Latina Mothers of Young Children With Special Needs: Personal Narratives Capturing the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Adriana Luna, MEd, BCBA, LBA, Courtney A. Zulauf-McCurdy, PhD, Shawna Harbin, PhD, BCBA, and Angel Fettig, PhD

Abstract
The Latino community has been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in unique challenges. This paper explores the lived experiences of five Spanish-speaking Latina mothers of young children receiving early childhood special education (ECSE) services during the pandemic. Through in-depth qualitative interviews, this paper focuses on the following research questions: (1) What barriers have Spanish-speaking Latino families encountered in ECSE service delivery during this pandemic? (2) How have families overcome those barriers? Latina mothers describe how despite encountering numerous barriers to ECSE service delivery during the pandemic, they also experienced key areas of support and strength. We discuss how ECSE professionals can leverage these sources of support and strength in a culturally responsive manner to better support the Latino community through the pandemic. By presenting interviews with Latina mothers, this paper offers a unique interpretation of their experience, which is often left out of educational research.

Keywords
Latino parents, pandemic, special education, early childhood

In the United States, one in four children under the age of five qualify for some form of early childhood special education services (ECSE; Data Resource Center for Child & Adolescent Health, n.d.). ECSE describes the services and supports that are provided to children under the age of five who have or are more likely to have developmental delays (Sandall et al., 2000). Consistently delivering evidence-based interventions early in life has been shown to improve child social-emotional skills and family outcomes such as parent self-efficacy (Hughes-Scholes & Gavidia-Payne, 2019). Despite the growing body of evidence outlining the benefits of ECSE, disparities in child and family outcomes exist, particularly for children from non-white backgrounds, such as Latino children (Sheppard, 2017). Additionally, there are documented racial disparities in both access to ECSE services (Feinberg et al., 2011) and in research representation (Roberts et al., 2020) for non-white families. The Latino population currently makes up the largest racial/ethnic minority group in the United States, comprising 18.7% of the total population (Jones et al., 2021). Therefore, more research is needed to better understand how to support Latino children and their families receiving ECSE services. The current study moves us closer to this goal by focusing on the experiences of Spanish-speaking Latina mothers of young children receiving virtual ECSE services.

Disparities in ECSE Access and Utilization
Despite the importance of ECSE, racial and ethnic disparities exist in both access and utilization of services. It is estimated that only 25% of children and families who are eligible for ECSE services are able to utilize them (Rosenberg et al., 2013), with disparities largely existing between white families and those that identify as Black, Latino, or who speak a language other than English. In fact, the odds of both having the need for ECSE services identified and being able to access and utilize services are 78% lower for Latino children compared to white peers (Granpeesheh et al., 2009). These disparities in access and utilization may be in part due to inadequate language
interpreting services for non-English speakers (Stahmer et al., 2019), fear of stigma or discrimination (DeFreitas et al., 2018), or inequitable quality of care from providers (Zuckerman et al., 2014). The quality of service delivery has also been found to be lower among Latino children in comparison to white children (Magaña et al., 2012). As prevalence estimates suggest that Latino populations represent the fastest growing population of children who would benefit from ECSE, these marked disparities may grow over time (Maenner et al., 2020).

**Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on ECSE Services**

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in abrupt changes to ECSE services across the nation (Steed & Leech, 2021). Of those still receiving services, frequency and time has been cut and for many, services have shifted from in-person to virtual (e.g., Zoom and telephone calls; Authors, 2022). As young children in ECSE often receive numerous supports from multiple providers, parents may be placed in the position of juggling schedules while also fulfilling their family duties (e.g., working, caring for children). Further placing a burden on parents is that virtual ECSE service delivery relies primarily on parents learning from their child’s educators in order to implement specialized interventions at home (Asbury et al., 2021).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, parents of children with disabilities already faced increased stress related to juggling their child’s educational, social, and emotional needs (Hsiao, 2018). This, combined with changes to ECSE service delivery, may suggest it is likely that parents of these young children have been faced with even greater challenges during the pandemic (Coyne et al., 2020). Further, shifts in ECSE services during the pandemic may have exacerbated pre-existing racial and ethnic disparities in ECSE (Neece et al., 2020). For example, the effectiveness of virtual learning (which many ECSE services have shifted to) highly depends on a child’s, and therefore, parents’ ability to attend virtual classes, pay attention, and engage through a screen. To simply participate, families must have access to a stable internet and at least, a computer or electronic device (Authors, 2022; Poole et al., 2020). Research suggests that linguistic minority families have had a difficult time benefitting from virtual service delivery due to barriers in communication (Choi & Chiu, 2021). Even when virtual learning is successful, it may be less effective than in-person learning for young children due to perceived attitudes that it is less personal or the difficulty with technology management (Cole et al., 2019).

Further complicating changes in ECSE service delivery during the pandemic is that educators may be shifting their focus to educate a child’s parent in order for them to provide services to the child during virtual learning and missed ECSE days (Authors, 2022). Although family-centered practices are mandated among ECSE educators (Division for Early Childhood, 2014), the implementation of these practices is often inconsistent between providers (Movahedazarhouligh, 2021). Engaging in family-centered practices may be challenging when the educator does not speak the family’s native language and comes from a different cultural/racial background than the family (Douglas et al., 2020). Within the field of ECSE, there is a need to better understand how to promote culturally responsive family-centered practices to improve service delivery and therefore child outcomes. The current study aims to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ECSE services from the perspectives of five Latina mothers.

**Culturally Responsive Framework**

Our rationale for studying the impact of the pandemic on ECSE services for Spanish-speaking Latina mothers was guided by our desire to understand the experiences of families who already face critical disparities in education service delivery. To best situate the study in a framework that highlights the unique strengths of these families, we center our work within a culturally responsive framework (Gay, 2018) that views the educators as cultural brokers within a family system (Fong & Lee, 2017). When working with families, children and families may benefit from educators who are able to engage in pedagogical practices that reflect an active and responsive effort to build on the family’s unique cultural background. Examples from the Latino culture include the concepts of *familismo* and *personalismo*. *Familismo* speaks to “the importance of family closeness and getting along with and contributing to the well-being of the family, often viewed as an extended one” (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002). The Latino culture also values *personalismo*, or the idea that people should be personable and respectful, which is more influential than one’s individual abilities or success (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002).

Essential to our conceptual framework is the concept of counter-storytelling (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001), or re-telling the stories of individuals often left out of research and the dominant narrative. To identify areas of future interventions, we aim to uplift the voices of these mothers directly and suggest ways to better support the Spanish-speaking Latino community. We have chosen to use the term “Latino” when referring to the community as a whole, and “Latina” when referring to the mothers specifically, who all identified as female. While Spanish is a gendered language and we accept nonbinary adaptations to one’s identity, the Latino community uses the term “Latino” as gender neutral (Torres, 2018). Being that the first author is a member of the Latino community, the research team deferred to her chosen terminology for this paper.
Present Study

This study presents interviews with Spanish-speaking Latina mothers and focuses on how these findings can guide the development and organization of resources that better highlight their unique cultural needs. We hope to exemplify these mothers’ experiences during the pandemic to shed light on the disparities that may have existed prior to the shift to virtual services. The research questions for this study were as follows: (1) What barriers have Spanish-speaking Latino families encountered in ECSE service delivery during this pandemic? (2) In what ways have Spanish-speaking Latino families overcome barriers in ECSE service delivery during the pandemic? While the research questions are focused on challenges experienced during COVID-19 pandemic, we hope these findings might highlight disparities of ECSE service delivery overall. Although we acknowledge that the current study exemplifies a small group of Latina mothers, we hope that it will lay the foundation for future studies capturing the voices of racial, ethnic, and linguistic minority families who receive ECSE services.

Method

The current study was part of a larger study aimed at understanding the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on young children and families’ ECSE services in a Pacific Northwest state in the United States (see Author, 2022 for full study methods). In the current study, we conducted semi-structured interviews with Spanish-speaking Latina mothers to gain in-depth understanding of their experiences and perceptions of instructional delivery and service receipt to support their young children receiving ECSE. To represent the participants’ experiences amid the pandemic, these interviews were conducted between October and December 2020 when parents had experienced services during the pandemic for approximately 6 months. All interviews included in this current study were conducted in Spanish by the first author who identifies as Latina, speaks fluent Spanish, and has expertise in ECSE. All study procedures were approved by the institutional review board of the higher education institution where the research team is situated.

Recruitment

Recruitment focused on Spanish-speaking Latinos who had children receiving ECSE services during the pandemic. Spanish and English recruitment emails and flyers along with a participation screener were distributed across schools, agencies, educational service districts, and multicultural family advocacy agencies that provide support specifically to Spanish-speaking Latino families within the Pacific Northwest State. Interested participants were directed to complete a screener on Qualtrics. The screener included branching logic to notify whether families met inclusion criteria. If respondents met inclusion criteria, contact information and preferred language were requested for follow up contact by the research team. Out of the 34 total individuals who took the initial screener, 25 were not eligible because either their child was not receiving ECSE (n=4), their child did not have a disability (n=4), or the caregiver did not finish the screener and left their contact information blank (n=17). Nine parents met inclusion criteria and were invited to participate. Email and phone call efforts were made to connect with all nine individuals who met inclusion criteria. Of those nine invitations, a total of five responded for interviews and were thus included in the present study. The lead author followed up via phone calls for the four that did not respond but was unsuccessful. Despite our limited sample size, we believe these interviews can be a first step in providing a timely perspective (albeit limited size) of Spanish-speaking Latina mothers during the pandemic. Qualitative studies with small cohorts of participants have been published in previous qualitative research with underrepresented racial and ethnic parents (Powell & Coles, 2021; Zulauf-McCurdy & Zinsser, 2022).

Participants

Five Spanish-speaking Latina mothers completed the interviews: Ana, Elena, Sofia, Lucia, and Isabela (pseudonyms used; Table 1). All participants identified as female but ranged in the ways they identified their race/ethnicity.

Ana. Ana held an associate’s degree in mathematics and had two daughters. She described herself as Latina and her children as Latin-American. Her youngest daughter was receiving services in speech language pathology (SLP), physical therapy (PT), and early childhood special education (ECSE). Ana and her husband spoke Spanish, while Ana’s daughter spoke English and Spanish. Their family lived in an urban area. Ana worked in the evenings but cared for her children during the day while her husband worked.

Elena. Elena had an associate’s degree in design and two children, a boy and a girl. She self-identified as Latina and identified her children as being a mix of American/White and Mexican, being that they were born in the United States. Her son received ECSE supports and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in the morning. Her daughter received SLP services in the afternoon. Elena stated that their family lived in an urban area and that both English and Spanish were spoken in her home. Elena cared for the children during the day and then worked in the afternoon.
Sofia. Sofia self-identified as Hispanic and held a high school diploma. Sofia has five children, with her youngest son receiving ECSE services with additional support in PT and SLP. Sofia identified her children as being Hispanic but were born here in the United States. Both English and Spanish were spoken in the home. Sofia described her family as living in a rural area. Her husband worked outside of the home, while she stayed home to care for their children.

Lucia. Lucia self-identified as Hispanic and described her highest educational level as being “some college.” Lucia had one daughter accessing ECSE and described her daughter’s ethnicity as “also Latina,” indicating the use of Hispanic/Latina interchangeably. Lucia described her family as living in an urban setting and speaking primarily Spanish in their home. Lucia described her husband as working outside the home during the evenings, while she primarily cared for the children.

Isabela. Isabela self-identified as Latina and attended some college with an emphasis in medicine. Isabela had three children, two boys and one girl, with the youngest boy receiving support through Head Start and her daughter accessing ECSE. Isabela identified all of her children’s ethnicity as being Latino. Only Spanish was spoken in their home, and they live in a small town. Isabela’s husband worked out of the home while she cared for the children at home.

Researcher Positionality

We are committed to reducing deficit-based framing of historically marginalized people, and our intention in this study is to highlight the voices of Latino parents in detailing their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Undoubtedly, the personal backgrounds of the authors play a role in the positionality of this study. As the daughter of Mexican immigrants, growing up in a Latino household has influenced the first author’s understanding of what is essential in supporting children and families. The first author contributed this way of seeing to the framing of this study. In placing the spotlight on Latina mothers, we push for a strength-based narrative in discussing what factors have played a key role in their resiliency, while simultaneously urging the education and academic community to understand and utilize these recounts to guide the field of early childhood. In addition to the first author, the team of researchers who supported this work included a white female postdoctoral researcher with research and clinical experience working with young children and their families in underserved community settings, a white female doctoral student with research and professional experience working with young children and their families in Early Intervention and ECSE settings, and an Asian female faculty member who researches family-centered early childhood special education practices. Aside from the first author who is fluent in Spanish and English, all members of the research team speak English as their primary language. We acknowledge that due to our various backgrounds and positions within academia we all bring our own bias into the work that we do.

Procedures

Interview scripts for parents were developed collaboratively by the research team (all of whom have advanced degrees in special education or clinical psychology). Interview guide domains and measures were informed by previously published articles that utilized rigorous qualitative methodological approaches (e.g., Mackie et al., 2021) as well as consultation with interdisciplinary qualitative research experts. Prior to the start of data collection, the interview script was piloted, in English, with a parent who met inclusion criteria of the study (but was not included in the study). Following this, interview questions were refined, in English, for clarity. The lead author then translated the interview script into Spanish and engaged in discussion with the research team to ensure that the translation of questions from English to Spanish reflected the cultural context while still adhering to the goal of each research question. Participants engaged in a semi-structured interview with questions pertaining to (a) general description of family, (b) service receipt experience during the pandemic, (c) perceived benefits and limitations of the service currently receiving, and

(d) perceptions of relationships with educators during the pandemic. Each interview consisted of 10 demographic and background questions (see Supplemental Material File for full interview script), 19 open-ended questions, and optional probing questions. The research team estimated the interviews would last 1 hour, depending on their experiences (e.g., questions such as “Is there anything else that you would like teachers to know about supporting families and young children during the pandemic?” varied if participants did not have anything else to add). All interviews were conducted in Spanish via Zoom (four interviews) or phone (one interview) by the lead author and transcribed verbatim in Spanish by an online transcription company. Each interview lasted between 28 and 55 minutes. While most participants spent approximately 1 hour in the interview, the participant who requested a phone interview spent 28 minutes. Participants received a gift card ($40) after the completion of the interview.

Analysis Procedure

We used qualitative content analysis to organize and elicit meaning from the data collected and to draw realistic conclusions (Polit & Beck, 2006). Initially, stages of the qualitative coding focused on two level-1 codes (deductive) created to mimic the two research questions: (1) description of barriers and limitations encountered during the pandemic and (2) strategies/supports to overcome barriers during the pandemic. Once these codes were defined, the first author read through all the transcripts to code them for level-1 codes (barriers and sources of support/strength). While the transcripts were maintained in Spanish to prevent loss of meaning in translation, the coding was done in English to capture interpretations of the data across each interview question (e.g., types of barriers described, such as technology and language; Charmaz, 2003). All codes were done on Google Docs and shared among each research member. As our interview questions focused heavily on barriers and facilitators, approximately 80% of each transcript was coded and therefore translated in English. Following the culturally responsive framework, the first and second author then engaged in a modified content analysis approach to read over coded (English) portions of the transcripts and additionally explore themes that naturally arose from interviews with these Latina mothers (inductive approach). The first and second author then engaged in multiple discussions in which they compared similarities, differences, quotes, and contrasting ideas within each specific code. This approach enabled the us to engage in content analysis to formulate a series of mini theories (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which we explored. Although the small sample size precluded reaching saturation in themes from the transcripts, we explored themes that appeared to be the most salient among these five mothers. The mini theories and subsequent hypotheses were then “tested” by the first author and second author by taking another close read of the coded portions of the transcripts. Negative evidence against these mini theories was sought out and were found, resulting in changes to (or abandonment of) theories. For example, an early theory that was discussed was the idea of family routine (e.g., dinner time) contributing to family resiliency by providing a consistent, anchoring activity in a time of uncertainty. However, this theory was later abandoned due to a lack of confirming evidence with other participants. Another mini theory was the early theme of financial strain being a barrier to ECSE participation. After the first author read the other transcripts and discussed with team members, it was decided that financial strain was not a salient theme for the other four mothers and did not relate to their experiences in ECSE services directly (i.e., when two mothers used a cell phone versus a computer or tablet to access ECSE services, it was not directly related to any perceived financial needs). The first and second authors discussed all mini-theories with the other authors and transformed them into the larger themes of results presented below. Similar procedures have been used in previous qualitative work with parents of young children (Author, 2022; Zulauf-McCurdy & Zinsser, 2022).

Results

Our analysis sought to identify and describe the experiences of Spanish-speaking Latina mothers of young children receiving ECSE services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the small sample, we believe this is a first step in identifying shared experiences, barriers, concerns, and sources of strength for these families during the pandemic. Each of the qualitative themes are described in detail below with quotations in both English and Spanish for transparency.

Barriers and Challenges

Our first research question focused on identifying barriers that Spanish-speaking Latino families have encountered during the pandemic related to their young children’s ECSE services. Results indicate that the mothers encountered significant barriers in the forms of language and technology. Additionally, we consider the elevated concerns and stress that the mothers shared to be a challenge in receiving virtual ECSE services.

Language. Elena, Lucia, and Isabela identified language as a significant barrier that interfered with their child’s services. While this barrier may have likely been present before the pandemic, the restrictions of online service delivery have appeared to heighten the related challenges, as they were now at the forefront of teaching their children.
The mothers shared that the services during the pandemic were focused on more one-on-one communication between the mother and educator. Isabela, who spoke only Spanish and whose child has an English-speaking educator, shared how she tries to repeat what the educator says to her child, although she only “more or less” understands (“más o menos yo entiendo”) what the educator is actually saying. Mothers also described how serving as their own translator has led to their child missing out on key educational topics, such as circle time.

In fact, Lucia shared how she pulled her daughter from services because instruction was only being provided in English when their dominant language was Spanish. As a result of the language barrier, her daughter could not follow along and had difficulty engaging. Lucia shared, “since it is in English and we speak to her most of the time in Spanish, I think they did not capture her attention and she was not interested in those classes. She didn’t want to take a single class” (“como es en inglés y nosotros le hablamos el mayor tiempo a ella en español, pienso que no captaron la atención de ella y a ella no le interesaron esas clases. Ni una clase quiso tomar”). As educators could no longer be in-person to provide support in the home or in a classroom, mothers were now the point-person between the child and educator. Elena shared that not having someone to help her translate from Spanish to English made it difficult for her to explain her child’s needs to their teacher: “Latino parents, we have a lot of limitations in facilitating our language and saying, ‘My child needs help’. I can’t just tell the teacher, ‘My child did this or didn’t do this’. I can only explain sometimes” (“Padres latinos, tenemos muchas limitaciones para facilitar nuestro lenguaje y decir ‘mi hijo necesita ayuda’. No puedo simplemente decirle al maestro ‘mi hijo hizo esto o no hizo esto’... solo puedo explicarlo a veces”). In this way, the communication between her and her child’s educator was limited, as she could not fully explain everything she needed to.

Technology. Technology was described as a significant barrier and limitation of virtual services for several mothers. Themes surrounding technology were noted in areas of access, navigation, and effectiveness of virtual services. Four out of the five mothers (Ana, Elena, Sofia, and Lucia) discussed having inadequate equipment to access virtual services, as they were logging onto appointments from their phones, rather than laptops, computers, or tablets. As Isabela described, accessing virtual services through their phones resulted in her child losing motivation to engage:

she can’t bear to be in front of a cell phone for an hour. She likes to be playing with toys and that is the big difference, that they can no longer capture her attention as easily as in person.

It’s different. In person, she does pay attention to you because she wants to play with you, but on a cell phone it is very difficult to get her attention. . . . no soporta una hora estar en frente de un celular. A ella le gusta estar jugando con juguetes y esa es la gran diferencia, que ya no pueden captar su atención tan fácilmente como en persona. Es diferente. En persona, ella sí te toma atención porque quiere jugar contigo, pero en celular es muy difícil que capten su atención.

Even when mothers did have the needed technology to access their child’s virtual ECSE services, navigating the digital world was taxing. Elena disclosed, “I was born in another country, when we were growing up, the technology simply did not exist” (“Nací en otro país. Cuando estábamos creciendo, la tecnología simplemente no existía”). Rather than communicating face-to-face as had been the norm prior to the pandemic, Elena now communicated to her child’s educators via email. She stated that she only knew “how to turn the computer on and off” (“la computadora la sabemos prender y apagar”), not effectively craft an email to send to her child’s educator. Prior to the pandemic, she did not need these skills; however, since services have shifted virtually: “It’s all based on emails and Internet appointments and we don’t even know how they work” (“ahora es todo a base de correos y citas por Internet que a veces no sabemos ni cómo trabajarán”).

Concerns and stress. Mothers described how they now had the responsibility of managing their child’s attention and motivation, while simultaneously acquiring new techniques to facilitate their child’s learning and development. Isabela shared, “It is not the same as when they’re in person, really. It’s difficult because sometimes they just don’t want to.” (“No es lo mismo como ellos estén en persona realmente, es difícil, porque a veces ellos no quieren”). Without in-person educator support, mothers described feeling incompetent in supporting their child and how this feeling lead to perceptions of inadequate service delivery. Despite trying her best to implement the strategies that the educators advised, Isabela confessed, “It’s not the same when they tell me to do this with them. I try it out, but it’s not the same” (“No es lo mismo que me digan a mí que yo haga esto con ellos. Yo trato la manera, pero no es lo mismo”). Elena echoed, saying that there are “things that we, as parents, aren’t aware of and they do know, as teachers” (“cosas que nosotros no nos damos cuenta como padres y ellos saben cómo maestros”). Despite the virtual support, mothers described how virtual services were not equal to the in-person learning.

Ana, Sofia, Elena, and Lucia discussed feeling lonely and isolated at home as a result of the pandemic. Although our interview questions did not specifically ask about emotional well-being, four out of the five mothers described this as a significant challenge to adequate ECSE service delivery. Ana shared, “Being home all the time is stressful and
more, I believe, for me than for her [daughter]” (“Todo el tiempo estar en casa es estresante y más yo creo para ella”). It is worth noting that all five of the fathers that were mentioned in the interviews worked outside of the home, and mothers reported being the primary caregivers. No mother described having a work from home option for herself or her husband. When describing their overall experiences in supporting their child’s education and needs during the pandemic, mothers used strong emotional language. For example, Elena said the following when asked about her experience with virtual services:

It is awful, for me it is a bad experience, it is so difficult, frustrating and overwhelming. Although it’s for a short period, it is difficult for them to obey you more as a mother than to obey a teacher. It is more difficult for them to sit with me than when they sit with the teacher, it is more difficult to have two children at the same time saying, “Sit down”, and one hits and the other starts to throw something and the has already thrown the tablet, it is very difficult for me. Es malisima, para mi es una mala experiencia, es tan difícil, frustrante y agobiante, aunque es poco el periodo, es difícil que ellos te obedezcan más a ti como mamá que obedezcan a un maestro, es más difícil que ellos se sienten conmigo que lo que se sentaban con el maestro, es más difícil tener dos niños al mismo tiempo diciéndoles, “Siéntate”, y uno pega y el otro empezó a aventar algo y el otro ya aventó la tableta, es muy difícil para mí.

Sources of Support and Strength

Our second research question aimed to identify ways that Latino families have overcome barriers and challenges placed by the pandemic as it related to ESCE services. Utilizing a culturally responsive framework, we aimed to place equal importance on how the Spanish-speaking Latina mothers applied unique strengths to surmount hardships encountered.

Parent–educator relationship. Despite mothers indicating a challenging and “awful” (“malísimo”) experience with learning during the pandemic, all five described having a strong relationship with their child’s educator. Parents felt grateful for the services that they received and well supported by their child’s educators. As Ana stated:

The way they have been doing things I think is the correct way. For me, everything is - I do not think there is another way that my daughter could be receiving her therapies. I think this thing with Zoom has helped me a lot because I can have visual contact with the teachers and they can show me the activities that I have to do with her, as before it was only by phone call. I think that would have been a disaster. Las cosas como se han estado dando creo que son las correctas. Para mi todo está–No creo que haya otra forma de que mi hija esté recibiendo sus terapias. Creo que esto de Zoom me ha ayudado bastante porque puedo tener contacto aunque sea visual con los maestros y ellos pueden mostrarme las actividades que yo tengo que hacer con la niña, a que si antes solo fuera por llamada. Creo que eso si hubiera sido un desastre.

Even though Sofia stated earlier in the interview that her child had regressed in his skills since the pandemic, she countered the negative experience by saying that she “is grateful, truly” (“les agradezco, realmente”) for the services they were still able to receive and that the educators “provide an incredible service” (prestan un servicio increíble) to their family. Elena echoed this gratitude in saying, “There really has been a lot of attention on their part to see if they can help, more than anything to ask what we need” (“Sí ha sido de parte de ellos mucha atención para ver si pueden ayudarnos, más que nada preguntarnos qué necesitamos”).

Culturally responsive practice. Mothers’ perceptions of an educators’ ability to use culturally responsive practices was especially important. Particularly during the pandemic, when these mothers already felt isolated, they noted perceptions that their educator shared understanding toward them and their family’s culture, which seemed especially important. Ana described that her educators “have learned about our culture” (“ellos han aprendido de nuestra cultura”) throughout their relationship and incorporated valued traditions into the child’s therapy. Her daughter’s SLP learned about Day of the Dead, a widely-celebrated holiday in Mexican culture. She shared:

For example, the Day of the Dead. I had speech therapy so the activities changed to saying words that were from the Day of the Dead and seeing images related to the Day of the Dead, altars and things like that. I also taught the educator and we used the strategies that she had for her to try to say the words . . . and then for Halloween, now it was the other way around. Por ejemplo, lo del Día de Muertos. Tenía terapia del habla entonces ahí las actividades cambiaron a estar hablando palabras que eran del Día de Muertos y estar viendo imágenes relacionados con el Día de Muertos, de altares y cosas así. Tanto yo le enseñaba a la terapista y utilizamos en práctica las estrategias, que ella tenía para que ella intentara decir las palabras. . .Lo del día de Halloween, ahora me tocó al revés”

Lucia shared that having educators that speak (or attempt to speak) Spanish helps her feel understood. She shared that her child’s educator is Russian, “so she knows what it’s like to learn another language” (ella sabe y entiende las necesidades de entender otro idioma). If other educators took the time to learn about a family’s home language during a time when services are already virtual and de-personalized, Lucia shared, educators and families “would click faster” (hicieran el clic más rápido).
Given that language was a significant barrier to services for some of these mothers, it should be noted that those with access to bilingual educators or interpreters expressed a contrasting perspective. In forming theories during data analysis, one leading theory was language as the primary barrier. However, two mothers had contrasting perspectives on language. Ana and Sofia indicated that language was not a barrier in service delivery, being that they had access to educators who either spoke Spanish or had interpreters readily available. In fact, they shared that having bilingual educators was incredibly beneficial. Specifically, Ana shared how having Spanish-speaking educators “has really helped” (“me ha facilitado bastante”) in communicating efficiently. Sofia stated that “there is always someone there who speaks Spanish” (siempre hay alguien que hable español y siempre está ahí).

Resiliency. In discussing how they have overcome barriers placed before them during the pandemic, all five mothers detailed a resilient and optimistic attitude toward the shift to virtual services. Mothers described learning a great deal throughout the pandemic, even though Elena called it “learning by force” (“aprendiendo por fuerza”). Elena elaborated that she has learned more about technology when they suddenly switched to virtual learning: “I really didn’t know this at all, but right now there’s a necessity” (“realmente antes no me sabía tanto, pero ahora hay entre necesidad”). Even though mothers were not familiar with virtual formats (e.g., email and videoconferencing), they described learning very quickly to navigate this new world out of necessity for their child. Isabela described how she is even learning “a little bit of English” (“un poquito de inglés”) through the process of managing her child’s education online. While she mentioned that the process has, indeed, been difficult, “it really is serving me” (“realmente me está sirviendo”).

Isabela also shared that being placed on the frontline of her child’s education allowed her to be more involved and learn more about her daughter. Before the pandemic, she mentioned,

I really didn’t know. I would practically leave the work to the teachers. “They know what they’re doing,” I would say. Now that they’re not here, and that they send all the material online so I can work with them, I’ve learned a bit more (realmente no sabía, yo prácticamente dejaba el trabajo a las maestras, “Ellas saben lo que hacen”, decía yo, ahora que no están, que ahora me mandan el material en línea, que yo pueda trabajar con ellos, he aprendido un poco más).

Mothers described sacrifice, love, and commitment to their child’s development in a manner that seemed to directly coincide with their outlook on services during this pandemic. Ana detailed how, in this pandemic, more responsibilities have been placed on parents:

I believe that, in having a child, education is always 50-50. Fifty percent from the teacher, 50 percent from parents. If one of the two does not do their part, I think the child would not progress. Although at this moment practically all the responsibility is on the parents, but it is our job. If we want to see an achievement, parents, even if they have thousands of activities, we have to hold space for them. Creo que siempre el tener un niño, la educación es 50-50. 50 parte el maestro, 50 parte de papás, si uno de los dos no pone de su parte, creo que el niño no avanzaría. Aunque en este momento prácticamente toda la responsabilidad la tenemos los papás, pero es nuestro trabajo. Si queremos ver algún logro, los papás, aunque tengan miles de actividades tenemos que tener nuestro espacio para ellos.

Thus, while these mothers did experience barriers and challenges to ECSE services during this time, they also relied on a few key factors that resulted in positive experiences with their providers.

Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate the lived experiences of Spanish-speaking Latino families, albeit a small sample size, receiving ECSE services during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, these findings also shed light on disparities and barriers that exist beyond the pandemic. The five Spanish-speaking Latina mothers that participated in these interviews reported converging barriers and challenges due to the pandemic. Yet, they also divulged sources of support and strength, such as the relationships they had with their educators. We present our findings with a focus toward practical implications and future directions for additional studies capturing the voices of Spanish-speaking Latino families.

Barriers and Challenges

Mothers expressed a range of barriers and challenges encountered during the pandemic including language differences, the access and use of technology, as well as the added concerns and stress of managing virtual ECSE services during the pandemic. While the mothers varied in which challenges they encountered, they all expressed at least one barrier related to supporting their child’s ECSE services during the pandemic. For example, some mothers shared their struggle with communicating effectively with their educators due to language barriers. This finding is consistent with other studies with this population who identify language as a major barrier in their child’s education (Garcia & Duckett, 2009), as families must reconcile what they are able to say to their educators. Language barriers may impede parent participation in services, limit communication opportunities, and make it difficult for families to implement interventions in their preferred language (Stahmer et al., 2019). In ECSE, language barriers
between educators and Latino parents limit the extent to which they are able to develop meaningful partnerships and communication (Hardin et al., 2009). Yet, Latino families report that they wish for more communication between them and their child’s educators, as they want to be looped into exactly what their child needs (Hughes et al., 2008).

Some ways that ECSE educators can support Spanish-speaking Latino families in a culturally responsive manner is through hiring and recruiting bilingual staff, having interpreters readily available, and being sensitive and open to the best method of communication for each family. Although interpreters can significantly improve the quality of ECSE services (Karliner et al., 2007), trained and qualified interpreters are still under-utilized (Kale & Syed, 2010). While the use of bilingual staff to serve as translators shows positive impacts in the areas of cultural brokerage (Crezee & Roat, 2019) and convenience, there is still a critical need for professional interpreters who are fluent in the jargon and terminology. To better increase culturally responsive ECSE services, educators may want to ensure interpreters are not only fluent in the native language of the family but are also familiar with ECSE terminology (Acar & Blasco, 2018). Further, choosing an interpreter that is familiar with screening and assessment tools frequently used in ECSE settings may lead to more accurate assessments of child and family needs (Acar & Blasco, 2018).

In the rapid shift to virtual service delivery, there now exists an equity issue that, while certainly present, may have not been as apparent prior to the pandemic (Pierce & Stevermer, 2020). Mothers in our study described experiencing barriers surrounding the shift to online schooling because they were either accessing the services through their phone or did not know enough about the technology at hand. This is consistent with research indicating how the Latino population has been disproportionately affected by technology access during the pandemic (Campos-Castillo & Anthony, 2021). While the Latino population is just as likely to own a smartphone as the general population, they are less likely to own a computer or laptop (Pew Research Center, 2019). In examining this barrier through the lens of culturally responsive practice, the field of ECSE can work with each family individually to determine the best method of support that will work for them (Bradshaw, 2013). For families who do not have readily available access or proficiency with technology and/or internet, steps can be taken to ensure that they are able to access services in an equitable manner (e.g., Poole et al., 2020). For example, educators should continually elicit and listen to families’ needs and tailor communication styles accordingly. Current studies suggest that virtual services can adapt their methods to smartphone use in the Latino community in an effort to provide more equity-centered care (Anaya et al., 2021). This might be especially relevant to future studies, as the growth of telehealth continues and as people grow accustomed to virtual service delivery (Zhu et al., 2021). ECSE educators can provide resources to families struggling with access to technology, such as tablets with internet hotspots, as well as basic parent education offered in the families’ preferred language. There has been promising research alluding to the benefits from telehealth, particularly for rural communities (Cason et al., 2012). Future research can address how ECSE educators can provide culturally relevant resources and support when virtual services are needed.

In the present study, it became notable that mothers were experiencing stress and concerns for their child’s outcomes, which may have been due to having reduced services and supports for their children with special needs (Ren et al., 2020). Additionally, all five of the mothers in this study stayed at home with their children, while their husbands worked outside of the home. Thus, while juggling all of the household responsibilities and new online service delivery, the frustration these mothers felt may have also been exacerbated by feeling they were receiving lower quality ECSE services. This is consistent with current literature documenting that families receiving ECSE services during the early stages of the pandemic felt that the quality of the services was diminished (Steed et al., 2021). Research documenting the experiences of the Latino community in raising a child with special needs report that there is already heightened stress, worry, and frustration with the services and communication they receive (Hughes et al., 2008). Now, in the context of a global pandemic, these mothers were additionally learning to navigate online services, some with more than one child in need. While research has shown that telehealth has been a successful tool to reach families (Cason et al., 2012), parents overall still report a preference for in-person services (Cole et al., 2019).

**Sources of Support and Strength**

Despite the barriers and challenges these five mothers expressed, they also revealed areas of support and strength. The mothers described having strong relationships with their providers, which they recounted with gratitude. Mothers were grateful for the work that their providers were putting in during this difficult time (e.g., investing in their rapport and relationships, language support) and felt that the providers were doing everything that could be done in that time. This theme of parental gratitude toward educators is consistent with findings on how the parent-provider relationship has been viewed during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Garbe et al., 2020). Mothers in the present study felt that, despite the stress and unideal situation related to the pandemic, their child’s educators were doing a good job in handling the shift to virtual services. Feelings of gratitude may play a protective role in negative emotions such as stress, depression, and anxiety within Latino culture.
(Duprey et al., 2020). However, more research is needed to explore the intersection of gratitude of Latino parents of children with special needs.

There was particular gratitude noted in the present study toward the educators who practiced culturally responsive care, such as getting to know the families or inquiring about their culture. From their voices, it was evident that incorporating the family’s culture into the session seemed to elevate and highlight the family as the unit of attention. This sentiment is consistent with literature on Latino culture (Cauce & Domenech-Rodríguez, 2002), particularly surrounding the concept of personalismo, or the value of personal, genuine relationships with other people (i.e., the need to be kind and friendly). This is especially true for collectivistic cultures (Cauce & Domenech-Rodríguez, 2002), such as the Latino culture, in which cultural exchange is highly valued in the parent–educator relationship. Specifically, personalismo allows for individuals to exchange small talk and express emotions openly with one another, thereby building both confidence and trust in others (Davis et al., 2019). In this way, building trust with the entire family becomes a key part of the parent–educator relationship. Indeed, this also highlights the concept of familismo (Cauce & Domenech-Rodríguez, 2002) by viewing the entire family as the extension of the child. Engaging in cultural exchanges, small talk, or simply getting to know the family on a personal level (practicing both personalismo and familismo tenets) can contribute to the positive parent–educator relationship. ECSE educators are encouraged to learn about families’ cultural practices and beliefs, including family perspectives of disability and developmental expectations (Bradshaw, 2013). This can be achieved through open dialogue with the families they serve in order to avoid making assumptions based on the family’s perceived membership in a cultural group. The Division of Early Childhood (DEC) has recognized family-centered practice as a recommended practice (RP), particularly in early intervention, since 1993 (McWilliam & Strain, 1993). With the entire family being recognized as the unit of attention, family-centered practice entails developing a family–educator partnership, where both members are seen as equal contributors to the relationship (Epley et al., 2010). Therefore, it is critical that ECSE educators adopt the consistent use of family-centered preservice training to further these pedagogical practices with incoming practitioners. For the Latino community, specifically, this may include personal, genuine relationships with the entire family.

This study also provides another example of the resiliency that has been documented within the Latino community (Lusk et al., 2021). Despite the barriers and challenges that were experienced during the pandemic, optimism and gratitude were noted in their interviews, especially as it pertained to their relationships with their providers and the mothers’ willingness to overcome the difficulties placed before them. Given that the mothers described gratitude and overall positive relationships with their providers, it is possible that the strong parent-provider relationships contributed to the mothers feeling empowered enough to overcome the barriers and challenges placed before them. Further research is needed to build on our current findings, highlight the role of resilience in Latino families, and examine how this may impact their outlook on ECSE services, particularly during times of high stress.

**Limitations**

The small sample size sets up the need for future studies speaking to additional parents from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds who may have different experiences than the white, middle class “norm” often focused on in research. It was beyond the scope of the present study to generalize these findings to other Latino communities. Despite having 34 respondents to our recruitment efforts, only 5 participants met criteria and followed through with the interviews. Additionally, only the lead author read the transcripts in Spanish to preserve the meaning and interpretability of the data and then coded in English. Although the English portions were shared (approximately 80% of each transcript), there is an unavoidable potential for bias with only one author accessing the transcripts in Spanish. Further, our research questions were concerned with understanding the experiences of these five mothers during the pandemic. Therefore, minimal demographic questions (e.g., acculturation, country of origin) were asked. Lastly, the interview questions were only piloted in English with an individual who met inclusion criteria but was not included in the study. Future studies should ensure to also pilot the questions in the second language (e.g., Spanish) in addition to translating them. Nonetheless, we believe that it is important to amplify these mothers’ voices and contribute to the extant research on Latino experiences and perceptions to ECSE service delivery. The Latino community is heavily understudied and underserviced (Vega & Alegría, 2001) and is often skeptical of governmental personnel (Paniagua, 2005). We argue the process (Ojeda et al., 2011) and the implications contribute a significant amount to Latino ECSE service provision.

**Future Directions**

To the best of our knowledge, this was the first study of the COVID-19 pandemic that captures the experiences of Spanish-speaking Latina mothers of young children receiving virtual ECSE services. To fully invest in supporting young children’s development, there needs to be an emphasis on capturing the perspective of all families via qualitative research, especially those who are marginalized in our current society. It is likely that ECSE professionals will continue to incorporate technology into their pedagogical practice as we emerge from the pandemic (Steed & Leech,
2021). Future equity-focused, qualitative studies of parents who have children with special needs will provide greater insight into the impact of the pandemic, the challenges practitioners and families face when working with a young child, and further ways to support all families and children through ECSE services.

The results of the present study can be applied to current practice by ensuring that practitioners engage in conversations with families and elevate their family values. For the Latina mothers in the present study, this included explicitly asking and incorporating values into session (i.e., language and holidays). In addition to minimizing the burden language minority families might feel when accessing services, researchers can further explore how practitioners can easily adapt their current practices to meet the needs of this population. Additionally, future research can shed light on how additional factors (e.g., acculturation, familiarity with ECSE, and severity of child’s disability) may influence perceived barriers and sources of support/strength.

Conclusion

The current study highlights the voices of five Spanish-speaking Latina mothers of young children in ECSE and brings to light their experiences with receiving and engaging in virtual services during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also shed light to the disparities that some members of Latino community are facing within ECSE. Specifically, our qualitative interviews highlight unique challenges in service delivery during the pandemic that were experienced by Spanish-speaking Latina mothers, a group who has often been missing from the literature. While we aimed to determine what perceived barriers they faced and how they are overcoming those barriers, these mothers also recounted key aspects that contributed positively to their outlook on service receipt. However, several issues still remain. If technology continues to be incorporated into ECSE service delivery, educators and researchers should be aware of how this impacts families with limited access to necessary devices (e.g., laptops). Additionally, it is important to restate the issue of language and how this impacted the mothers’ perceptions. Practitioners should emphasize the importance of easily-accessible and effective language interpretation in ECSE. We encourage service educators and leaders in the field of ECSE to reflect on the supports and services they provide to Spanish-speaking Latino families and what steps they can take to more fully meet the needs of all families in a culturally responsive manner.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Shawna Harbin https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7985-3505

Supplemental Material

Supplementary material for this article is available on the Topics in Early Childhood Special Education website with the online version of this article.

References

Authors. (2022).
Acar, S., & Blasco, P. (2018). Guidelines for collaborating with interpreters in early intervention/early childhood special education. Young Exceptional Children, 21(3), 170–184.
Anaya, Y., Hernandez, G., Hernandez, S., & Hayes-Bautista, D. (2021). Meeting them where they are on the web: Addressing structural barriers for Latinos in telehealth care. Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association, 28(10), 2301–2305.
Ashbury, K., Fox, L., Deniz, E., Code, A., & Toseeb, U. (2021). How is COVID-19 affecting the mental health of children with special educational needs and disabilities and their families? Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 51(5), 1772–1780.
Bradshaw, W. (2013). A framework for providing culturally responsive early intervention services. Young Exceptional Children, 16(1), 3–15.
Campos-Castillo, C., & Anthony, D. (2021). Racial and ethnic differences in self-reported telehealth use during the COVID-19 pandemic: A secondary analysis of a US survey of internet users from late March. Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association, 28(1), 119–125.
Cason, J., Behl, D., & Ringwalt, S. (2012). Overview of states’ use of telehealth for the delivery of early intervention (IDEA Part C) services. International Journal of Telerehabilitation, 4(2), 39.
Cauce, A. M., & Domenech-Rodríguez, M. (2002). Latino families: Myths and realities. In J. M. Contreras, K. A. Kems, & A. M. Neal-Barnett (Eds.), Praeger series in applied psychology. Latino children and families in the United States: Current research and future directions (pp. 3–25). Praeger Publishers/Greenwood Publishing Group.
Charmaz, K. (2003). Chapter 5. Grounded theory. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods (pp. 81–110). SAGE.
Choi, T., & Chiu, M. (2021). Toward equitable education in the context of a pandemic: Supporting linguistic minority students during remote learning. International Journal of Comparative Education and Development, 23(1), 14–22.
Cole, B., Pickard, K., & Stredler-Brown, A. (2019). Report on the use of telehealth in early intervention in Colorado: Strengths and challenges with telehealth as a service delivery method. International Journal of Telerehabilitation, 11(1), 33.
Coyne, L., Gould, E., Grimaldi, M., Wilson, K., Baffuto, G., & Biglan, A. (2020). First things first: Parent psychological flexibility and self-compassion during COVID-19. Behavior
Granpeesheh, D., Dixon, D., Tarbox, J., Kaplan, A., & Wilke, A. (2018). Gay, G. (2018). Garcia, C., & Duckett, L. (2009). No te entiendo y tú no me entiendes: language barriers among immigrant Latino adolescents seeking health care. Journal of Cultural Diversity, 16(3), 120–126. Gay, G. (2018). Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice. Teachers College Press. Granpeesheh, D., Dixon, D., Tarbox, J., Kaplan, A., & Wilke, A. (2009). The effects of age and treatment intensity on behavioral intervention outcomes for children with autism spectrum disorders. Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders, 3(4), 1014–1022. Hardin, B., Mereoiu, M., Hung, H., & Roach-Scott, M. (2009). Investigating parent and professional perspectives concerning special education services for preschool Latino children. Early Childhood Education Journal, 37(2), 93–102. Hsiao, Y. (2018). Parental stress in families of children with disabilities. Intervention in School and Clinic, 53(4), 201–205. Hughes, M., Valle-Riestra, D., & Arguelles, M. (2008). The voices of Latino families raising children with special needs. Journal of Latinos and Education, 7(3), 241–257. Hughes-Scholes, C., & Gavidia-Payne, S. (2019). Early childhood intervention program quality: Examining family-centered practice, parental self-efficacy and child and family outcomes. Early Childhood Education Journal, 47(6), 719–729. Jones, N., Marks, R., Ramirez, R., & Rios-Vargas, M. (2021). 2020 census illuminates racial and ethnic composition of the country. United States Census Bureau. Retrieved January 30, 2022, from https://census.gov/library/store/Kale, E., & Syed, H. (2010). Language barriers and the use of interpreters in the public health services. A questionnaire-based survey. Patient Education & Counseling, 81(2), 187–191. Karliner, L., Jacobs, E., Chen, A., & Mutha, S. (2007). Do educator interpreters improve clinical care for patients with limited English proficiency? A systematic review of the literature. Health Services Research, 42(2), 727–754. Lusk, M., Terrazas, S., Caro, J., Chaparro, P., & Puga Antúnez, D. (2021). Resilience, faith, and social supports among migrants and refugees from Central America and Mexico. Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health, 23(1), 1–22. Mackie, T., Schaefer, A., Ramella, L., Carter, A., Eisenhower, A., Jimenez, M., Fettig, A., & Sheldrick, R. C. (2021). Understanding how parents make meaning of their child’s behaviors during screening for Autism Spectrum Disorders: A longitudinal qualitative investigation. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 51(3), 906–921. Maenner, M., Shaw, K., & Baio, J. (2020) Prevalence of autism spectrum disorder among children aged 8 years –Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, 11 Sites, United States, 2016. MMWR Surveillance Summaries, 69, 1–12. Magaña, S., Parish, S. L., Rose, R. A., Timberlake, M., & Swaine, J. G. (2012). Racial and ethnic disparities in quality of health care among children with autism and other developmental disabilities. Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 50(4), 287–299. McWilliam, R., & Strain, P. (1993). Service delivery models: DEC recommended practices. In S. Sandall, M. E. McLean, & B. J. Smith (Eds.), DEC recommended practices in early intervention=early childhood special education (pp. 40–50). Sopris West. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED370258) Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook. SAGE.
young children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 64(10), 739–749.

Ojeda, L., Flores, L., Meza, R., & Morales, A. (2011). Culturally competent qualitative research with Latino immigrants. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 33(2), 184–203.

Paniagua, F. (2005). Assessing and treating culturally diverse clients: A practical guide (3rd ed.). SAGE.

Pew Research Center. (2019). Demographics of mobile device ownership and adoption in the United States. Author. https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile

Pierce, R., & Stevermer, J. (2020). Disparities in use of telehealth at the onset of the COVID-19 public health emergency. *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/1357633X20963893

Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2006). The content validity index: Are you sure you know what's being reported? Critique and recommendations. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 29(5), 489–497.

Poole, T., & Coles, J. (2021). ‘We still here’: Black mothers’ personal narratives of sense making and resisting antiblackness and the suspensions of their Black children. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 24(1), 76–95.

Ren, J., Li, X., Chen, S., Chen, S., & Nie, Y. (2020). The influence of factors such as parenting stress and social support on the state anxiety in parents of special needs children during the COVID-19 epidemic. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 565393.

Roberts, S. O., Bareket-Shavit, C., Dollins, F. A., Goldie, P. D., & Mortenson, E. (2020). Racial inequality in psychological research: Trends of the past and recommendations for the future. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15(6), 1295–1309.

Rosenberg, S., Robinson, C., Shaw, E., & Ellison, M. (2013). Part C early intervention for infants and toddlers: Percentage eligible versus served. *Pediatrics*, 131(1), 38–46.

Sandall, S., McLean, M., & Smith, B. (2000). *DEC recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education*. Sopris West.

Sheppard, M. (2017). Frequency and form of team communication from the perspective of parents of preschool children with disabilities: Implications for diverse families. *Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners*, 17(1), 39–54.

Solorzano, D., & Yosso, T. (2001). Critical race and LatCrit theory and method: Counter-storytelling. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14(4), 471–495.

Stahmer, A., Vejnoska, S., Iadarola, S., Straiton, D., Segovia, F., Luelmo, P., Morgan, E. H., Lee, H. S., Javed, A., Bronstein, B., Hochheimer, S., Cho, E., Aranbarri, A., Mandell, D., Hassrick, E. M., Smith, T., & Kasari, C. (2019). Caregiver voices: Cross-cultural input on improving access to autism services. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 6, 752–73.

Steed, E., & Leech, N. (2021). Shifting to remote learning during COVID-19: Differences for early childhood and early childhood special education teachers. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 49(5), 789–798.

Steed, E., Phan, N., Leech, N., & Charlifue-Smith, R. (2021). Remote delivery of services for young children with disabilities during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 44(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/10538151211037673

Torres, L. (2018). Latinx? *Latino Studies*, 16(3), 283–285.

Vega, W., & Alegria, M. (2001). Latino mental health and treatment in the United States. In M. Aguirre-Molina, C. W. Molina, & R. Zambrana (Eds.), *Health issues in the Latino community* (pp. 179–208). Jossey-Bass.

Zhu, D., Paige, S., Slone, H., Gutierrez, A., Lutzky, C., Hedriana, H., Barrera, J. F., Ong, T., & Bunnell, B. (2021). Exploring telemental health practice before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Telemedicine and Telecare*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/1357633X211025943

Zuckerman, K., Sinche, B., Mejia, A., Cobian, M., Becker, T., & Nicolaidis, C. (2014). Latino parents’ perspectives on barriers to autism diagnosis. *Academic Pediatrics*, 14(3), 301–308.

Zulauf-Mccurdy, C., & Zinsser, K. (2022). A qualitative examination of the parent–teacher relationship and early childhood expulsion: Capturing the voices of parents and teachers. *Infants & Young Children*, 35(1), 20–39.