

## Chapter 11

# Latinx Siblings' Social Emotional Support During Shared Reading

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## ABSTRACT

*In order to identify culturally adaptive approaches to socialization of school readiness skills involving siblings in Latinx families, researchers investigated how Latinx older siblings interact with younger siblings in the context of shared reading to support social emotional skills in three Latinx immigrant families. Analyses revealed that older siblings demonstrated socialization practices such as using commands or questions and using social cues, which appeared to foster focal children's engagement. Older siblings also modeled connecting to prior knowledge, problem solving, negotiation of roles, and asking for and providing help, which seemed to enable children's autonomous social participation. Importantly, practices co-occurred with warm and responsive interaction styles. Findings inform how Latinx immigrant families socialize emotional skills to accomplish early literacy tasks using practices that may be culturally specific and aligned with parental socialization.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Parents foster children's social emotional skills by leveraging warmth and responsiveness (Baumrind, 1971; Bronson, 2000; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Karreman et al., 2006). The research base on social emotional development primarily emphasizes parent-child interactions and their implications for development, failing to fully acknowledge developmental supports spurring from interactions with other family members. Yet younger children form unique relationships with older siblings, who possess knowledge and skills relevant for younger children's social emotional development (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990; Howe et al., 2006; Brownell & Carriger, 1998; Hartup, 1989). Moreover, older siblings are acclimated to academic environments, enabling older siblings to have interactions with younger children that could cultivate social emotional skills in service of academic demands (Hurtado-Ortiz & Gauvain, 2007). When considering ethnic minority families' approaches to socialization of social emotional skills that are adaptive to culture and context, Latinx families may rely on supports from non-parental family members such as siblings for development of social emotional competencies (Alfaro & Umaña-Taylor, 2010; Coll et al., 1996).

## BACKGROUND

Social emotional skills are comprised of three main processes: cognitive regulation, emotional processes, and social and interpersonal skills (Jones & Doolittle, 2017). The authors focus specifically on social and interpersonal skills, consisting of following social rules and expectations, evaluating the behavior of others, and cooperating and problem solving with others for rich social interactions (Jones & Doolittle, 2017). As indicated by Bronson (2000), children can "reflect on their own and others' behaviors and the consequences of these behaviors in the environment" (p. 227). This requires children to evaluate their own and others' behavior and engage in perspective-taking, as they begin developing an independent set of standards that guide behavior, particularly in the context of cooperative learning and joint problem solving (Bronson, 2000). Social emotional skills promote school readiness by contributing to children's elementary school reading achievement (Brackett et al., 2012).

Shared book reading between parent and child, or in this case between older siblings and younger children, is a form of social interaction that can provide structured opportunities for building social emotional skills, such as engaging with reading a story and experimenting with novel literacy tasks (Aram & Aviram, 2009; Bus, 2003; Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). Given the importance of older siblings in Latinx families in supporting the social emotional development of their younger siblings, and the evidence of shared reading as a social context demanding social emotional skills, the authors examine the processes through which older siblings support social emotional skills during reading interactions in Latinx immigrant families. Using ethnographic observations of three Latinx immigrant case families engaging with books in English and Spanish, the authors ask the research question: *How do Latinx older siblings from three case families interact with younger siblings in the context of shared reading to support social emotional skills?*

To contextualize the current study, the authors lay the theoretical foundation for sociocultural construction of social emotional skills, specifically highlighting (1) the role of older siblings in supporting younger children's social emotional skills, and (2) shared reading as a social context for older siblings to socialize focal children's social emotional skills. The authors then demonstrate how in Latinx immigrant

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