Facilitating Family Engagement in Joint Book Reading and Storytelling in Latino Families:

Bridging Cultural Differences to Maximize Early Language and Literacy Development in Young Children with Cochlear Implants

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Disclosures

– Myriam De La Asuncion, AuD., is employed by MED-EL Corporation
Objective

- Identify reasons why Latino families may not typically read with young children

- Provide strategies to facilitate shared reading and storytelling in Spanish-speaking homes in ways that are culturally and linguistically sensitive
Joint Storybook Reading

- Shared reading involves turn taking, alternating leads, and joint interpretation of the story
Benefits

- It is well established that joint storybook reading is beneficial for the development of language, listening, speech, social, and pre-literacy skills (Reese, 2012)

- The need for joint-reading in children with cochlear implants is even greater (DesJardin, et. Al, 2008)
Recent study at UC Berkeley & UCLA
- 4,550 hearing children from birth to 30 months born in the US

Study observations indicate Latino children are raised in environments
- Nurturing
- Emotional warmth/support

Benefits of their environmental exposure
- Develop appropriate social skills that are on par when they reach kindergarten
Cultural Differences

- Study indicated Latino homes may be less conducive to language learning (TV frequently on, more commands, more closed set questions)

- What about reading?
  - 18% of Mexican American mothers who spoke Spanish at home read to their children daily, compared with 59% of Caucasian mothers
Common Cultural Traits

- May require more modeling and coaching
- Not traditional bed time routine
- Changing cultural perspectives on the importance of reading
Findings

- Sharing the benefits of reading to Latino children at very young ages to promote language and early literacy

- Without an understanding of cultural differences surrounding reading, clinicians may see a lack of follow-through with recommendations
Strategies to Promote Daily Shared Reading

- Ask caregivers about their own childhood experiences with reading growing up
  - Open-ended questions
  - Non-judgmental
  - Share other families’ experiences
- Make benefits explicitly known
  - Adult learning principle
- Plan jointly with families
  - Set specific goals
- Read together/discuss frequently
  - Families may need more explicit coaching/guidance on strategies
Encourage families to read in their language

- Facilitates involvement and maintains the family-child bond
- Validates the home language
- Family can better provide a full and complete language model
  - Can more easily comment, expand, and converse about the story
When Today’s Latino Parents Were Children...

- Fables/fairy tales (European origin)
- A few classic children’s authors such as Rafael Pombo (Colombia, 1833-1912)
- Creation stories/legends
- Oral traditions/storytelling: sharing of narratives, sayings, advice, folktales, and family stories
Which Books to Read with Families?

- Best books and stories are those that the family grew up with and are familiar with (emotional connection)
  - Challenge: limited number of toddler/preschooler books available written originally in Spanish (and most available now weren’t around when today’s parents were children)
Current Authors Filling the Gap

- Antonio Rubio
  - Author from Spain
  - De la Cuna a la Luna series
  - 2003 to present
  - Amazon (but not all ship to U.S)

- Patty Rodriguez & Ariana Stein: Lil’ Libros
  - First generation Latina women raised in the U.S
  - Goal of encouraging parents to read from infancy, on familiar subjects: strong ties to Mexican culture—know the child’s family/county of origin!
  - 2014 to present
  - Amazon/Target
When possible, target culturally relevant stories and books.

What do the characters portrayed in books look like and experience? (Different for different families!)

- Keep in mind family’s country of origin
- Provide choices for family to select from
Supplementing with Translations

Translations

- Very valuable resources for birth to preschool population due to limited books available written originally in Spanish
- Good vs. bad translation
- Look for non word-for-word translation—one that maintains the rhyme and integrity of the author’s original story
Experience Books

- Allow family to tell stories about their own experiences, using their own language
  - Puts child and family at the center of narrative
- Also use: Photo albums of family members
“Reading the Pictures”

- Books in non-Spanish print
  - Often much easier for families to acquire in stores/libraries; state/social services programs send home children’s books in English

- Wordless picture books
  - Teaches parents to focus on conversation/language input that books can provide
  - Especially good for families with limited literacy in Spanish
Final Takeaways

- Culturally, Latino families *may* have less experience reading books to young children
  - May need more coaching/guidance
- When possible, use stories families are familiar with
- Finding books originally in Spanish can be challenging
- Supplement with tools such as translations, experience books, and picture books
- Guide families on how to maximize the linguistic input and conversational narrative, regardless of which type of books families are using
- Don’t make assumptions
- Have dialogue and partnership
References


Thank You!  ¡Gracias!