Parents of younger children with disabilities have been significantly more satisfied with partnership and qualities of their child's teacher than parents of older children (Summers et al., 2005a). Similarly, through interviews, Spann and colleagues (2003) found that parents of younger children with ASD tend to also be more satisfied with school experiences than parents of older children. Furthermore, parents of typically developing children are also significantly more trusting of teachers when their children are younger (Adams & Christenson, 2000). Because parents of younger children tend to be more satisfied with teachers than parents of older children, this indicates the importance of continuing to explore these differences.

**Child Improvement**

Parents of children with ASD aim to help their children reduce their problem behaviors, increase their communication, build their skills, and more (Bitterman et al., 2008; Mackintosh et al., 2012). Naturally, teachers are among the list of professionals that can help children and families achieve those goals. Teachers see their children almost every day and focus on academic, social, and behavioral skills. Furthermore, teachers and parents can work together to set goals for children in the IEP meeting, and they can work together to monitor the child's progress (Drasgow et al., 2001). If a child is improving, parents may feel like a teacher understands their child's needs, which may improve partnership satisfaction.

**Relations between Partnership Satisfaction and Child Improvement**

Parent perceived child improvement has been linked with partnership satisfaction, as well as treatment satisfaction. Eskow and colleagues (2018) found that high parent-teacher partnership satisfaction, specifically related to the child-related needs subscale, was associated with higher levels of perceived child academic progress in children with ASD. Authors note that directionality of the relationship of these variables in their findings was not necessarily definitive, and that either direction could be justified. In this study, we used perceived child progress as a predictor, as improvements in school could make parents more satisfied with their child's teacher, and their feelings of partnership. Additionally, while not explicitly found within the partnership literature, child progress has been linked with parent satisfaction in other contexts. For instance, parents of children with ASD in a medical intervention study were more satisfied with greater improvement in their child's behavior from the treatment (Tierney et al., 2007). Similarly, in a study of children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and operational defiance disorder, parents' treatment satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with their child's progress in reduced frequency and total number of problem

behaviors (Brestan, Jacobs, Rayfield, & Eyberg, 1999). If children are making progress with their teachers, this may increase parents' partnership satisfaction, as parents can trust that teachers know what their child needs.

## Gap in the Literature

### Lack of Latino Partnership Research

Although there is existing literature on parent-teacher partnerships, there are very few studies that investigate partnership satisfaction, especially for Latino parents of children with ASD. Even Summers and colleagues (2005b), creators of the Family-Professional Partnership Scale (FPPS) which was used in this study, make the case that their scale should be extended to more diverse families. For instance, within their studies, researchers had 11.7% Latino parents and 4.4% Latino parents in the first and second tests of the questionnaires, respectively (Summers et al., 2005b). Increasing the diversity sample within research studies is specifically relevant to Los Angeles, as Latino families make up a large percentage of the population, and Latino students make up a large percentage of students accessing special education services (Hernandez et al., 2008; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Overall, little research has been done to explore Latino parents' perceptions on partnerships, especially within the ASD community, where productive partnerships can be imperative for the benefit and growth of the child. This study aims to gather information that describes possible ways in which teachers and parents can access and promote building partnerships (Auerbach, 2007).

## Aims

As both the Latino and ASD population grow, it is imperative to establish a research base that may assist in improving or establishing collaborative relationships between parents and teachers. As a start, this study investigated parent-teacher partnership satisfaction for Latino

parents of children with ASD, and other characteristics of these parents. This study also investigated what characteristics predict parent-teacher partnership satisfaction. Lastly, this study was able to understand and interpret parents' experiences with their child's teacher via qualitative analysis. In turn, hearing Latino parents' perspectives on their partnerships may inform researchers and teachers as to what is going well, what needs to be improved, and what can be targeted to work on with parents to improve their relationship and parents' satisfaction. In order to identify sources of satisfaction among Latino parents of children with autism, this study aimed to:

**Aim 1:** Characterize the sample of Latino parents of children with ASD in terms of their parent-perceived involvement-related factors, parent reported child-related factors, culture-related factors, and satisfaction with parent-teacher partnerships.

**Aim 2:** Identify the aspects of parent-perceived involvement-related factors, namely parent-teacher interaction (i.e., frequency of parent-teacher communication, parent school-based involvement, and parent home language), and child-related factors, namely child characteristics (i.e., parent-perceived child improvement and child age) that impact parents' satisfaction with the parent-teacher partnership.

**Aim 3:** Explore Latino parents' descriptions of their experiences with their child with ASD's teacher.

## Method

### Participants

Prior to recruitment, all materials were submitted to and approved by the university Institutional Review Board. Participants met the following eligibility criteria: a) was a Latino parent of a child diagnosed with ASD b) had a child with autism who was enrolled in

kindergarten-5th grade, c) lived in Los Angeles County, and d) the parent must have been at least 18 years of age to participate. Participants were recruited for this study between December, 2018-June, 2019.

A total of 94 parent participants completed the surveys, 56 online and 38 on paper. Participants were 95.70% female, and 4.30% male (see Tables 1 and 2 for full parent descriptive information). Participant ages ranged from 28-51 (M = 38.60, SD = 6.05). All participants identified as Latino(a), and participants described their ethnic/racial background as either Caucasian/White (33.30%), or "other," and wrote in variations of Latino(a) or Hispanic (66.70%). Most people were either employed full-time (26.90%) or were homemakers (39.80%). The majority of families (88.30%) were eligible for free/reduced lunch, indicating that they had incomes of 130-185% below poverty, or below 130% of poverty (National School Lunch Program, 2019). More than half of participants (62%) were earning an income of $49,999 and below. About a quarter of the participants had received some high school education or less (25.80%), some had received their high school diploma or GED (20.40%), about a quarter received some college experience (23.70%), 9.70% attended trade school or received their Associate's degree, and 20.50% had received their Bachelor's degree or more (see Table 1). Parents described their children as ranging in age from 4-11 (M = 7.77, SD = 1.90). Grades were almost evenly represented between kindergarten and 5th grades, with the highest number of children being in kindergarten (23.40%) and 4th grade with the lowest number of children (11.70%; see Table 3).

**Recruitment.** Participants were recruited through a) parent groups to assist establishing community trust (Magaña, 2000), b) disability/autism-based organizations c) service systems and service providers, such as local regional centers and parent centers d) ASD-related studies in

which participants indicated they would like to be contacted for future research projects, and e) study flyers that were distributed around the greater Los Angeles area, at ASD-related events, and online. Emails containing study flyers, a study description, and a link to the surveys (in Spanish and English) were also sent to regional centers, parent groups, and autism organizations. Flyers had links to the online survey, as well as a number to call if parents wanted to schedule an in-person meeting to fill out the survey on paper.

Participants completed the surveys online via Qualtrics or on paper. Participants read the information sheet that described the details of the study. For the Qualtrics version of the survey, the survey had a screener portion after the information sheet, and the survey ended after the screener if participants do not meet the screener requirements. For in-person visits, the screener was administered over the phone before the visit was scheduled. Questionnaires answered on paper were entered into Qualtrics by research volunteers.

Participants who completed the survey had the option to submit their email (not in connection with their survey results) to have their name selected to win one $50 gift card. One gift card was awarded to the 50$^{th}$ participant.

**Sample size analysis.** A sample size analysis was conducted using G*Power Version 3.1. The analysis yielded a sample size of 92 participants, using the following parameters: estimated power = .8, estimated effect size ($f^2$) = .15, $\alpha$ = .05, number of tested predictors = 5, and total number of predictors = 8.

## Measures

### Translation procedure.

***Measures.*** Two bilingual, native Spanish-speaking research assistants divided the measures and flyers and then translated them from English to Spanish. These research assistants

then switched portions of the measures and flyers to back-translate the content from Spanish to English. Any discrepancies between the translations were discussed among the research team and any changes to be made to the English or Spanish versions were decided as a group in order to make measures clear to participants (Balcells-Balcells et al., 2011; Brislin, 1970). Measures that were already translated into Spanish were reviewed, and vocabulary was edited if necessary to suit parents in this study (e.g., Summers et al., 2005b; Marin & Gamba, 1996).

***Parent qualitative responses.*** Parents' qualitative responses to the one open-ended questions asking, "Is there anything else you would like to say about your child's teacher?" were translated from Spanish to English by three bilingual, native Spanish-speaking research volunteers. Their translations were reviewed and edited by one bilingual, native Spanish-speaking graduate student for accuracy of translation.

**Evaluating survey questions.** Five subject matter experts reviewed the surveys in order to evaluate survey questions (Groves et al., 2009). One expert was a special education teacher who had worked in ASD research, and had worked directly with children with ASD and their parents. Two other experts were Latino parents of children with ASD in elementary school, who have personal expertise regarding the topics in the survey. These parents were able to pretest the surveys on paper. One parent used the Spanish version, and the other used the English version. The final two experts were bilingual, native Spanish-speaking research assistants who translated the materials and had both worked with and had personal experiences with Latino parents and children with autism. All experts provided feedback on content and usability standards, as well as cognitive standards (Groves et al., 2009). The parent who took the surveys in Spanish provided feedback on translation accuracy. Both parents and research assistants provided information on cultural relevance (Skaff, Chesla, Mycue, & Fisher, 2002).

**Descriptive information.**

***Eligibility.*** Eligibility information included whether parents consider themselves Latino/Hispanic, if they live in Los Angeles County, child's autism diagnosis, and child's grade level. Parents were instructed to think of only one child with autism if they had more than one who fit this description, in order to increase the diversity of parent responses.

Participants had two response options as to whether they are Hispanic/Latino: (1) Yes and (2) No. Participants had two response options as to whether they live in Los Angeles County: (1) Yes and (2) No. Participants had two response options as to whether their child has been diagnosed with ASD: (1) Yes and (2) No. Child's grade was a categorical variable with seven response options: (1) Kindergarten, (2) 1st grade, (3) 2nd grade, (4) 3rd grade, (5) 4th grade, (6) 5th grade, and (7) none of these.

***Demographics.*** Demographic descriptive information included parent race/ethnicity, parent age, parent gender, parent marital status, employment status, parent education, country received education in, parent and child country of birth, years lived in United States, parent generation status, free or reduced lunch eligibility, income level, child gender, school type, teacher type, parent-perceived child developmental level, child's other disabilities, and child's most common method communication as perceived by the parent.

Race was a categorical variable with six response options: (1) African American/Black, (2) Caucasian/White, (3) Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, (4) American Indian/Alaska Native, (5) Asian, (6) Other. Age of parents was a continuous variable that was collected from the question, "How old are you?" Parent and child gender were categorical variables with three possible answers: (1) Female, (2) Male, and (3) Other. Parent marital status was a categorical variable with three response options: (1) Single, (2) Married, and (3) Divorced. Parent

employment status was a categorical variable with four response choices: (1) Unemployed, (2) Employed part-time, (3) Employed full-time, and (4) Homemaker. Highest level of parent education was a categorical variable with eight possible answers: (1) Less than high school, (2) Some high school, (3) High school or GED, (4) Some college, (5) Trade school or vocational school, (6) Associate's degree, (7) Bachelor's degree, and (8) Graduate degree. Country received highest level of education, and parent and child country of birth are categorical and open-ended. Years lived in the United States was a continuous variable. Generation status of participant was a categorical variable and had eight possible options: (1) 1st generation (you were born in another country and immigrated to the United States after age 17), (2) 1.25 generation (you were born in another country and immigrated to the United States between ages 13-17), (3) 1.5 generation (you were born in another country and immigrated to the United States between ages 6-12), (4) 1.75 generation (you were born in another country and immigrated to the United States between ages 0-5), (5) 2nd generation (you were born in United States but both of your parents immigrated to the United States), (6) 2.5 generation (you were born in United States but one of your parents immigrated to the United States), (7) 3rd generation (you were born in the United States and both of your parents were too), and (8) Prefer not to answer (Rumbaut & Massey, 2013). Eligibility for free or reduced lunch was a categorical variable with two possible answers: (1) Yes, and (2) No. This was used as a proxy for income/socioeconomic status (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Family income was categorical with 12 response choices: (1) 9,999 or less, (2) 10,000-19,999, (3) 20,000-29,999, (4) 30,000-39,999, (5) 40,000-49,9999, (6) 50,000-59,999, (7) 60,000-69,999, (8) 70,000-79,999, (9) 80,000-89,999, (10) 90,000-99,999, (11) 100,000 or more, and (12) Prefer not to answer.

School type was a categorical variable with four response options: (1) Public school, (2) Private school, (3) Charter school, and (4) Home schooling. Type of teacher was a categorical variable with three response options: (1) Special education teacher, and (2) General education teacher, and (3) I don't know. Parent-perceived child developmental level was a categorical variable with three response options: (1) Behind age level, (2) At age level, (3) Above age level. Participants had two response options as to whether their child has been diagnosed with other developmental disabilities: (1) Yes and (2) No. If they answer yes, they had a space to write in those disabilities. Parent-perceived child communication was adapted from a developmental questionnaire (Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota, n.d.). Parents selected which type of communication their child used most often with them, with seven response options: (1) sounds, (2) 1-2 words, (3) 3-5 words, (4) Complete sentences, (5) Gestures, (6) Signs (sign language), and (7) Communication device.

***Bidimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics.*** The Bidimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (BAS; Marin & Gamba, 1996) is a self-report scale that measures level of acculturation and yields two cultural domains within the scale, Hispanic and non-Hispanic (American) ($\alpha_{Hispanic}$ = .90; $\alpha_{Non\text{-}Hispanic}$ = .96). The scale originally yields three subscales, including language use (6 items), electronic media (6 items), and linguistic proficiency (12 items). Each subscale asks about both English and Spanish language use and understanding. Authors state that the linguistic proficiency scale may be used by itself to measure acculturation, which was used in this study ($\alpha_{Hispanic}$ = not reported; $\alpha_{Non\text{-}Hispanic}$ = .97). These items, such as "How well to you speak English" are rated on a 4-point scale from 1 ("very poorly") to 4 ("very well"). The BAS was created in both English and Spanish. Scores are averaged for each cultural subscale (6 questions for each), which a 2.5 score cutoff to indicate low or high cultural

adherence. Having both scores above 2.5 indicate high cultural adherence for both cultures, or biculturalism (Marin & Gamba, 1996). In this study, the total measure had a Cronbach's alpha of .80, while the Hispanic cultural domain had a Cronbach's alpha of .97 and the non-Hispanic cultural domain had a Cronbach's alpha of .98.

***Parent Involvement at Home Scale.*** The Parent Involvement at Home Scale (PIH; Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000) is a parent self-report questionnaire that measures parents' perceptions of their involvement in their child's education at home. This scale was originally used among parents of elementary students ($\alpha = .77$), and had 8 items. The scale was adapted because of cultural relevance concerns brought up by reviewers of the surveys. Three items were taken out (e.g., "I arrange for my child to play with other children of his or her age") for cultural relevance, as suggested by survey reviewers. One item was added ("I make sure that my child has someone who can help them with their homework") for cultural relevance, as suggested by survey reviewers, as parents cannot always help their children directly with homework (Martinez, 2011; Valencia & Black, 2002). This adapted scale yields 6 items, such as, "I read with my child." Items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Less than 1 day per week") to 4 ("5-7 days"). Higher mean scores indicate increased home involvement. Parents are instructed to reflect on an average week in their household when selecting answers. In this study, the measure had a Cronbach's alpha of .87 (the non-adapted version with 5 items had a Chronbach's alpha of .83).

***Community Views and Knowledge about ASD.*** The Community View and Knowledge about ASD Scale (CVS; Zuckerman et al., 2018) is a parent self-report questionnaire that measures parents' perceptions of stigma towards ASD in their community. This scale was developed for use within a multi-site study with both Latino and non-Latino white parents of

children with ASD from English and Spanish focus groups. This scale yields 8 items to contribute to the mean score, such as "People in my community think ASD is a result of bad parenting or lack of discipline," And has indicated high internal consistency ($\alpha = .8$). Items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Definitely no") to 4 ("Definitely yes"). Two items are reverse coded (items 3 and 7). Higher mean scores indicate higher levels of parent-perceived stigma. In this study, this measure had a Cronbach's alpha of .80.

**Predictors.**

***Demographics.*** Demographic predictor information included age of child, educational placement of child, parent-perceived child improvement. Specifically, predictors included age of child, parent home language, and parent-perceived child improvement. Control variables included how the child spends the majority of their school day/educational placement.

Age of child was a continuous variable that was collected from the question, "how old is your child?" Parent home language was a categorical variable with four response choices: (1) English only, (2) Spanish only, (3) both English and Spanish, and (4) Other. Educational placement of child was a categorical variable with three answers for participants to choose from: (1) Mostly special education, (2) Mostly general education, and (3) Other.

Parent-perceived child improvement in behavior, reading, math, social skills, and talking were rated on a 4-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". This measure was created for this study as one could not be found. A higher mean score of the 4 items indicate greater perceived improvement. This measure had a Cronbach's alpha of .89.

***Parent and Teacher Involvement Questionnaire.*** The Parent and Teacher Involvement Questionnaire (PTIQ; Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group [CPPRG], 1995; Kohl et al., 2000) is a parent self-report questionnaire that measures parents' perceptions of their

involvement in their child's education. A confirmatory factor analysis yielded 4 factors within this measure (CPPRG, 1995). One of those factors is the parent-teacher contact frequency (α = .77; CPPRG, 2001), which yields 4 items, and focuses on initiator, method, and frequency of communication between parent and teacher. Items include "In the past year, you have called your child's teacher," and "In the past year, your child's teacher has called you." Questions are measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 ("Never") to 5 ("More than once per week"). This study used an adapted version of parent-teacher contact frequency factor, adding current ways that parents and teachers contact each other, such as through text. The adapted version also included item 5 on the PTIQ, which asked about talking directly to the child's teacher, which was also a relevant way of speaking with the teacher. The adapted version yields 12 items, inquiring about more recent technologically advanced methods of communication, such as texting and applications. Higher mean scores indicate increased communication for both the parent and teacher. In this study, the original four questions had a Cronbach's alpha of .77, and the adapted measure had a Cronbach's alpha of .85.

***Parent Involvement at School Scale.*** The Parent Involvement at School Scale (PIS; Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000) is a parent self-report questionnaire that measures parents' perceptions of their involvement in their child's education through school participation. The scale was originally used with parents of elementary school students (α = .71), and had 6 items. One item was taken out of the original version for relevancy ("I picked up my child's report card") and replaced with a more relevant option based on the literature ("I went to parent organization meetings at my child's school [such as PTO/PTA]" [Peña, 2000; Valencia & Black, 2002]). The adapted scale yields 6 items, such as "I visited my child's classroom." Items are rated on a 3-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 ("Never") to 3 ("Several times per year"). Higher

mean scores indicate increased parent involvement at school. Parents are asked to reflect on the past school year when selecting their answer. In this study, this measure had a Cronbach's alpha of .71 (the non-adapted version with 5 items has a Cronbach's alpha of .68).

**Outcome variable.**

***Family Professional Partnership Scale.*** The Family Professional Partnership Scale (FPPS; Summers et al., 2005b) is a parent self-report questionnaire that measures parents' satisfaction levels of their partnership with a service professional ($\alpha_{total}$ = .96, $\alpha_{child}$ = .94, $\alpha_{family}$ = .92), and was the main outcome measure. Within this study, the FPPS was used to assess parents' satisfaction levels of partnership with their child's teacher (parents were instructed to think of the teacher that their child spends most of their day with). This survey was piloted with 60 items to 291 parents of children with disabilities. A second study with 205 parents ended up reducing the scale to 18 items via a confirmatory factor analysis. After being validated for content, the survey was comprised of 18 items assessing parent-professional partnership-related scenarios, such as if the child's service providers "have the skills to help your child succeed," or "value your opinion about your child's needs." Parents rate their satisfaction level for each statement on a 5-point scale from 1 ("very dissatisfied") to 5 ("very satisfied"). The scale yields two subscales, each with nine items: one subscale is a family-focused scale (related to needs of the family and "quality of the professional's relationship with the whole family"), and the other is a child-focused scale (related to needs of the child and "quality of the professional's relationship with their child"; Summers et al., 2007, p. 327). The subscales were found to be unidimensional and internally consistent (Summers et al., 2005b). The overall partnership satisfaction mean score was used as an outcome measure, as was each of the subscale mean scores. Higher mean scores indicate increased satisfaction with parent-teacher partnership. The partnership satisfaction was

also previously translated into Spanish, but was checked and altered by Spanish translators for clarity in this study. In this study, the FPPS had a Cronbach's alpha of .98, $FPPS_{child}$ had a Cronbach's alpha of .97, and $FPPS_{family}$ had a Cronbach's alpha of .97, all indicating high internal consistency.

**Qualitative response.** After the first 14 participants, an open-ended response ("Is there anything else you would like to say about your child's teacher?") was added at the end of the questionnaire in order to capture any additional information parents wanted to add that was not already captured by the questionnaires.

## Missing Data

Participants had to complete all of the surveys in order to be included in the study. Participants who completed the surveys but were missing more than one question from any predictor or the outcome measure was excluded from the main analysis, the linear regressions, in order to maintain the integrity of the measures, responses, and analyses. Only two participants were excluded from the main analyses because they had more than one item missing from a single measure ($N_{partnership\ satisfaction} = 92$; $N_{partnership\ satisfactionchild} = 92$; $N_{partnership\ satisfactionfamily} = 93$). If participants were missing one item from a predictor or outcome measure, means were calculated with the total number of items the participant had answered, instead of the total number of items within the measure.

## Quantitative Analytic Procedure

Differences were assessed between those who had completed or not completed the questionnaires via t-test. Differences were assessed between participants who completed the questionnaires online versus in person via t-test, in order to determine if method of delivery

should be controlled for. Mean scores were calculated for all continuous scales (e.g., partnership satisfaction).

To address the first aim, descriptive statistics were calculated (means, standard deviations, and variable ranges) for continuous variables, while percentages and frequency counts were calculated for categorical variables. ANOVAs and Pearson correlations were run between variables of interest to determine their relation.

To address aim 2, multiple regressions were conducted. The partnership satisfaction was examined for violations of assumptions, and predictors were also tested for multicollinearity (Field, 2013). Correlations were also run between all continuous predictor variables to assess their relations and relevance. A one-way ANOVA was run between categorical and continuous regression variables to determine association. A chi-square test was run between categorical variables to determine association. Child's educational placement was controlled for (Kasari, Freeman, Bauminger, & Alkin, 1999; Leyser & Kirk, 2004; Wilder, 2004). Free/reduced lunch was not controlled for, as 88.30% of participants qualified for free/reduced lunch. Each of the variables were run in a separate regression against each main outcome variable (e.g., overall partnership satisfaction score, child-focused subscale, and family-focused subscale). Statistical significance was examined in each case. Then, one full model with all variables was run against each primary outcome. Next, one full model with all variables was run against the primary outcomes, and included age/parent-school involvement interaction (Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, & Fendrich, 1999). Lastly, one full model with all variables was against the primary outcomes, and included age/parent-teacher communication frequency interaction (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Izzo et al., 1999). Interaction variables were centered to decrease multicollinearity issues.

Age was made dichotomous for the interaction graph based on mean age, in that below 7.77 years was the younger group and above 7.77 years was the older group.

**Qualitative Analytic Procedure**

Qualitative responses were organized alphabetically for coding purposes in order to reduce bias regarding which language the response was originally in. To address the third aim, inductively-driven thematic analysis was used to review qualitative data, and codes were developed using inductive, open coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Both descriptive codes and in vivo codes were used (Saldaña, 2009). Codes were grouped together in a hierarchical manner based on similarities in concepts, thus developing themes and sub-codes (Bazeley, 2013). These themes and sub-codes were then reviewed by a subject expert, a bilingual, native Spanish-speaking graduate student who had experience with children with ASD and their families. The purpose of this review was to verify the accuracy and relevancy of the codes.

Questions were then developed based on themes and codes that had been compiled (see Figure 1). A codebook was also developed to define each code (see Table 4). Deductive coding was then implemented, in which the questions that had been created were used as a lens to code parents' responses for answers to those questions. A coding tree was developed in order to understand and follow the coding procedure process, including how to progress through the deductive questions (see Figure 1). Each question was looked at one at a time (e.g., "*what is the disposition of the parent?*"), and the relevant codes (e.g., *"positive," "negative," "neutral," or "mixed"*) were used to categorize the responses. Codes were compiled in an Excel file, with each page within the Excel file representing a separate question. Some questions, such as "*if there was a parent-teacher connection, what was the connection*?" required coders to use sub-codes (e.g., "*makes the effort"*) to select applicable quotes from participants' responses, based on the code

definition. Because this study focuses on parent-teacher partnerships, codes that were not directly relevant to the parent-teacher relationship were not included in this paper, although they were coded for (e.g., school-related codes).

A bilingual, native Spanish-speaking graduate student was trained in the deductive questions and coding procedure and coded 20% of the responses, or 8 responses, in each round of intercoder reliability. Codes were reviewed for intercoder agreement, and reliability was assessed. The formula used to determine reliability percentages and reliability percentages was *(number of agreement / total opportunities for agreement)* (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Discrepancies in coding were discussed, definitions were clarified, and consensus coding was used in order to accurately code participants' responses and achieve 100% agreement for each code. Eight more responses were coded to confirm reliability, for a total of 40% coded for intercoder agreement (see Table 5).

## Results

All data were downloaded from Qualtrics and transferred to SPSS Version 25 for quantitative analyses. Qualitative analyses were conducted via Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word.

### Quantitative Analyses

**Preliminary analyses.** All analyses were conducted using SPSS Version 25. Participants who did not finish the surveys did not complete enough of the outcome measures to be assessed for differences between those who finished and those who did not. T-tests were run to compare differences between participants who took the survey online versus on paper. There were no significant differences between these groups in reference to the outcome measures, although there were several demographic differences (see Tables 6 and 7).

In total, 104 people who qualified for the study continued past the initial screening questions (see Figure 2). Six people completed the demographics measures only. Four people completed at least one of the predictor surveys, but did not complete the outcome measure. A total of 94 participants completed the all of the surveys, 56 online and 38 on paper.

**Descriptive statistics.**

***Parent characteristics.*** Mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum were calculated for continuous variables, while frequency and percent were calculated for categorical variables. Complete categorical and continuous descriptive characteristics for parents are presented in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. Complete categorical and continuous regression-related variables are presented in Tables 8 and 9, respectively. Regression outcome measures are presented in Table 10.

A total of 94 participants completed the surveys. The majority of participants were born in Mexico (47.90%) or the U.S. (30.90%) (see Table 1). Other countries listed include Guatemala (7.40%), Peru (5.30%), El Salvador (3.2%), and then Cuba, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Nicaragua all at 1.10%. Parents have lived in the United States from a range of 6 months-50 years, but most parents have lived in the U.S. for 11-20 years (37.20%). Additionally, most participants identified as 1$^{st}$ generation American (40.40%), in that they immigrated to the U.S. after age 17. The majority of participants were educated in the United States (53.80%). About half of participants received their high school degree or less (46.20%), whereas about half received some sort of college education (48.50%; see Table 1). The majority of parents were married (68.80%) and identified as homemakers (39.80%). Parent income in Table 1 was organized by California tax brackets, with 62% earning an income of $49,999 and

below and 26.20% earning above $50,000 (Tax Year 2018 California Income Tax Brackets, 2019). The largest group under $50,000 was 18.50% of families earning $20,000-$29,999.

Mean parent age was 38.60 (SD = 6.05). Parents' mean Hispanic acculturation survey scores was 3.49 (SD = .72; out of 4), and mean non-Hispanic/American acculturation score was 2.97 (SD = .99); both acculturation mean scores indicate high acculturation levels (see Table 2). Mean perceived stigma in relation to ASD was 2.60 (SD = .59; out of 4), indicating slightly high stigma. Parents reported high levels of involvement in their child's education at home, with a mean of 3.54 (out of 4; SD = .60). One-way ANOVAs indicated that there was no significant difference between stigma scores for different education placements, or generational status. Pearson correlations between both acculturation mean scores and stigma mean scores were not significant.

Parents' home language was either Spanish (40.40%), English (27.70%), or Spanish and English (31.90%; see Table 8). Parent perception of child improvement (M = 2.64, SD = .78; out of 4), school involvement (M = 2.39, SD = .43; out of 3), and communication frequency (M = 2.43, SD = .82; out of 5) are described in Table 9. Parents' most frequently used methods of contacting teachers were talking in person (M = 3.18, SD = 1.12) and calling the teacher (M = 2.76, SD = 1.41). Parents reported that teachers' most frequently used methods of contacting them were talking in person (M = 2.63, SD = 1.33) and writing a note (M = 2.40, SD = 1.33). Regression outcome measures—partnership satisfaction (M = 3.77, SD = 1.01; out of 5), partnership satisfaction$_{child}$ (M = 3.63, SD = 1.10; out of 5), and partnership satisfaction$_{family}$ (M = 3.88, SD = .95; out of 5)—are described in Table 10. Pearson's correlations, chi square test, analysis of variance $\eta$ values were calculated in order to assess the association between regression-related variables and review for multicollinearity (see Table 11).

***Child characteristics.*** Mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum were calculated for continuous variables, while frequency and percent were calculated for categorical variables. Complete categorical descriptive characteristics for children are presented in Table 3. Complete categorical and continuous regression-related variables are presented in Tables 8 and 9, respectively.

The majority of children were boys (85.10% boys, 14.90% girls), which is logical, as autism is found in boys and girls at a ratio of 4:1 (CDC, 2018). Children had a mean age of 7.77 (SD = 1.90; see Table 9 for continuous regression variables). The majority of children did not have additional disorders (60.60%), as reported by their parents. Out of the 37 children that did have additional disorders listed, the most common that parents listed were speech delay/disorders (32.40%), ADHD (24.30%), developmental delay (10.80%), or intellectual disability (10.80%). Almost every child was born in the United States (97.90%), and the majority of children were in public school (94.70%). The majority of children (65.20%) spent most of their school day in special education (see Table 8 for categorical regression variables). Similarly, the majority of the children's main teachers were special education teachers (64.50%). Parents reported that most children (76.60% children) were behind developmental age level. Parents also reported that half (50%) of the children speak in complete sentences.

**Assumptions.**

The partnership satisfaction, partnership satisfaction$_{child}$, and partnership satisfaction$_{family}$ were all examined for violations of assumptions, and were found to meet all assumptions for multiple regression, including linearity, independent errors, homoscedasticity, and normality. Predictors were also tested for multicollinearity. Partial plots were visually inspected for outliers.

**Linear regressions.** Because 88.30% of participants stated that they were eligible to receive free/reduced lunch, that variable was not included as a control variable in the regressions as was originally planned. Categorical variables (child school placement and home language) were rotated in the regression to determine if having different reference groups changed any results within the model. Ultimately, there were no significant differences, and most of the day in general education was selected to be the reported reference group for school placement, and English was the reference group for language.

*Partnership satisfaction.* Each variable was analyzed individually before running the overall model ($N = 92$). Independently, child improvement alone accounted for 41% of the variance, $F(1, 90) = 62.99$, $p = .000$, and was found to relate positively with partnership satisfaction as well ($b = 0.83$, $p = .000$). Also, there was a significant interaction between age and communication frequency ($b_{centered} = -.16$, $p = .016$). There was a positive, moderate relation between communication frequency and partnership satisfaction for young children. For older children, there was a very weak relation between communication frequency and partnership satisfaction. The age by communication frequency interaction explained 11% of the variance, $F(3, 89) = 3.49$, $p = .019$. The age by school involvement interaction was not significant.

Next, the total model was run with the control variable in the first block (see Table 12). Then, all of the predictors were added in the second block (see Table 13). The total model was found to explain 47% of the variance, $F(8, 83) = 9.15$, $p = .000$, and was able to explain significantly more of the variance than the initial control variable model, $\Delta R^2 = .47$, $\Delta F = 12.12$, $p = .000$. Both communication frequency ($b = .23$, $p = .038$) and child improvement ($b = 0.84$, $p = .000$) were significantly and positively related to the outcome, partnership satisfaction. Each interaction was run with a model, but neither interaction was significant.

*Partnership satisfaction*$_{child.}$ Each variable was analyzed individually before running the overall model ($N$ = 92). Independently, child improvement was found to explain 43% of the variance, $F(1, 90) = 68.23$, $p = .000$, and was also positively and significantly related to partnership satisfaction$_{child}$ ($b = 0.93$, $p = .000$). There was also a significant interaction between age and communication frequency ($b_{centered} = -.18$, $p = .012$). There was a positive, moderate relation between communication frequency and partnership satisfaction for young children. For older children, there was a weak relation. The age by communication frequency interaction explained 11% of the variance, $F(3, 89) = 3.65$, $p = .016$. The age by school involvement interaction was not significant.

Next, the total model was run with the control variable in the first block (see Table 14). Then, all predictors were added in the second block (see Table 15). The total model explained 51% of the variance, $F(9, 82) = 9.48$, $p = .000$, and was found to explain significantly more of the variance than the initial control variable model, $\Delta R^2 = .51$, $\Delta F = 12.06$, $p = .000$. Child improvement ($b = 0.91$, $p = .000$) was significantly and positively related to the outcome, partnership satisfaction$_{child.}$ The age by communication frequency interaction was also significant ($b_{centered} = -.13$, $p = .032$). There was a positive relation between communication frequency and partnership satisfaction for young children (see Figure 3). For older children, there was a weak, negative relation between communication frequency and partnership satisfaction.

*Partnership satisfaction*$_{family.}$ Each variable was analyzed individually before running the overall model ($N$ = 93). Independently, child improvement explained 36% of the variance, $F(1, 91) = 51.20$, $p = .000$, and was positively related to partnership satisfaction$_{family}$ ($b = 0.74$, $p = .000$) were significant. There was also a significant interaction between age and communication frequency ($b_{centered} = -.13$, $p = .045$). There was a positive relation between communication

frequency and partnership satisfaction for young children. For older children, there was little to no relation. The age by communication frequency interaction explained 9% of the variance, $F(3, 90) = 2.98$, $p = .036$. The age by school involvement interaction was not significant.

Next, the total model was run with the control variable in the first block (see Table 16). Then, all of the predictors were added in the second block (see Table 17). The total model explained 43% of the variance, $F(8, 84) = 7.92$, $p = .000$, and was able to explain significantly more of the variance than the initial control variable model, $\Delta R^2 = .43$, $\Delta F = 10.53$, $p = .000$. Both communication frequency ($b = .23$, $p = .029$) and child improvement ($b = 0.74$, $p = .000$) were significantly and positively related to the outcome, partnership satisfaction$_{\text{family.}}$ Each interaction was run with a model, but neither interaction was significant.

**Qualitative Analysis**

Forty-one parents responded to the prompt, "Is there anything else you would like to say about your child's teacher?" (the prompt was added after the first 14 participants). Qualitative responders had a mean age of 39.50 (SD = 5.61), lived in the United States an average of 24.89 (SD = 11.25) years, and there was representation from each grade level. Main themes emerged, including *parent-teacher connection, parent-teacher disconnect, child improvement, parents' suggested strategies*, and *parent overall disposition* (see Table 18 for overall frequency of each code; for code definitions and coding procedure, see Table 4 and Figure 1, respectively). From this array of parents' concerns and thoughts, the most dominant themes were *parent-teacher disconnect* and *connection*—when parents mentioned whether they felt that the teacher understood their family and their child. Separated into several sub-codes, there were many ways for parents to feel connected or disconnected to their child's teacher (see Table 4). Accents were added to Spanish responses if missing for the ease of the reader.

**Parent-teacher disconnect.** A number of parents expressed concerns with the less than optimal connection between themselves and their teacher (see Table 16 for overall frequency of each code; see Table 4 for code definitions). From the responses categorized under the parent-teacher disconnect theme, sub-codes emerged, including *minimizes needs*, *lack of communication*, *teacher unprepared*, *mistreatment*, and *general negative*.

*Minimizes needs.* Parents described situations in which they felt that teachers have not been providing their children with proper accommodations or teaching techniques. Several parents felt that they and their children's teachers did not always agree about the education, services, and overall guidance for their child. For instance, when a parent requested "a one-on-one BCBA to help guide [my child] through his aggressive behaviors and elopement," the teacher disagreed in terms of what they thought the child needed. Parents also felt that teachers could not work with their child's behavioral challenges. One parent stated that they felt the teacher "does not know enough to handle my son's behavioral needs," while another shared that the "teacher does not direct the children in their behavior" ["*la maestra de mi hijo siento que no dirige a los niños en su comportamiento*"]. Parents were also concerned that their child's teacher did not understand the needs of their child in terms of providing academic work at the child's level. A parent described the teacher as teaching above the child's level: "they are teaching her what a second grader learns but mentally she is like two years old," ["*ella le están enseñando lo que aprende un niño de 2 grado pero ella mentalmente tiene como 2 años"*]. Another parent expressed that the teacher overruling her child's needs affects how her child feels about school work: "[the teacher] doesn't accept that my daughter needs help and my daughter seems frustrated and depressed with the homework she has" ["*Ella no acepta que mi niña ocupa ayuda y mi niña se muestra frustrada, y deprimida con las tareas*"]. From parents' responses, it seems

that teachers minimizing or ignoring their child's needs is makes it difficult for parents and children.

*Lack of communication.* Parents were concerned that the teacher did not communicate with them, and were especially worried about not knowing what occurs in the classroom regarding their child's behaviors or academic goals. One issue mentioned by several parents was their concern that they do not know what happens in the classroom: "She did not let me know when my child misbehaves at school…until the IEP," [*No me aviso cuando mi hijo se porta mal en la escuela...hasta cuando fue su IEP*] and "[the teacher] does not pass along what happens in the classroom." Another concern was the amount of discussions it took in order for the teacher listen. One parent stated that "it takes several meetings, follow ups and observations by private professionals before [the teacher] is willing to implement [accommodations or suggestions]." A lack of communication or poor communication can make parents feel like they are not able to collaborate with their child's teacher, or know how their child is doing.

*Teacher unprepared.* The training level and ability of their children's teachers were mentioned by parents, specifically regarding teachers' experiences teaching children with ASD. Some teachers seemed to not know a lot about teaching children with ASD or recognizing symptoms of ASD, as one parent noted: "before [my child] was put into special education classes[,] some teachers thought he was misbehaving." Even if teachers do have the opportunity to receive some training, the number of hours that teachers are actually trained in working with children with ASD was a concern to parents: "some Special Ed teachers only have 5 [hours] of autism training and only understand learning disabilities, so they have a hard time teaching children with autism." Additionally, despite trainings to prepare teachers to work with children with ASD, some teachers may have a more challenging time using helpful strategies. For

instance, one parent felt that the teacher "wasn't the best at teaching [especially] kids with ASD. She had to go for lots of training by the [district due] to my complaints and NOT helping my child." Concern regarding teachers' ability to teach children with ASD may discourage parents from feeling confident that the teacher can help their child.

*Mistreatment.* Two parents mentioned negative and harmful behavior of their child's teacher towards their children, including teachers being "impatient and impersonal". One parent claimed that the teachers and assistants "yell[ed,] sometimes they even hit them," ["*mucho maltrato y gritos a veces los llegan a golpear*"]. Parents cannot feel like a partner with their child's teacher if they are also worried about any mistreatment that may be going on in the classroom, and children should not be treated in that manner.

*General negative.* Parents also wrote in general, negative comments about their child's teacher. For instance, many parents felt like their child's teacher was "not a good match for our child," for various reasons. One parent merely commented, "dictator" ["déspota"] without any further explanation. Another parent expressed the teacher's lack of assistance regarding their child: the teacher was "not help[ing my child] appropriately, academically speaking" ["*no lo han ayudado apropiadamente, académicamente hablando*."]. Additionally, a parent claimed that, "there is no connection between me and [the teacher]!" ["*no hay conexión entre ella y yo!*"], expressing a feeling of lack of partnership. For these parents, there was some connection and common ground missing between themselves and the teacher.

**Parent-teacher connection.** On the other hand, other parents shared positive experiences with the teacher in response to the prompt ("Is there anything else you would like to say about your child's teacher?"), contributing to a sense of connection with them (see Table 16 for overall frequency of each code; see Table 4 for code definitions). Within parents' responses and this

connection theme, sub-codes emerged, including *makes the effort*, *child inclusion*, *good communication*, and *general positive*, all of which contribute to making parents feel connected with their child's teacher.

*Makes the effort.* For several of these parents, they felt that their child's teacher learned about and accommodated their child's needs, or that the teacher was making the effort to understand and work with their child, which was important to them. These are teachers who incorporate the child and the child's family in the education process, such as one teacher who "integrates her kiddos' personalities/preferences in her classroom resulting in a strong bond with them," or another teacher who, "also makes an effort to get to know my family." *Making the effort* for these parents includes teachers doing things like "advocat[ing] for [the teacher's] kids," or arranging the classroom with "several areas to help soothe and stimulate the kids when needed." Parents felt that these teachers truly strive to make the effort to work effectively with their children.

*Child inclusion.* For some parents, a connection with their child's teacher meant that their child was included in the school and classroom. Normalizing ASD in school and incorporating students with ASD in school activities is a large part of parents feeling connected. As a parent noted, for example, the child's teacher made efforts to educate students at the school about autism: "the month of April is used to help kids in other classes understand what autism is…My son's teacher keeps her kids included in every school activity." For another parent, feeling that the teacher included their child meant treating him "the same as the other children," ["*lo trata de la misma manera que a los demás niños*"] and "integrat[ing] him in all of the activities" ["*lo integra en todas las actividades*"]. In these ways, parents have felt that the teacher is able to

include their child in the classroom and school activities, which is where they should feel like they belong.

*Good communication.* In terms of having good parent-teacher communication, both content of the conversations and ability speak to each other in multiple formats were important to parents. One parent described being able to reach teachers easily as a working parent as essential: "text or email is very convenient." In terms of what was actually shared with parents, one parent said that their child's teacher "encouraged me a lot with the working strategies and support towards my child about how to help him move forward at home, making him some activities that she [sent] me" ["*me ha animado muchos con las estrategia de trabajo y apoyo hacia mi niño de cómo ayudarlo en la casa a progresar, haciéndole algunas actividades que ella me manda*"]. Having a teacher who kept parents updated about strategies that were beneficial to their child was important to this parent, and would assist many families.

*General positive.* Nine parents wrote general, positive comments about their child's teacher, indicating how much they liked them. For instance, parents described their child's teacher as "very supportive and helpful," "happy and very professional" ["*alegre y muy profesional*"], "honest," and like a "family away from [my child's] family during school hours." One parent even mentioned that the teacher seems like he really "love[s] his job [and] there should be more teachers like him" ["*ama su trabajo deberían aver más maestros como el*"]. These are positive qualities that mattered to parents.

**Parent disposition.** Parents' responses were coded for overall sense of emotion, and included four sub-codes: *positive, negative, mixed*, and *neutral* (see Table 16 for overall frequency of each code; see Table 4 for code definitions).

*Negative.* For parents who had *negative* responses, many had concerns about the teacher's teaching style, how their child was performing in the class, and how the teacher interacts with the parent: "My child's teacher does not know enough to handle my son's behavioral needs and in turn becomes defensive when I ask about them." Parents were also concerned about how their child was being treated: "The teachers of special classes and also assistants don't care or protect the children" ["*Que los maestros de clase especiales y tanto asistentes no cuidan ni protegen a los niños*"]. More than half of the parents who left comments were found to be negative responses.

*Positive.* On the other hand, parents who had *positive* responses liked their child's teacher, and saw their child improving: "I've seen improvement with my son's behavior and she's honest," and "she's been very supportive and helpful. He made tremendous progress with her." Parents also discuss how their child is included in the classroom and the efforts the teacher makes: "[the teacher] understands the needs of my child and integrates him in all of the activities. They do not pay more attention because he has autism, he treats him the same as the other children" ["*Entiende las necesidades de mi hijo y lo integra en todas las actividades. No le pone más atención por tener autismo, lo trata de la misma manera que a los demás niños*"]. Parents seemed to be happier when they felt the teachers were supportive of them and their family.

*Mixed.* Parents who have *mixed* responses are happy with some aspects of the teacher and school, but unhappy with others. As one example, a parent notes that, "General education teacher is fine. Special education teacher is the problem," indicating that parents cannot always guess which teacher would work well with their child. Other parents feel blocked or intimidated by some aspects of the school, such as receiving services and the IEP process: "The teacher is good

but I think the district is a mafia- like services equal money…It is intimidating when one is at the IEPs we need to educate ourselves to be able to advocate for [our children]" ["*La maestra es buena pero pienso que el distrito estuna mafia- como servicios equivale a dinero...Es intimidante cuando uno esta en los IEP's necesiatmos capacitarnos para poder abogar por ellos"*]. It is difficult for parents to be happy with every aspect of the school, teacher, and other aspects of their child's education.

*Neutral.* For the one parent who left a *neutral* comment, they noted that, "it has been more or less now in this year with help to my son," ["*Bueno a sido mas o menos horita en este ano con ayuda a mi hijo*"], signifying that the school year has been neither good nor bad.

**Child improvement.** Parents found it important to discuss whether or not their child as improving in school (see Table 16 for overall frequency of each code; see Table 4 for code definitions). Several parents described not only how their child has made progress, but also the teachers' qualities that are responsible for the improvement: "[the teacher has] been very supportive and helpful. He made tremendous progress with her," and, "[the] second year teacher…brought new ideas and developmental strategies that work very well with my son."

On the other hand, parents also shared their concerns that their child has not been making progress: "I am worried that my child is not advancing on his goals at the school…My child cannot say what he worked on at school even when asked" ["*Me preocupa que me hijo no este avanzando en sus metas en la escuela…Mi hijo no puede decir en que trabajo en su escuela aunque le pregunte*"]. Teaching style was another concern for parents, as some parents do not believe their children can learn in their classroom environment: "they don't teach them well…It is impossible for her to be able to learn" ["*no los enseñan bien…es imposible que ella sea capaz de aprender*"]. One parent was concerned about the teacher's lack of focus, claiming, "Lately,

[my child] hasn't been improving. [The teacher] hasn't focused on his needs or academic goals since he has a one on one aid." Parents take note of whether or not their child is improving in school and the teachers' effort to help because that matters to them.

**Parents' suggested strategies.** Several parents had suggestions for teachers and the school in order to improve the education process for their child and other children (see Table 16 for overall frequency of each code; see Table 4 for code definitions). Some suggestions had to do with the teachers' and staff's personality: "Overall, the whole school and staff…need to [have] more empathy for kids with disabilities," indicating that the parent believed that more work needed to be done to prepare the school to work with children with ASD. One parent also mentioned that the teacher should be honest with what is going on in the classroom and how the teacher can help this family: "[the teacher] needs to be more honest with the parents about the behavior of my child and if she can help provide the necessary services about my son's academic difficulties I would like for her to pay attention and tell me" ["*necesita ser más honesta con los padres sobre el comportamiento de mi hijo y si ella puede ayudar a proveer los servicios necesarios en las dificultades académicas de mi hijo me gustaria que ella prestara atencion y decirme."*]. Preparation for teachers to work with children with ASD was also mentioned, as well as more openness with parents as to what helpful strategies they can use with their own children: "We need more prepared teachers that are prepared to work with the needs of our children and me as a mom be able to observe how they help them in their therapies" ["*Necesitamos maestros mas profesionales y preparados para trabajar con las necesidades de nuestros hijos y yo como mama poder observar cómo le ayudan sus terapias*"]. Similarly, another parent suggested that teachers prepare regarding understanding students' IEPs before school starts: "all teachers should read the IEPs of each child so that when they enter school they

know how to act since many parents say that the teachers are not aware of all the problems" ["*todos los maestros deberían de leer los IEP de cada niño para que cuando entren a la escuela, sepan cómo actuar, ya que muchos padres cuentan que no están enterados de los problemas"*]. These suggestions identify issues that parents have observed—from teacher training and preparation, to how children are treated. Learning from suggestions of these parents could help the partnership building process, and make families feel more welcome.

## Discussion

This study's goals were to (1) characterize this sample of Latino parents in terms of their parent-perceived involvement-related factors, parent reported child-related factors, culture-related factors, and satisfaction with parent-teacher partnerships, (2) Identify the aspects of parent-perceived involvement-related factors, namely parent-teacher interaction (i.e., frequency of parent-teacher communication, parent home language, and parent school-based involvement), and child-related factors namely child characteristics (i.e., parent-perceived child improvement and child age) that impact parents' satisfaction with the parent-teacher partnership, and (3) Explore Latino parents' descriptions of their experiences with their child with ASD's teacher. Not many studies have concentrated on using quantitative methods to understand relations between Latino parents' perceptions of parent-teacher partnership and other variables. Overall, participants were a diverse group of parents who shared their various experiences with their child's teacher—both positive experiences and negative experiences. Study results noted that parents were relatively satisfied with their partnerships. It was also found that as parent perception of child improvement and communication frequency ratings increased, so did parents' satisfaction with partnerships. For the satisfaction child subscale, communication frequency's relation to satisfaction depended on age of the child. From parent responses, we found that

parents felt more connected with teachers when they felt teachers understood their child. On the other hand, parents felt less connected with teachers when they did not feel like there was good communication between themselves and the teacher.

**Parent Characteristics**

A diverse sample of Latino parents of children with ASD in kindergarten-5$^{th}$ grade Los Angeles was recruited for this study. Parents, who were mostly mothers, were born in the United States or Mexico primarily, although parents were from a variety of other countries as well. Participants' preferred language spoken at home was almost evenly split between Spanish, English, and both Spanish and English. There was also a large range in highest level of education, with about half of parents receiving a high school diploma or less, and half receiving at least some college education. Despite the large range in income, the majority of parents were eligible or receiving free/reduced price school lunch, indicating families were still mostly under the poverty line. Parents were most likely to identify as 1$^{st}$ or 2$^{nd}$ generation immigrants. Most parents have lived in the United States for 11 or more years, and, on average, were highly acculturated in both Hispanic culture and non-Hispanic/American culture. This diverse collection of parents granted us the opportunity to explore their varying perspectives, and to better understand what they were experiencing with their children at school.

Parents had a slightly high perception of ASD stigma in their community. Stigma for disabilities and mental health can be challenging for Latino parents, and can even prevent them from getting information about autism, getting a diagnosis for their child, or accepting the ASD diagnosis (Zuckerman et al., 2014a, 2014b). Feelings of stigma could prevent parents from reaching out to teachers, if they feel their child's teacher might judge them or their child (Burke et al., 2019). Parents' perceptions that teachers do not have enough compassion or knowledge

about ASD may feed into their perception of stigma from school staff, or vice versa (Burke et al., 2019). In this study, there was no difference in perceived stigma level between educational placements, even though having the label of being in special education might make parents feel more stigmatized (Lalvani, 2015). There was also no difference in stigma level between generational status or acculturation levels, despite indications that Latino immigrants, who may be less acculturated, tend to have higher perceived stigma (Zuckerman et al., 2018). Results indicate there is still work to be done, however, in order to inform people about ASD in order to further destigmatize it.

Despite slightly high ratings of perceived stigma, parents rated themselves as having both high school and home involvement. Latino parents are likely getting involved in their child's education at home, such as teaching their children moral values and providing homework help in various ways (Gonzalez & Ayala-Alcantar, 2008; Walker et al., 2011). However, barriers such as language, lack of time, or not having knowledge of the school system, can prevent Latino parents from getting involved in the school itself (Quezada et al., 2003). Despite possible barriers, this study has indicated that these parents of children with ASD do get involved in both school and home settings, as American school policies such as IDEA, encourage (Jung, 2011). As parents expressed in this study via the qualitative portion, they were not always able to get everything their child needed from the teacher alone, serving as a reminder that, especially for children with ASD, it can be vital for parents to be involved in their child's education through various methods (e.g., help at home, IEP meetings, etc.). From this study, it was apparent that these parents do take opportunities to be involved in their child's education not only at home, but also at school, despite possible barriers mentioned in the literature that may make those types of involvement difficult (Quezada et al., 2003).

## Child Characteristics

There was a fairly even proportion of grade representation for children in this study, with the greatest number of children being in kindergarten. Most children were in special education and were categorized by parents as being behind their developmental level. Most children were not identified as having additional disorders. Children were most likely to communicate in complete sentences. Traditional public schools were most common, with a few children attending charter schools.

## Parent-Teacher Partnerships

This study aimed to describe Latino parents' experiences, as well as their feelings and needs regarding partnerships. Despite past qualitative research studies describing challenges and barriers that can prevent partnerships from developing between teachers and Latino parents (e.g., Blue-Banning et al., 2000; Ramirez, 2003; Salas, 2004) within this study, overall, parents were relatively highly satisfied with their partnership experience, as was found in past quantitative studies that were not specifically focused on Latino families (e.g., Summers et al., 2005a; Summers et al., 2007). In this study, parents were generally satisfied with how teachers understood their child and treated their child, as well as with how teachers acted towards their family. Based on partnership satisfaction scores, many Latino parents were satisfied with their partnerships with their child's teacher, indicating that teachers and parents are already working together to benefit the child in a way that complements the parents' needs.

We found that parent perceptions of child improvement and level of quality communication from teachers were consistent predictors of satisfaction with parent-teacher partnership. As seen in past quantitative studies, parents' perceptions of their child's teacher has positively been associated with both skill progress (e.g., Eskow et al., 2018) and communication

frequency (e.g., Adams & Christenson, 2000; Kohl et al., 2000). Perceiving higher child improvement ratings and more frequent communication may indicate to parents that they can depend on the teacher to help their child, thus confirming aspects of partnership for parents. This may build trust between parent and teacher, which may manifest in partnership satisfaction, as trust is important to building partnerships (Adams & Christenson, 1998).

These results may be specific to the Los Angeles area, where there are many Latino families (e.g., 73.4% of students in LAUSD in the 2018-2019 school year were Latino ["L.A. Unified Fingertip Facts," 2018]), as well as many Latino teachers (e.g., 43% of LAUSD teachers were Latino in 2018-2019; Wong, 2019). LAUSD also has many bilingual teachers, including over 3,000 Spanish-speaking teachers ("Spanish-speaking teachers getting special training to meet California's demand," 2017). In fact, in this study, we found that there was no significant difference in partnership satisfaction between parents who spoke English at home when compared to parents who spoke Spanish or Spanish and English at home. This indicates that parents' language may not impact parent-teacher relationships within this sample. Meanwhile, in other areas of the country where the Latino population is smaller and teachers are less likely to be Latino, families may experiences more challenges, or may feel more excluded. In Los Angeles, Latino families may feel more supported by and connected with teachers in Los Angeles County, which may partially explain high partnership satisfaction ratings. Additionally, perhaps barriers for these parents lie elsewhere in the education process, and are just not found in the parent-teacher relationship.

**Communication frequency.** When parents and teachers are able to share reliable and frequent information, this could build the feeling of partnership, thus increasing parents' satisfaction (Blue-Banning et al., 2004). Receiving information regularly also tells parents that

the teachers believe that parents deserve to know information about their child's day, academic goals, and strategies for their child, informing parents that they, too, are part of the team striving to help their child (Tucker & Schwartz, 2013). In order to assist their children academically, families want relevant and individualized information from teachers; sharing helpful information from teacher to parent is especially important when it can build feelings of partnerships (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Kohl et al., 2000; Tucker & Schwartz, 2013). Increased communication between parents and teachers can also provide parents with a means to advocate productively for their child, allowing them to feel empowered as part of the team (Burke et al., 2019; Tucker & Schwartz, 2013). As was found in this study, when parents felt that communication was more frequent, parents felt more satisfied that teachers were being respectful of the child's needs, as well as the family's needs, according to the overall partnership satisfaction scale, and family subscale.

Results for the partnership satisfaction child subscale indicated an association between communication frequency and partnership satisfaction for younger children, but not for older children. This may be partially explained by communication practices of parents and teachers of younger versus older children. Parents and teachers tend to be in contact more when children are younger, as parents may still be getting used to the school routine and the teacher (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Izzo et al., 1999). More frequent communication may help these parents feel that teachers are understanding their child's needs, thus relating to parents' partnership satisfaction. Parents and teachers of older children tend to interact less, perhaps because parents have adjusted to school by that point and/or because of increased child independence, so communication frequency may not be as important of a contributor to satisfaction levels (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Izzo et al., 1999; Murray, McFarland-Piazza, & Harrison, 2015). Also, for

older children, more frequent interaction could indicate issues in the classroom, such as behavioral problems, as the communication and satisfaction association is negative (Dornbusch & Glasgow, 1996; Izzo et al., 1999). Additional research is needed to further explain this association.

**Child improvement.** In the context of ASD, which has no specific recommended course of treatment, parents are especially grateful and aware when their child is making progress, as not every intervention works for every child, and children have different developmental trajectories (Goin-Kochel, Mackintosh, & Myers, 2009; Lord, Luyster, Guthrie, & Pickles, 2012). As children improve in various skills, parents may become more confident that their child's teacher understands their child's needs, as well as family needs, thus increasing their partnership satisfaction levels. Parents also may feel that, if their child is doing better academically and behaviorally, that they and the teachers have worked together sufficiently to get their child to that point, thus making them feel more connected. Unlike the results that Eskow and colleagues (2018) found, in which child improvement was only positively related to the child focused subscale, these results were repeated across both partnership satisfaction subscales. This study found that when parents perceived that their children with ASD improved in certain skills, parents felt that teachers understood the needs of their child and respected their child, and also understood the needs of the family.

**Qualitative Responses**

Five themes emerged from the qualitative data: parent-teacher connection, parent-teacher disconnect, parent disposition, child improvement, and parent strategies. This study's qualitative findings are also reflected in its quantitative findings—emphasizing that communication and child improvement are important elements to parents and to their perception of parent-teacher

partnerships, as was found in other qualitative and quantitative studies (e.g., Blue-Banning et al., 2004; Eskow et al 2018; Stoner et al., 2005; Tucker & Schwartz, 2013). Parents who felt more connected to their teacher felt that the teacher understood their child and their family, and that the teacher was able to communicate directly with them, and also include their child in the classroom. Open communication builds trust with parents of children with ASD (Stoner et al., 2005). Conversely, those who felt less connected tended to mention their teacher's lack of communication with them, as well as other negative aspects of their relationship, such as perceived mistreatment of students, and dismissing their child's needs. Parents also gave suggestions such as having teachers better prepare to work with children with ASD, whether that be through additional training or fully reading students' IEPs. These suggestions indicate parents want teachers to better understand how to work with their child, similar to past research (Tucker & Schwartz, 2013). Many parents were happy with how their teachers acted towards them and their child, but other parents' responses suggested that there can still be improvements made regarding how parents and students are treated. Overall, parents expressed their desire to have teachers understand their child's needs, and then have the desire and knowledge to implement those needs to make their child's educational experience more rewarding and beneficial.

**Contributions to the Field**

This study not only produced additional information about parents of children with ASD, but it also focused on underrepresented people and understudied topics within ASD research. Latino parents of children with ASD were able to describe their partnerships with teachers, as well as what they were satisfied and dissatisfied with regarding these partnerships. Understanding more about what makes these Latino parents of children with ASD satisfied with

their partnerships may give a voice to those who may not have had one, and will allow future research to continue to investigate partnership satisfaction and related constructs (Peña, 2000).

This study was able to confirm conclusions that previous studies also found, such as positive relations between parent-teacher partnership satisfaction and child improvement and communication quality (e.g., Adams & Christenson, 2000; Eskow et al., 2018) in the context of Latino families with children with ASD. Furthermore, this study was able to expand on past studies' qualitative findings using quantitative methods and confirm that teacher communication is important to parents (e.g., Blue-Banning et al., 2004). This study also confirmed that, despite potential barriers, Latino parents can have positive partnerships with their children's teachers. Parents also want to be informed about the needs and progress of their child. This study also further debunks the myth that Latino parents are not involved in their child's education, or that they may not be comfortable speaking with a teacher (Gonzalez & Ayala-Alcantar, 2008). As was found in past studies, these parents were involved in their child's education both at home and at school, and through their desire for information about what is going on in the classroom and child progress (e.g., Walker et al., 2011).

Although data and results are not generalizable to everyone, as it focused on a group of Latino parents in one area of the country, suggestions and findings can still be considered by teachers. This study gives schools and teachers information about parents' needs and perceptions to continue to bridge the gap between parents and teachers, and to confirm that many teachers and parents seem to be on the right path to pursuing partnerships, at least from these parents' perspectives. This is a unique opportunity in which Latino parents were able to anonymously share what they need in order to develop or maintain partnership satisfaction, and could be used to educate teachers and teachers-in-training in terms of ways to mediate productive relationships.

Understanding what parents need from school staff and acting on that information could help build partnerships and avoid potential barriers (Gonzalez & Ayala-Alcantar, 2008; Tucker & Schwartz, 2013).

This study also illustrated that teachers and schools could use partnership satisfaction measures to ask parents directly how they feel about partnerships, as parents were able to provide a range of responses to this questionnaire (Summers et al., 2005c). Using partnership satisfaction measures may make it easier for teachers to reach out to parents to inquire about their parent-teacher partnership satisfaction levels. Having teachers ask parents to fill out a progress report of sorts may also increase the trust and connection that parents feel toward teachers, especially if they could give information anonymously; teachers would be showing parents that they care about their input. Lastly, receiving and reviewing the results of the partnership satisfaction measure together may motivate teachers and parents to work together to improve education programs, as they can see where strengths and weaknesses lie (Fantuzzo et al., 2006).

**Contributions to the Community**

Latino families are not a highly researched group in the field of ASD. This study allowed a community to have a platform to voice experiences anonymously that they may not have had otherwise. Parents also had the opportunity to be both anonymous and honest in a study that was not directly connected to their child's school, perhaps allowing them to share more information. In response to the qualitative prompt, parents also were grateful for being included in this research:

> I'm very glad to be able to participate in surveys like this and if I can help with anything else I will gladly do so. What I have learned and accomplished has been through looking for help and knocking door to door. Thank you for worrying about the needs of our

community. [*Me siento feliz de poder participar en encuestas como estas y si de algo más puedo ser de ayuda con gusto lo hago yo lo poco o lo mucho que e aprendido y logrado a sido por buscar ayuda tocando puertas. Gracias por preocuparse por nuestra comunidad*.]

Another parent said, simply, "Thank you for giving me the opportunity of being a part of this survey," ["*Gracias por darme la oportunidad de ser parte de esta encuesta*,"]. Being the focus of a research study was important to parents, and they were happy to participate and have their voices heard.

This study also illustrated the importance of using various methods to recruit participants and collect data in order to include different members of the Latino community, some of whom may not have been reached previously by researchers. Participants were about evenly split between people who responded to the surveys online and on paper. Choosing to collect data only using one method could have limited the number or type of people interested. In order to capture these nuances within a sample, it is imperative to consider using multiple ways to recruit participants and collect data.

**Limitations**

Limitations that exist in this study is that the term "Latino" groups several different cultures together, and limits researchers in terms of the nuances within each specific culture (Salas, 2004). Additionally, I do not speak Spanish, making it necessary to recruit team members who did speak Spanish fluently. Because this study was cross-sectional, directionality between variables could not be assumed (Setia, 2016). Response bias may have also inflated parent-teacher partnership responses, as it may be more culturally and socially unacceptable for parents to be dissatisfied or to disagree with teachers (Hill & Torres, 2010), although parents had the

opportunity to respond anonymously. Additionally, perhaps because of the current political climate, including undocumented families being held at detention centers or deported at a high rate (Nixon, 2018), recruitment of families was difficult, and may be more skewed towards people who felt safer than others participating in research. A teacher's strike also occurred during six days of the data collection period, and may have affected how parents felt about teachers, either positively or negatively. Lastly, teachers were not included in this study, although their perspectives would assist in understanding a better and more detailed picture of the partnerships.

**Future Directions**

Future directions for this research could include investigating additional possible predictors in order to understand what relates to partnerships and partnership satisfaction. Some possible variables to research could be parent empowerment, parent stress, or parent school belonging (Burke & Hodapp, 2014; Dunst & Dempsey, 2007; Francis, Blue-Banning, Haines, Turnbull, & Gross, 2016). Perhaps school environment is impacting parents' relationships with teachers. Also, pursuing partnership research within the context of child development is important, as needs of children change across ages and grade levels, and so do expectations for parent-teacher communication and parent involvement at school (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Including child outcomes, such as student engagement, in a longitudinal study would also be beneficial, to investigate what child outcomes are related to partnerships for this sample (Hughes & Kwok, 2007). Also, recruiting both teachers and parents in order to receive a full picture of parent-teacher partnerships would be another important next step. Additional information about teachers would also be helpful, including their race/ethnicity as cultural mismatch (for example, regarding role expectations) can impact parent and teacher relationships (Hill & Torres, 2010). Conducting

in-depth, qualitative interviews with randomly selected parents who respond to these surveys would also be valuable, as about half of the parents wrote in responses to the qualitative prompt, indicating they had information that they wanted to share that was not covered in the surveys. This would allow researchers to expand on answers that parents provided, and would also give parents more of a space to share their experiences. A larger study with a diverse collection of parents would also allow researchers to investigate similarities and differences across these groups. Researchers would also be able to make more accurate conclusions as to why partnership satisfaction ratings may differ across groups.

**Conclusions**

This study was able not only to describe characteristics and experiences of a group of Latino parents of children with ASD in Los Angeles, but was also able to determine which factors were related to parents' satisfaction with parent-teacher partnerships, and interpret parents' experiences with their child's teacher. Overall, parents were relatively satisfied with partnerships, but there is still some work to be done. Partnerships are imperative in the context of ASD and special education in order to ease the experience of seeking out and receiving appropriate and effective educational practices for children (Burke & Hodapp, 2016).

In order to develop partnerships, the value of communication between parents and teachers should not be overlooked. Teachers should continue to have frequent, but also meaningful conversations with parents—including sharing information about the child's experiences, both good and bad, as well as providing suggestions that could help the child and family (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000). Teachers can make sure that parents understand what is occurring in the classroom by providing them with helpful information about their child. Past literature suggests that cultural beliefs may causes Latino parents to be more hesitant to interact

with teachers because of respect parents have for teacher (Gonzalez & Ayala-Alcantar, 2008; Harry, 1992). In these cases, perhaps teachers could invite parents to the table to exchange expertise.

We also found that parents perceiving that their child has been improving in various skills and subjects during the school year can also improve satisfaction with partnerships. Parents and teachers can make the effort to understand what strategies and rewards children respond to, so that they can all work towards building the child's skills. If teachers do not have an understanding of how their students learn, it could make it more difficult for teachers, students, and parents.

Partnerships are vital to the educational experience because they can promote academic improvement, quality of life, parent involvement in their child's education, and more (Eskow et al., 2018; Hsiao et al., 2017; Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000). This study continues the narrative that many Latino parents both want and can develop a partnership with teachers (Carreón et al., 2005; Jones, 2003). Continuing to investigate, encourage, and improve partnerships could motivate more parents to work closely with teachers and thus improve their child's educational experiences (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000).

## Appendix

Table 1

*Categorical Descriptive Characteristics of Parents*

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Self-identified race (*n* = 90) | | |
| Caucasian/White | 30 | 33.30 |
| Other (Latino[a]/Hispanic variation write-in) | 60 | 66.70 |
| Parent gender (*n* = 93) | | |
| Female | 89 | 95.70 |
| Male | 4 | 4.30 |
| Parent employment status (*n* = 93) | | |
| Unemployed | 14 | 15.10 |
| Employed part-time | 17 | 18.30 |
| Employed full-time | 25 | 26.90 |
| Homemaker | 37 | 39.80 |
| Marital status (*n* = 93) | | |
| Single | 22 | 23.70 |
| Married | 64 | 68.80 |
| Divorced | 7 | 7.50 |
| Highest level of education (*n* = 93) | | |
| Some high school or less | 24 | 25.80 |
| High school or GED | 19 | 20.40 |
| Some college experience | 22 | 23.70 |
| Trade school or Associate's degree | 9 | 9.70 |
| Bachelor's degree or more | 19 | 20.50 |
| Country achieved highest level of education (n = 93) | | |
| USA | 50 | 53.80 |
| Mexico | 30 | 32.30 |
| Guatemala | 5 | 5.40 |
| El Salvador | 2 | 2.20 |
| Peru | 2 | 2.20 |
| Colombia | 1 | 1.10 |
| Cuba | 1 | 1.10 |
| Dominican Republic | 1 | 1.10 |
| Venezuela | 1 | 1.10 |
| Country of birth (n = 94) | | |
| USA | 29 | 30.90 |
| Mexico | 45 | 47.90 |
| Guatemala | 7 | 7.40 |
| El Salvador | 3 | 3.20 |
| Peru | 5 | 5.30 |
| Colombia | 1 | 1.10 |
| Cuba | 1 | 1.10 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dominican Republic | 1 | 1.10 |
| Venezuela | 1 | 1.10 |
| Nicaragua | 1 | 1.10 |
| Years lived in United States ($n$ = 94) | | |
| Less than 1 year | 1 | 1.10 |
| 1-10 years | 4 | 4.30 |
| 11-20 years | 35 | 37.20 |
| 21-30 years | 24 | 25.50 |
| 31-40 years | 23 | 24.50 |
| 41-50 years | 7 | 7.40 |
| Generation identified with ($n$ = 89) | | |
| 1st generation | 36 | 40.40 |
| 1.25 generation | 11 | 12.40 |
| 1.5 generation | 5 | 5.60 |
| 1.75 generation | 4 | 4.50 |
| 2nd generation | 22 | 24.70 |
| 2.5 generation | 4 | 4.50 |
| 3rd generation | 3 | 3.40 |
| Prefer not to answer | 4 | 4.50 |
| Family total income ($n$ = 92) | | |
| $9,999 or less | 7 | 7.60 |
| $10,000-19,999 | 11 | 12.00 |
| $20,000-29,999 | 17 | 18.50 |
| $30-000-39,999 | 12 | 13.00 |
| $40,000-49,999 | 10 | 10.90 |
| $50,000 and up | 24 | 26.20 |
| Prefer not to answer | 11 | 12.00 |
| Free/reduced lunch eligibility ($n$ = 94) | | |
| No | 11 | 11.70 |
| Yes | 83 | 88.30 |

Table 2

*Continuous Descriptive Characteristics of Parents*

| | *n* | Mean | Median | *SD* | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parent age | 88 | 38.60 | 38 | 6.05 | 28 | 51 |
| Perceived stigma | 94 | 2.60 | 2.63 | .59 | 1 | 3.88 |
| Hispanic acculturation | 94 | 3.49 | 3.91 | .72 | 1 | 4 |
| Non-Hispanic acculturation | 93 | 2.97 | 3 | .99 | 1 | 4 |
| Home involvement | 91 | 3.54 | 3.83 | .60 | 1.17 | 4 |

Table 3

*Categorical Descriptive Characteristics of Children*

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Child gender ($n$ = 94) | | |
| Female | 14 | 14.90 |
| Male | 80 | 85.10 |
| Country born in ($n$ = 94) | | |
| USA | 92 | 97.90 |
| Mexico | 1 | 1.10 |
| Colombia | 1 | 1.10 |
| Child grade ($n$ = 94) | | |
| Kindergarten | 22 | 23.40 |
| 1st grade | 14 | 14.90 |
| 2nd grade | 18 | 19.10 |
| 3rd grade | 14 | 14.90 |
| 4th grade | 11 | 11.70 |
| 5th grade | 15 | 16.00 |
| School type ($n$ = 94) | | |
| Public school | 89 | 94.70 |
| Charter school | 5 | 5.30 |
| Child's main teacher type ($n$ = 93) | | |
| Special education | 60 | 64.50 |
| General education | 28 | 30.10 |
| I don't know | 5 | 5.40 |
| Child's developmental level ($n$ = 94) | | |
| Behind age level | 72 | 76.60 |
| At age level | 21 | 22.30 |
| Above age level | 1 | 1.10 |
| Additional disorders ($n$ = 94) | | |
| Yes | 37 | 39.40 |
| No | 57 | 60.60 |
| Child common communication style ($n$ = 94) | | |
| Sounds | 2 | 2.10 |
| 1-2 words | 11 | 11.70 |
| 3-5 words | 27 | 28.70 |
| Complete sentences | 47 | 50.00 |
| Gestures | 3 | 3.20 |
| Signs (sign language) | 1 | 1.10 |
| Communication device | 3 | 3.20 |

Table 4

*Qualitative Coding Definitions*

| Theme | Code | Definition | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| Disposition | | Emotions represented in responses. | |
| | Positive | Parents' responses are positive in emotion. | "I am happy with my son's teacher" |
| | Negative | Parents' responses are negative in emotion. | "I feel that there is no connection between me and her!" |
| | Neutral | Parents' responses are neutral in emotion. | "Well it has been more or less now in this year with help to my son." |
| | Mixed | Parents' responses are both positive and negative in emotion. | "The teacher is good but I think that the district is a mafia- like services equal money I feel that at times they want to minimize the needs of our children." |
| Parent/teacher connection | | Parents feel a true connection with the teacher and feel like they're all on the same page. Parent likes the teacher and how they behave. | |
| | Makes the effort | Teacher cares about students and families. Teacher tries new techniques and understands individualized care. Parent feels that teacher understands and meets the needs of the child and the child's family. | "He prioritizes his students and makes an effort to get to know his students. He is respectful and cares a lot about his students. He also makes an effort to get to know my family." |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Good communication | Parent feels that parent and teacher have good communication with each other. | “I feel I have good communication with my son's teacher. Being a working parent, being able to text or email is very convenient.” |
| | Child inclusion | Children are included in the school and classroom | “The month of April is used to help kids in other classes understand what Autism is and how it affects children. The teacher integrates her kids at every chance…My son's teacher keeps her kids included in every school activity.” |
| | General Positive | Generally positive comment that doesn’t fit in other category. Doesn’t have to do with teacher/child interaction. | “I am happy with my son's teacher” |
| Parent/teacher disconnect | | Parents and teachers are not on the same page. Parent does not like how the teacher behaves. Parent does not feel favorably about the teacher. | |
| | Mistreatment | Students are mistreated in school or in classroom. | “That the teachers of special classes and also assistants don’t care or protect the children I only see a lot of mistreatment and yelling sometimes they even hit them” |
| | Lack of communication | Parent feels that parent and teacher do not communicate. | “She does not pass along what happens in the classroom” |
| | Minimizes needs | Parent feels that teacher minimizes child’s needs, in that they do not provide acceptable care or accommodations for students. This is more about how teachers do not provide certain care, accommodations, lessons, or services for children, according to parents. Comment must include child and teacher not doing what parent feels child needs. | “Ultimately does not understand child’s needs and is unwilling to do small or simple accommodations other teachers have provided in prior classes. Accommodations requested that have been done for typical kids without disabilities.” |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Teacher unprepared | Parent feels teacher was not properly trained or prepared to deal with students with autism. | “My child's teacher wasn't the best at teaching [especially] kids with (ASD). She had to go for lots of training by the [DISTRICT]. [Due] to my complaints and NOT helping my child.” |
| | General negative | Generally negative comment that doesn’t fit in other category. Doesn’t have to do with teacher/child interaction. | “Incompetent” |
| Child improvement | | Parent describes their child as either meeting their goals or not meeting their goals. | |
| | Improving | Parent feels that the child is improving in school. | “I’ve seen improvement with my son’s behavior” |
| | Not improving | Parent feels that the child is not improving in school. | “he is not advancing” |
| Strategies from parents to schools | Strategies from parents to schools | Strategies parents suggest to make their child’s education better | “I believe that all of the teachers should read the IEP’s of every child so that when they enter the school, they know how to act, due to the fact that many parents tell that they are not aware of the problems” |

Table 5

*Qualitative Intercoder Agreement Percentages*

| Code/Question | First round of coding (%) | Second round of coding (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Disposition | 100 | 87.50 |
| Regarding who? | 62.50 | 87.50 |
| If teacher, is there a connection? | 75 | 87.50 |
| Makes the effort | 100 | 100 |
| Child inclusion | 100 | 100 |
| Good communication | 100 | 87.50 |
| General positive | 62.50 | 100 |
| Minimizes Needs | 87.50 | 100 |
| Lack of communication | 100 | 87.50 |
| Teacher unprepared | 75 | 100 |
| Mistreatment | 87.50 | 100 |
| General negative | 87.50 | 87.50 |
| Are strategies suggested? | 62.50 | 87.50 |
| What suggested strategies? | 62.50 | 87.50 |
| Is child improving? | 100 | 75 |

Table 6

*Chi-Square Tests for Association between Categorical Variables by Online versus Paper.*

| | Online vs. Paper |
|---|---|
| Spanish vs. English vs. Both | 15.55** |
| High school or less vs. At least some college | 10.33** |
| Born in U.S.A vs. Mexico vs. Other | 12.44** |
| Born outside of U.S.A. ($1^{st}$ generation) vs. born in U.S.A. ($2^{nd}$ generation) vs. No answer | 10.00** |

*Note.* * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 7

*Independent T-Tests for Mean Differences between Continuous Variables by Online versus Paper.*

| | | *n* | Mean | SD | *t* | df | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Years lived in U.S.A. | Online | 56 | 27.36 | 10.54 | 2.39 | 92 | .019 |
| | Paper | 38 | 22.12 | 10.28 | | | |
| Non-Hispanic/American Acculturation mean | Online | 56 | 3.25 | .92 | 3.57 | 91 | .001 |
| | Paper | 37 | 2.55 | .94 | | | |

Table 8

*Categorical Regression Variables*

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Child school day ($n$ = 94) | | |
| Mostly in special education | 60 | 63.80 |
| Mostly in general education | 29 | 30.90 |
| Other | 5 | 5.30 |
| Home language ($n$ = 94) | | |
| Spanish | 38 | 40.40 |
| English | 26 | 27.70 |
| Spanish and English | 30 | 31.90 |

Table 9

*Continuous Regression Variables*

| | *N* | Mean | Median | *SD* | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Child age | 94 | 7.77 | 8.00 | 1.90 | 4.00 | 11.00 |
| Communication frequency | 94 | 2.43 | 2.25 | .82 | 1.08 | 4.92 |
| School involvement | 94 | 2.39 | 2.42 | .43 | 1.33 | 3.00 |
| Child improvement | 93 | 2.64 | 2.60 | .78 | 1.00 | 4.00 |

Table 10

*Continuous Regression Outcome Measures*

| | *N* | Mean | Median | *SD* | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Partnership satisfaction | 93 | 3.77 | 3.89 | 1.01 | 1.06 | 5.00 |
| Partnership satisfaction$_{child}$ | 93 | 3.63 | 3.78 | 1.10 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Partnership satisfaction$_{family}$ | 94 | 3.88 | 4.00 | .95 | 1.00 | 5.00 |

Table 11

*Pearson Correlations and Associations between Regression Variables*

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Child age | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Child improvement | -0.05 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 3. Communication frequency | -0.15 | 0.06 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 4. School involvement | -0.06 | 0.03 | 0.33** | 1 | | | | | |
| 5. Partnership satisfaction | -0.08 | 0.64** | 0.20 | 0.04 | 1 | | | | |
| 6. Partnership satisfaction$_{child}$ | -0.10 | 0.66** | 0.19 | 0.05 | 0.98** | 1 | | | |
| 7. Partnership satisfaction$_{family}$ | -0.08 | 0.60** | 0.22* | 0.02 | 0.98** | 0.93** | 1 | | |
| 8. Child's school day | 0.12[1] | 0.14[1] | 0.06[1] | 0.18[1] | 0.06[1] | 0.07[1] | 0.04[1] | 1[1] | |
| 9. Home language | 0.21[1] | 0.13[1] | 0.21[1] | 0.25[1] | 0.14[1] | 0.12[1] | 0.17[1] | 3.70[2] | 1[1] |

*Note*. [1]Child's school day and home language are measured using $\eta$ for association with continuous variables. [2]Child's school day and home language are measured using chi square for association.

*$p < 0.05$, two-tailed. **$p < 0.01$, two-tailed.

Table 12

*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis: Predicting Partnership Satisfaction, Model 1*

| Model 1 | B | *SE* | *t* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 3.78 | .19 | 19.60 | .000 |
| Control Variables | | | | |
| Mostly special education | -.03 | .23 | -.11 | .911 |
| Other | .22 | .50 | .45 | .652 |

*Note.* Reference group is "mostly in general education". $F = 14$; $r^2 = .00$, $p = .870$.

Table 13

*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis: Predicting Partnership Satisfaction, Final Model*

| Model 2 | B | *SE* | *t* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 1.50 | .70 | 2.13 | .036 |
| Control Variables | | | | |
| Mostly special education | .10 | .18 | .53 | .600 |
| Other | .59 | .39 | 1.51 | .136 |
| Predictors | | | | |
| Child age | -.00 | .05 | -.02 | .982 |
| Child improvement | .84 | .11 | 7.98 | .000 |
| Communication frequency | .23 | .11 | 2.10 | .038 |
| Spanish | .09 | .21 | .45 | .654 |
| Spanish and English | -.19 | .22 | -.86 | .391 |
| School involvement | -.23 | .21 | -1.07 | .287 |

*Note.* Reference groups are "mostly in general education" and "English". $F = 9.15$; $R^2 = .47$, $p = .000$.

Table 14

*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis: Predicting Partnership Satisfaction Child Subscale, Model 1*

| Model 1 | B | *SE* | *t* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 3.66 | .21 | 17.39 | .000 |
| Control Variables | | | | |
| Mostly special education | -.06 | .26 | -.23 | .821 |
| Other | .30 | .54 | .55 | .584 |

*Note.* Reference group is "mostly in general education". $F = .24$; $r^2 = .01$, $p = .786$.

Table 15

*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis: Predicting Partnership Satisfaction Child Subscale, Final Model*

| Model 2 | B | *SE* | *t* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 1.38 | .66 | 2.08 | .041 |
| Control Variables | | | | |
| Mostly special education | .05 | .19 | .27 | .790 |
| Other | .45 | .42 | 1.07 | .287 |
| Predictors | | | | |
| Child age (centered) | -.02 | .05 | -.49 | .629 |
| Child improvement | .91 | .11 | 8.12 | .000 |
| Communication frequency (centered) | .14 | .12 | 1.14 | .257 |
| Spanish | .13 | .22 | .60 | .553 |
| Spanish and English | -.08 | .24 | -.33 | .744 |
| School involvement | -.10 | .23 | -.45 | .652 |
| Frequency*age (centered) | -.13 | .06 | -2.18 | .032 |

*Note.* Reference groups are "mostly in general education" and "English". $F = 9.48$; $R^2 = .51$, $p = .000$.

Table 16

*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis: Predicting Partnership Satisfaction Family Subscale, Model 1*

| Model 1 | B | *SE* | *t* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 3.89 | .18 | 21.31 | .000 |
| Control Variables | | | | |
| Mostly special education | -.02 | .22 | -.07 | .943 |
| Other | .15 | .47 | .32 | .747 |

*Note.* Reference group is "mostly in general education". $F = .07$; $R^2 = .00$, $p = .933$.

Table 17

*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis: Predicting Partnership Satisfaction Family Subscale, Final Model*

| Model 2 | B | *SE* | *t* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 1.94 | .68 | 2.79 | .007 |
| Control Variables | | | | |
| Mostly special education | .10 | .18 | .54 | .59 |
| Other | .50 | .38 | 1.32 | .192 |
| Predictors | | | | |
| Child age | .01 | .04 | .23 | .819 |
| Child improvement | .74 | .10 | 7.22 | .000 |
| Communication frequency | .23 | .11 | 2.23 | .029 |
| Spanish | .11 | .20 | .53 | .595 |
| Spanish and English | -.25 | .22 | -1.14 | .257 |
| School involvement | -.28 | .21 | -1.35 | .182 |

*Note.* Reference groups are "mostly in general education" and "English". $F = 7.92$; $R^2 = .43$, $p = .000$.

Table 18

*Qualitative Theme and Code Frequencies*

| Theme | Code | Frequency ($N$ = 41) |
|---|---|---|
| Disposition | | |
| | Positive | 13 |
| | Negative | 21 |
| | Neutral | 1 |
| | Mixed | 6 |
| Parent/teacher connection | | 16 |
| | Makes the effort | 7 |
| | Good communication | 2 |
| | Child inclusion | 4 |
| | General positive | 9 |
| Parent/teacher disconnect | | 20 |
| | Mistreatment | 2 |
| | Lack of communication | 7 |
| | Minimizes needs | 10 |
| | Teacher unprepared | 8 |
| | General negative | 7 |
| Child improvement | | |
| | Improving | 3 |
| | Not improving | 5 |
| | Not mentioned | 33 |
| Suggested strategies | | |
| | Strategies from parents to schools | 4 |

Figure 1

*Qualitative Coding Tree for Coding Process*

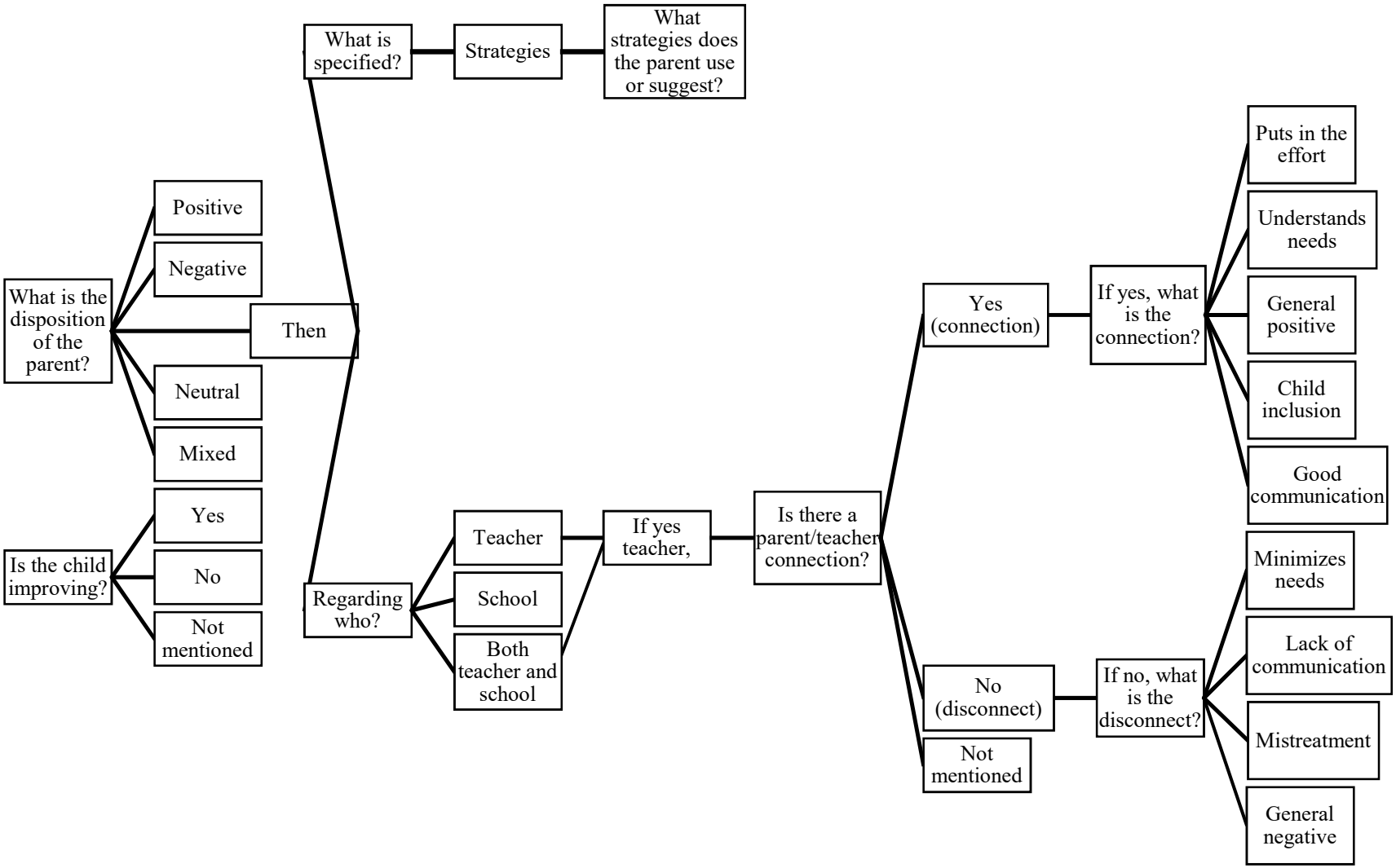


Figure 2

*Participant Tree for People who did not Finish Surveys*

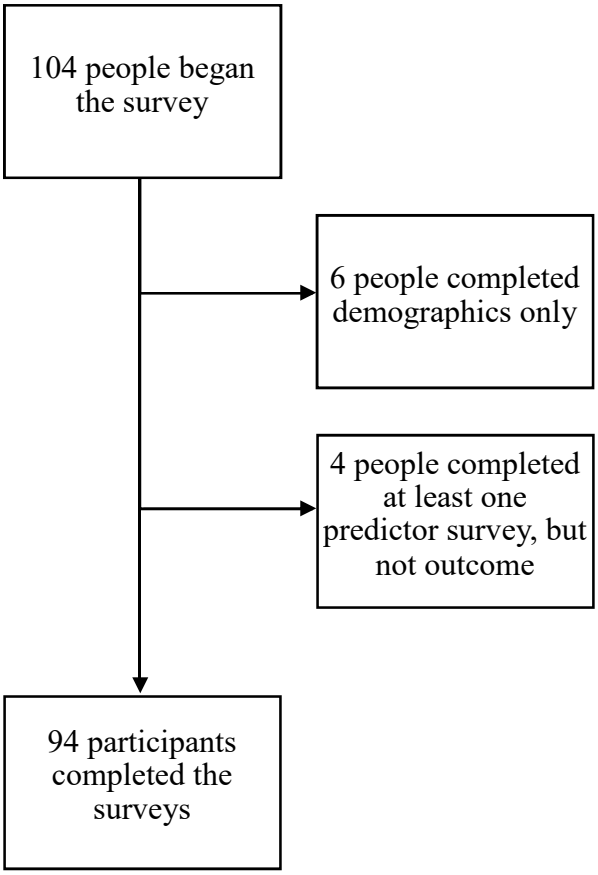
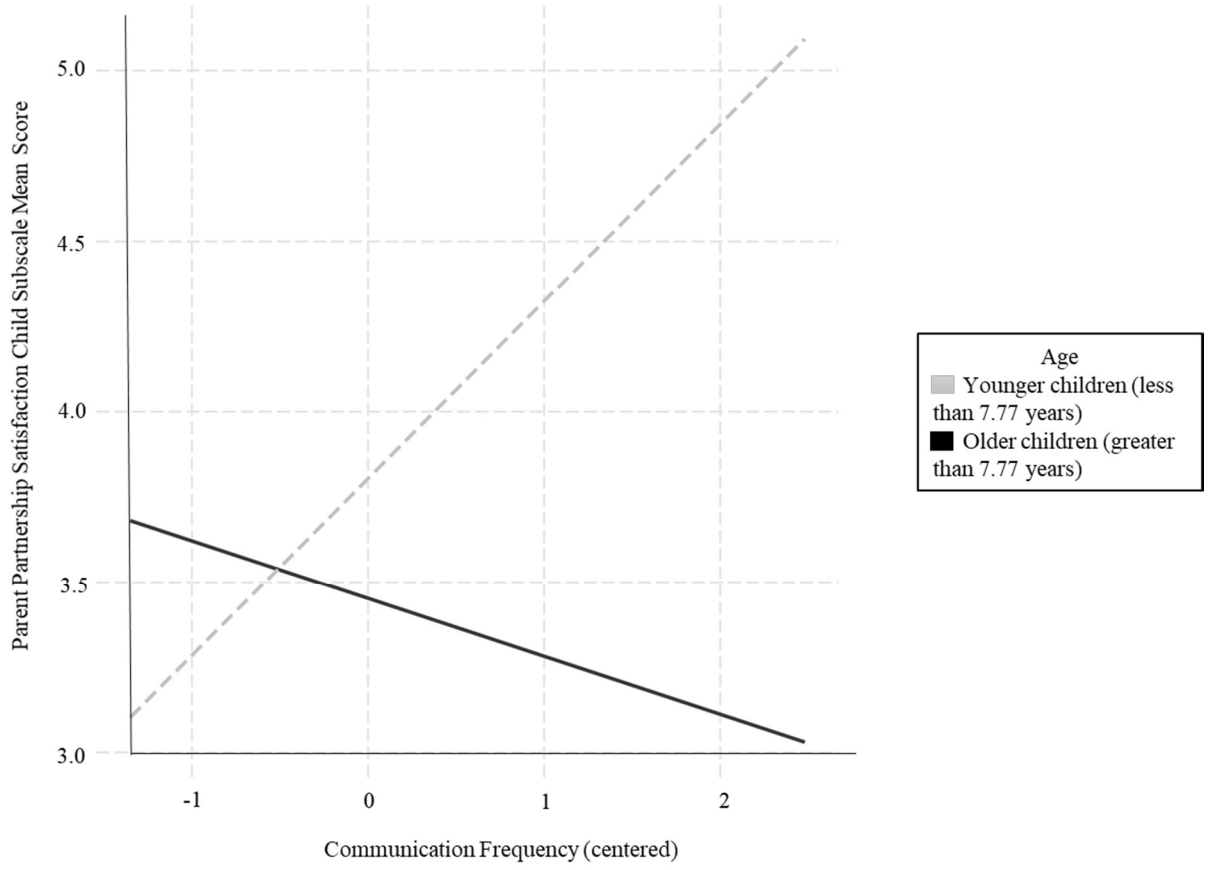


Figure 3

*Centered Communication Frequency by Age Interaction for Partnership Satisfaction Child Subscale*



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