

**Sensory Processing, Attention, Emotional Regulation and Learning: All parents need to understand the connections-- Working with Spanish speaking parents in a Head Start Program in the United States**

Laurette Olson, Cynthia Martell, Rocio Nunez, Nadilus Rojas  
*Mercy College, Dobbs Ferry, New York, United States*

Due to poverty, language barriers, limited education and cultural barriers, many parents immigrating to the United States from Latin America have limited access to opportunities for learning about their children's sensory processing needs and how to support those needs proactively. Their children are at risk for poor sensorimotor development as they are likely to live in environments that offer reduced opportunities for rich sensorimotor play. Their learning style, needs, and perceptions of children and parenting may be different from parents of the dominant middle class US culture as their culture and life experiences are different.

Some low-income Latin American families with young children in the US participate in Head Start, a comprehensive, federally funded program specifically developed to promote school readiness in young children from low-income families. Though Head Start provides strong culturally sensitive programming related to language and literacy development, children's sensory processing development is not typically part of the parent education opportunities offered.

In this guided poster, the presenters will illustrate how they developed a parent-child psycho-educational group to support Spanish-speaking parents who immigrated to the United States from Latin America or the Caribbean islands learn about and explore how to integrate an understanding of their children's sensory processing needs into their everyday parenting. Latin American OT students under the supervision of a US college professor and pediatric OTR have provided the group in Spanish. The content, process, and outcomes of the group over the course of 3 years will be illustrated on the poster.

Learning objectives

Participants in this session will learn how the presenters:

- Helped Spanish speaking parents in two Head Start programs make the connections between sensory processing, attention, emotional regulation and availability for learning.
- Met the needs of low-income parents from Latin America for culturally responsive educational opportunities for learning about children's sensory processing needs and its impact on development through a psycho-educational parent-child group.