Profiles of mothering behavior among low income African American and Latina mothers of preschoolers: Profiles, predictors, and school readiness

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Dallas Preschool Readiness Project
The University of Texas at Dallas and The University of Texas-Houston School of Public Health
Cultural Differences in Parenting

• Our knowledge of parenting relies predominantly on studies of white middle-class mothers and their children.

• Continued need for studies of cultural differences parenting.

• Unclear which parenting behaviors are optimal for school readiness in African American and Latino populations experiencing poverty.
Study Goals

• Explore the parenting profiles that emerge for low income, African American and Latina mothers.

• Examine the associations between mothering profiles and child school readiness.
Dallas Preschool Readiness Project

- 407 children and their parents recruited at age 2 ½
- Home visits conducted at child ages 2 ½ and 3 ½ years
  - Observations of 402 children with maternal data
  - 48% African American (N=192)
  - 52% Latino (N=210)
    - Mostly originating from Mexico
  - Child Gender:
    - 54% boys
    - 46% girls
  - Family income:
    - 51% of African American sample in extreme poverty
    - 17% of Latina sample in extreme poverty

**Extreme poverty = less than half of the federal poverty level for household size**
Parent-child Interaction Qualities: 3 Box Task

Age 2 ½ years

5-point global parental ratings:
- Sensitivity
- Intrusiveness
- Detachment
- Cognitive Stimulation
- Positive Regard
- Negative Regard
Measures of School Readiness at 3 ½

Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)

Bracken School Readiness Subscale (SRS)

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT/TVIP)
Analysis Approach

• Latent Class Analysis

• Series of multivariate regression models

• Separately for each ethnicity

• Controlling for maternal education and gender
Mothering Profiles: Results of LCA

**African American**
- Child-Oriented
- Directive
- Harsh-Intrusive
- Withdrawn

**Latina**
- Child-Oriented
- Directive
- Harsh-Intrusive
Mothering Profiles

African American
- Child-Oriented: 29%
- Directive: 35%
- Harsh-Intrusive: 19%
- Withdrawn: 17%

Latina
- Child-Oriented: 50%
- Directive: 45%
- Harsh-Intrusive: 5%
- Withdrawn: 5%
African American: CBCL at age 3 ½ by Mothering Profiles at age 2 ½

Means adjusted for maternal education and child gender

* p < .05
Latino: CBCL at age 3 ½ by Mothering Profiles at age 2 ½

Means adjusted for maternal education and child gender
African American: Bracken Scores at age 3½ by Mothering Profiles at age 2½

- **Child-Oriented**
- **Directive**
- **Harsh-Intrusive**
- **Withdrawn**

Means adjusted for maternal education and child gender

**p < .01**
Latino: Bracken Scores at age 3 ½ by Mothering Profiles at age 2 ½

Means adjusted for maternal education and child gender
African American: PPVT/TVIP at age 3 ½
by Mothering Profiles at age 2 ½

Means adjusted for maternal education and child gender
African American: PPVT/TVIP at age 3 ½ by Mothering Profiles at age 2 ½

Means adjusted for maternal education and child gender
**Latino:** PPVT/TVIP at age 3 ½ by Mothering Profiles at age 2 ½

Means adjusted for maternal education and child gender
Mothering Profiles and School Readiness

Child-oriented and Directive mothering profiles are both positive for children’s school readiness.

Harsh-Intrusive mothering is associated subsequently with more behavior problems and lower Bracken* scores.
Ethnic Variations

Directive mothering is not as optimal as child-oriented mothering for Latino children, but not for African American children.

Withdrawn mothering among African American mothers was associated with poorer Bracken school readiness and lower PPVT scores.
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