


Adapting a Coparenting-Focused Prevention Program for Latinx Adolescent Parents in a School Context

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The current study utilized a three-step cultural adaptation process to adapt a universal-coparenting program for Latinx adolescent parents in a school-based setting. First, focus groups were conducted with adolescent parents (n = 13; 100% Latinx; 69% female), their parents (n = 17; 94% Latinx; 82% female), and school staff (n = 7; 71% White; 100% female) to identify unique needs faced by this population. Second, the program was adapted to include new lesson modules (e.g., coparenting with grandparents, coparenting after breakups) and structural reformatting to fit a school schedule. Third, selected lessons from the adapted program were piloted in four schools with 32 Latinx adolescent parents (97% Latinx; 78% female). Lesson evaluation surveys and focus group data assessed the feasibility and acceptability of the service delivery method and content to show the program was well received. However, implementation challenges emerged when attempting to provide services to adolescent fathers and Spanish-speaking adolescents. This manuscript provides an example of how to use this cultural adaptation process to tailor prevention programs, highlights a new prevention program that can serve as a resource for adolescent parents, and provides several recommendations for working with Latinx adolescent parents.

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Mark Feinberg created the Family Foundations program and is the owner of a private company, Family Gold, which disseminates the Family Foundations program. His financial interest has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board and the Conflict of Interest Committee at The Pennsylvania State University.

Correction added on 23 September 2021, after first online publication: The authors' declaration of conflict of interest has been added in this version.

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In 2017, over 196,000 children in the United States were born to adolescent mothers under the age of 20 (Martin, Hamilton, Osterman, Driscoll, & Drake, 2018). This transition into parenthood is often coupled with the need to negotiate multiple levels of complex coparental relationship dynamics. For example, adolescent mothers tend to experience on-again/off-again romantic relationships (Gee & Rhodes, 2003; Halpern-Meeekin, Manning, Giordano, & Longmore, 2013) and often coparent with nonresidential adolescent fathers (Mollborn & Lovegrove, 2011) and their own parents (Perez-Brena, Updegraff, Umaña-Taylor, Jahromi, & Guimond, 2015).

Given the complex experiences of adolescent parents (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention [CDC], 2017; Pittman & Coley, 2011), it is important for service providers to develop and implement relevant and accessible services that promote successful family adaptation and adjustment. One promising area of intervention would be improving adolescent parents' supportive relationships, such as the coparenting dynamics between the adolescent parent–grandparent (Gee & Rhodes, 2003; Nadeem, Whaley, & Anthony, 2006) and mother–father dyads (Fagan & Palkovitz, 2007; Futris & Shoppe-Sullivan, 2007). To address these needs, programs such as Family Foundations (Feinberg, 2003) and Strong Foundations (Lewin et al., 2015) have been developed; however, additional adaptations are needed to address current recommendations for serving adolescent (Letourneau, Stewart, & Barnfather, 2004; Martin & Brooks-Gunn, 2015) and Latinx parents (Goodman & Silverstein, 2002).

The importance of managing such relationships in a positive manner during the transition into parenthood is highly salient for Latinx adolescent parents because they make up 31.8% of the adolescent parent population (Office of Adolescent Health [OAH], 2016) and have been characterized as endorsing strong family cohesion, obligation, and respect values (Knight et al., 2010). Yet, the unique needs of Latinx adolescent parents have not been integrated into the types of service delivery methods or the contexts in which they most often engage. To better serve this population, intervention programs must acknowledge Latinx adolescent parents' unique developmental, family, and cultural experiences and service delivery needs. Thus, the goal of this study was to utilize the Cultural Adaptation Process model (Domenech-Rodriguez & Wieling, 2005) to adapt coparenting interventions originally developed for adults (Feinberg, 2003) in community settings and later adapted for Black adolescents (Lewin et al., 2015), to serve Latinx adolescent parents in a school setting.

Family Foundations and Strong Foundations

Family Foundations (FF) is a universal, couple-focused psycho-educational program for first-time parents focused on enhancing the coparenting relationship (i.e., the ways parents support and collaborate with each other in their roles as parents; Feinberg & Kan, 2008). FF consists of a series of eight classes before and after birth, conducted by a male–female co-leader team. Research based on randomized trials of the program indicated that FF was successful in improving outcomes for the parents (i.e., reduced parental stress, lowered maternal depression and anxiety) and children (i.e., improved self-regulation, reduced levels of internalizing and externalizing problems, and enhanced school adaptation), as well as enhancing the coparenting relationship and reducing both parenting and couple aggression (Feinberg, Jones, Roettger, Solmeyer, & Hostetler, 2014; Feinberg et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2018).

The FF program structure and content are flexible and have been adapted to support specific groups within and outside of the United States. For example, Lewin et al. (2015) completed an adaptation to serve primarily Black adolescent parents. This new adaptation, called Strong Foundations (SF), used a similar community-based, two-hour class format, but classes were adapted to be more experiential (e.g., more hands-on activities, role-plays). Adolescent couples were recruited to attend five prenatal classes and then received individualized couple sessions. Postpartum sessions aimed to allow adolescent couples to practice their skills and to discuss additional topics, which were selected to align with the original FF conceptual model, but addressed issues relevant for adolescent parents (e.g., grandparents, new relationships).

CULTURAL ADAPTATION PROCESS MODEL

The Cultural Adaptation Process model (Domenech-Rodriguez & Wieling, 2005) can be summarized into three primary phases: key players are identified and begin collaborating, intervention and evaluation measures are adapted, and findings are integrated into the revised intervention. Phase 1 is comprised of four interrelated steps: (a) collaboration with the program developer and opinion leaders, (b) examination of the existing literature, (c) collaboration with community members to assess program interest and need, and (d) collaborators assess the need for adaptation (Domenech-Rodriguez & Wieling, 2005). Phase 2 is comprised of two steps: (a) beginning the adaptation of the intervention a priori and (b) assessing the initial adaptation to allow for an iterative process where initial feedback informs additional changes. Finally, in Phase 3, community reactions are reviewed and integrated to create an adapted program. For the purpose of this paper, when discussing Phase 2, we will only report on our process of adapting the intervention because the process of adapting the outcome measures and subsequent psychometrics are beyond the scope of this manuscript.

Phase 1: Key Players are Identified and Begin Collaborating

Our Phase 1 process included an examination of program concepts and techniques via literature on coparenting among Latinx adolescent parents, collaboration with community members (i.e., adolescent parents and their parents) to assess program interest and need, and collaboration with the developer of FF (the 3rd author in this manuscript) and opinion leaders. This process allowed us to evaluate the need to adapt the intervention.

The opinion leaders were two Latinx practitioners and seven school staff who serve adolescent parents. Opinion leaders were selected to represent eight local high schools that serve a large adolescent parent population (four in an urban area, two in a suburban area, and two in a rural area). One Latinx practitioner worked with students in the more rural/suburban areas, and the other Latinx practitioner worked in the urban areas. The school staff represented each of our target schools and were the ones who most closely worked with adolescent parents within each school (e.g., directors of schools' adolescent parenting programs, social workers). One individual was the program director for two schools; thus, seven school staff represented the eight schools.

The cultural adaptation process was guided by our adaptation team. This team consisted of one scholar with expertise in Latinx parent-adolescent family and cultural dynamics, one scholar with expertise in adolescent romantic relationship dynamics, the developer of the FF program who holds expertise in coparenting, and two of our previously mentioned opinion leaders (i.e., the two practitioners). Three of the five members of this adaptation team identified as Latinx. The adaptation team also closely collaborated with the other opinion leaders and community members (i.e., adolescent parents and grandparents) who participated in our focus groups and provided additional guidance and input as needed.

Examination of program concepts and technique for Latinx adolescent parents

When adapting evidence-based programs, it is important to take several components into account, such as language, content, examples and metaphors (use of metaphors), service delivery method and location, and social context (Bernal, Jiménez-Chafey, & Domenech-Rodríguez, 2009). The cultural embeddedness of these components can be distinguished into two levels, surface and deep culture (Castro, Barrera, & Holleran Steiker, 2010; Resnicow, Soler, Braithwaite, Ahluwalia, & Butler, 2000). Surface culture reflects aspects such as language, food, and customs, whereas deep culture reflects thought patterns (cognition), values, norms, and systems within which individuals engage (e.g., homeopathic vs. medical doctors; familial vs. center-based childcare; Resnicow et al., 2000). Interventions can be adapted at surface and/or deep levels (Castro et al., 2010). Surface adaptations require linguistic translations, change of examples and metaphors, and change of social context of service delivery with minimal change to central content. Deep adaptations require changes in content to highlight relevant issues (e.g., triadic coparenting relationship dynamics), align cultural values and motivations of the program and clients, and ensure content delivery fits clients' cognitive abilities and mental schemas. For the purpose of serving Latinx adolescent parents, FF and SF provided a strong framework from which to offer relevant coparenting intervention services. However, there was a need for surface and deep-level adaptations to address the current recommendations for serving adolescent (Letourneau et al., 2004; Martin & Brooks-Gunn, 2015) and Latinx parents (Goodman & Silverstein, 2002; Perez-Brena et al., 2015).

First, research focused on best practices in serving adolescent parents suggests that most programs are offered in community-based afterschool programs, home-based programs, or school-based programs (Martin & Brooks-Gunn, 2015). Although each service model holds promise, community-based and home-visiting programs struggle to sustain participation (Hodgkinson, Colantuoni, Roberts, Berg-Cross, & Belcher, 2010). For community-based programs, transportation constraints, time limitations, and a lack of access to consistent childcare often prevent adolescents from enrolling or consistently attending services. Time limitations are especially important to consider as qualitative work with adolescent fathers notes that fathers often discuss role overload due to the need to manage multiple jobs and school (Gilkman, 2004). Home-visitation programs can be challenging because 39% of adolescent parents experience housing instability, which affects their ability to schedule consistent visits (Sadler et al., 2007). Further, home-visitation programs do not provide peer-learning or peer-support opportunities. In contrast, school-based programs tend to overcome the limitations of other service models because they are offered during school hours, provide peer support, provide childcare, and increase adolescent parents' sense of school belonging (Martin & Brooks-Gunn, 2015). Regardless of service delivery model, longer programs (10–18 lesson programs), group and peer-learning models, and singularly focused (vs. multi-focused) programs are most beneficial to this population (Letourneau et al., 2004). Taken together, this body of research suggests adolescent parents benefit most from singularly focused (e.g., coparenting only), long-term, school-based programs with a peer-learning component.

At a deep level, cultural values and norms of Latinx families must also be considered. Generally, Latinx families have been characterized as endorsing values related to strong family cohesion, family obligations, and respect for elders (Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006; Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990; Knight et al., 2010). These values are related to relatively high involvement of adolescent fathers and more triadic and interdependent coparenting dynamics between adolescent parents and their own parents. For example, Latinx (specifically Mexican American) mothers reported receiving more support from the fathers of their children compared with Black mothers (Wiemann, Agurcia,

Rickert, Berenson, & Volk, 2006). In addition, support from their own mothers, whether it be supplemental (i.e., the adolescent is supported by their mother) or coparental (i.e., their mother is equally involved in parenting their child), is common among Latinx adolescent parents (Perez-Brena et al., 2015). In fact, Latinx grandmothers often report that they prefer to be highly involved in the coparental relationship with the adolescent parent (Goodman & Silverstein, 2002). This preference is in contrast to Black families, where Black grandmothers tend to report preferring a custodial relationship with the infant, where the grandmother serves as the sole, or replacement, caretaker to the child (Goodman & Silverstein, 2002). Similar research has not been conducted for family support dynamics with Latinx adolescent fathers.

Collaboration with community members and opinion leaders via focus groups

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, an independent evaluator completed a series of triangulating focus groups with adolescent parents ($n = 13$; 100% Latinx; 69% female; 100% spoke English fluently), their parents (referenced as the grandparents; $n = 17$; 94% Latinx; 82% female; 74% spoke English fluently), and school staff ($n = 7$; 71% White; 100% female; 100% spoke English fluently) to guide the adaptations to the program. Regarding the 13 adolescent parents, five couples participated (five males and five females) and three additional females participated as individuals. All adolescents participated postpartum. Participants reflected similar cultural backgrounds and rates of language fluency as members of their communities (U.S. Census, 2015a, 2015b).

To identify adolescent parents and their families, we invited adolescents who had previously received pregnancy/parenting-related services in one of our eight target high schools. We called each student and invited them to attend one of our scheduled focus group sessions. We also asked them to invite the child's other parent and at least one of their own parents. If a participant expressed concern regarding a partner or parent joining the sessions, we discussed potential barriers (e.g., transportation, childcare, scheduling, proximity, food) and tried to accommodate their needs. Focus groups were held in locations that were centrally located for multiple schools. All participants knew they were participating in research and provided written informed consent/assent. We obtained parental consent when an adolescent was a minor.

A total of five focus groups were completed, two with adolescent parents, two with grandparents, and one with school staff. Additionally, three one-on-one phone interviews were held with Spanish-speaking grandparents who could not attend the focus groups due to lack of transportation and scheduling. Our goal was to understand adolescent parents' coparenting needs and experiences from their perspective and the perspective of the important adults in their lives.

Following the recommendations of Temple and Young (2004), all audio-recorded responses were transcribed in the language in which the interview was conducted, then translated into English when required by bilingual research assistants, and, finally, validated by bilingual members of the qualitative coding team. Transcripts from each focus group (i.e., school staff, adolescent parents, and grandparents) were grouped together and analyzed by a group of four trained coders using content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018), including theme identification and categorization through inductive coding (Thomas, 2006). The coding team used analyst triangulation to ensure the trustworthiness of the data by coding separately then meeting to determine consensus (Creswell, 2014). Specifically, we began by reading through the transcripts in their entirety to identify prevalent themes and then created coding categories from these themes. Once the codes were developed, we coded each of the focus group transcripts line-by-line. To reach intercoder agreement, we used consensus coding methodology (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997) wherein

each code was compared across members of the coding team to check for consistency and discrepancies were discussed until agreement was reached by the coding team.

Focus group findings

Participants' comments primarily fell within two themes: coparenting supports (e.g., who supports them and how) and coparenting challenges.

Coparenting support

Regarding coparenting support, adolescents reported two to five sources of coparental support. That is, no student reported belonging solely to a coparenting dyad (mother–father only). Instead, adolescent parents reported belonging to a coparenting triad ($n = 3$), quad ($n = 5$), or a larger parenting team ($n = 5$). When discussing who supported adolescent parents, all three groups (adolescent parents, grandparents, school staff) noted that the top three sources of coparental support included the maternal grandmothers as the primary source of support, followed by the adolescent father and paternal grandparents. Adolescent mothers also mentioned receiving support from siblings and other family members (e.g., uncles, aunts), and adolescent mothers and fathers mentioned receiving support from their current romantic partner. It is important to note that adolescent parents, but not grandparents or school staff, mentioned siblings and romantic partners as coparental supports. Although most participants noted multiple sources of support, most of the coparenting discussion focused on adolescent parent–grandparent and adolescent mother–father coparenting relationships.

All three groups agreed that adolescent parents received financial (e.g., paying for rent, groceries) and emotional or moral support. However, only the adolescent parents and grandparents noted that adolescent parents received support with routine childcare tasks such as caretaking, bathing, feeding, and playing with the child. In addition, grandparents and school staff, but not adolescent parents, noted that grandparents provided support by attempting to teach adolescents about responsibility. That is, grandparents mentioned they often provided advice, withheld supports (e.g., babysitting), or set rules to prevent adolescents from engaging in extracurricular activities to help adolescents learn and accept their parental responsibilities. School staff also mentioned these behaviors, but they described grandparents' behaviors as controlling and constraining to adolescents, rather than supporting, especially when adolescents needed to take a break for self-care. Grandparents and staff also mentioned that they helped the adolescent parents by encouraging them to maintain a positive relationship with the other adolescent parent (especially after a breakup) and by providing transportation.

Coparenting challenges

Grandparents and adolescents reported that having or striving for good communication and a consistent routine helped their coparenting teams succeed. However, all three groups reported challenges among the coparenting teams that made coparenting more difficult.

Specifically, all three groups indicated that *lack of communication or ineffective communication* (e.g., blaming, yelling, misinterpreting intentions) was the greatest coparenting challenge adolescent parents faced, particularly between the grandparents and adolescents. Many of the adolescent parents and grandparents discussed how ineffective communication created tension and increased arguments. These arguments emerged when discussing parenting goals and behaviors, the involvement of the other parents, or the adolescent's desire to engage in self-care. Ineffective communication around parenting goals, routines, and access also created tension between adolescent mothers and fathers and between households (e.g., deciding when to hand off the baby, discrepancies in rules across households).

Adolescent parents also experienced challenges related to *coparental control and gatekeeping*. Specifically, school staff and adolescents indicated that the grandparents would often control the way the adolescents parented their own children. These control tactics emerged as critiques of adolescent parenting, unsolicited advice, parenting directives, direct actions to take over parenting, or indirect actions (e.g., spoiling the child when the adolescent was at school). These experiences were most consistently shared by adolescent fathers who described how their parents and the mother of their child corrected their parenting or how the maternal grandmother questioned the fathers' ability to make decisions for the child. Additionally, school staff noted that grandparents would engage in gatekeeping with the adolescent parents, often through curfews and strict house rules, to prevent adolescent fathers from being more involved with the infant. Adolescent fathers described similar experiences. One father even expressed that he had to show he was going to be an involved parent before the adolescent mother's family supported his involvement in the mother and child's life. The school staff also indicated that the adolescent mothers engaged in gatekeeping by limiting the time adolescent fathers could see the child or withholding information from the adolescent father, particularly during times of animosity. Adolescent fathers also noted gatekeeping would occur if they were not providing financially for the child. Overall, whereas the other groups indicated that communication and parenting control were prevalent challenges, school staff often discussed the control dynamics as the most prevalent challenge faced by these coparenting teams.

Discrepancies in their parenting styles was another important challenge that adolescent parents and grandparents faced. These discrepancies ranged from disciplinary behaviors (e.g., spanking), spoiling behaviors (e.g., giving in to the child), and priorities for the child (e.g., bedtime decisions). This challenge appeared to be particularly prevalent as the adolescents typically continued to live with the grandparents after the child was born. As a result, the adolescent parents described feeling pressure to use the grandparents' practices because it was not their household or because they did not want to be disrespectful or ungrateful to their parents. Differences in parenting styles also emerged across adolescent parents, especially when they had to coparent across different households. This added challenge of living separately often contributed to difficulty with communication around childrearing practices and increased the likelihood of mismatched practices across households (e.g., disciplining the child).

Finally, both the adolescents and school staff reported coparenting to be particularly challenging when there was a *strained or negative personal relationship* between the coparents (e.g., after a breakup). This strained relationship would transfer over to the coparenting dynamics and increase negative communication between the coparents and families. The school staff reported these negative interactions often resulted in fathers' reduced interest in being involved in the child's life, reduced interest in coparental collaboration, or in adversarial relationships between families.

Phase 2 & 3: Program Adaptation Process

Based on these findings, the adaptation team agreed that a school-based intervention informed by the content from the FF (adult) and SF (adolescents) curricula would benefit our adolescent parents and address their service needs. Our a priori adaptation consisted of a ten-lesson school-based coparenting curriculum. Surface (e.g., language, examples, change in service delivery model) and deep adaptations (e.g., address unique experiences, cultural values, and motivations) were made to incorporate additional needs identified by our focus groups. Specifically, we adapted the curriculum to fit a school system; thus, the curriculum was adapted to include ten 60-minute lessons that were administered weekly (see Table 1 for lesson descriptions) to fit a class/lunch period and semester schedule. To

TABLE 1
Outline of the “Strong Team Parenting Foundations” Program

| Lesson Theme | Key Topics |
|---|---|
| 1: Introduction to Team Parenting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program goals and structure • Importance of a parenting team • Parenting teams come in all shapes and sizes • Identifying goals/values for your child |
| 2: Taking Care of Yourself and Your Relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The self, the relationship, and the coparenting team • Importance of caring for each role • Making room for fun! |
| 3: Teamwork and Listening Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing your “readiness” to be a parent • Listening skills • Allowing the team to be there for the child |
| 4: Conflict, Your Body, and Your Child | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of family conflict • Self-regulation strategies • Demonstrating Team Unity |
| 5: Managing Conflict and Thoughts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing conflict • The role of negative thoughts • How to reframe thoughts • Building positive attitudes and relations with the parenting team |
| 6: Working it Out | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to communicate and start difficult conversations • Time out vs. Withdrawal • Sharing parenting responsibilities (division of labor) |
| 7: Security and Problem-Solving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional security and parenting behaviors • Importance of addressing problems • Identifying different types of problems |
| 8: Discipline and Problem-Solving Methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse parenting and discipline strategies • Models of problem-solving |
| 9: Coparenting After Breakups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining both parents’ involvement after a breakup • Integrating new romantic partners • Strategies for respectful, cooperative parenting |
| 10: Coparenting with Grandparents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grandparents as sources of support • Understanding sources of misunderstanding and miscommunication • Establishing boundaries • Promoting involvement of all coparents |

shorten the lessons from two hours to 60 minutes, the adapted curriculum was condensed to solely focus on concepts related to coparenting, excluding concepts related to child development. Parenting topics, such as parenting styles and discipline, were not included in this curriculum. However, these topics were introduced to help parents reflect on the

strengths and challenges coparents face when they have different styles as well as the importance of appreciation, perspective-taking, and problem-solving if this situation arises. We believe our focus on coparenting was appropriate as most students were already attending child or infant development classes through the school and past research suggests that new parents, especially fathers, benefit from a coparenting-focused curriculum (Fagan, 2008).

To develop this adapted coparenting curriculum, the adaptation team met weekly with the original program developer to cross-reference the two original curricula along with our adapted curriculum. Further, the team developed logic maps to ensure that concepts built on one another from one lesson to the next. For example, we first introduced the concept of coparenting and the idea that each person has a unique *parenting team* that might involve parents, grandparents, siblings, etc. (Lesson 1). Second, we introduced the importance of taking care of oneself and one's relationships with members of the parenting team (Lesson 2). Third, we introduced coparenting concepts (support, gatekeeping, division of labor) and skills to take care of one's team (Lessons 3–8). Specifically, within Lessons 7 and 8 we began to introduce more complex scenarios to account for the fact that many adolescents must negotiate parenting duties across multiple households; therefore, division of labor and the negotiation of different parenting styles and rules might require coordination across households. Finally, we introduced additionally complex scenarios such as coparenting after a breakup and coparenting with multiple people (e.g., parent–coparent–new partner; Lesson 9), along with coparenting with grandparents (e.g., dealing with parent-coparenting power imbalances, differences in parenting values and styles; Lesson 10).

Our triangulating focus groups are a particular strength of our study, as information gathered by adolescent parents, grandparents, and school staff helped us identify needs that are salient to all parties, while also identifying conflicting feedback that might represent miscommunication or differential expectations or intentions amongst groups. These inconsistencies were especially helpful to identify sources of conflict that might lead to reductions in coparenting support. These tensions and areas of miscommunication informed the development of one of our lessons (Lesson 10: Coparenting with Grandparents). Lesson 10 encourages students to take their parents' perspective and understand their intentions and discusses means to communicate regarding: (a) differences in parenting goals, (b) grandparent involvement/over-involvement, and (c) grandparent gatekeeping. In addition, other lessons were adapted to provide students with information and/or language to support their ability to identify and articulate needs for self-care.

Triangulating information across parents, grandparents, and school staff was also helpful to identify parenting needs related to managing changes in relationships (e.g., after a breakup), and managing coparenting across multiple households, and with multiple people. For example, both adolescent mothers and grandparents discussed the need to develop and navigate a positive coparenting relationship with the adolescent father, regardless of relationship status, to decrease coparenting challenges and increase parental involvement. Although grandparents discussed needing to develop a positive coparenting relationship between families, school staff, more often than adolescents and grandparents, emphasized that family members experienced challenges collaborating across households to manage drop off/pick up arrangements, celebrations, etc. This collective information informed the material in Lesson 9: Coparenting After Breakups.

To ensure our curriculum addressed our population's needs, we made several additional deep adaptations throughout the lessons. First, as many youth reported the other parent might not attend the same school or they did not have a relationship with the other parent, we adapted the lesson examples and activities to allow youth to attend without their partner and to reflect on other coparental figures (e.g., grandparent). We also reviewed all content to ensure that values (e.g., familism, family cohesion, and respect; Knight et al., 2010),

parenting practices (e.g., the use of nonpunitive control tactics; Halgunseth et al., 2006), and coparenting dynamics (e.g., higher grandparent coparenting; Goodman & Silverstein, 2002) more commonly used in Latinx families were presented respectfully and/or incorporated into the discussion. For example, we acknowledged the presence of coparenting triads and larger coparenting structures because past research and our focus groups highlighted that adolescent parents were likely to report they coparented with grandmothers, adolescent fathers, and other family members. Thus, our program introduced the idea of a “parenting team” early in the program, and coparenting scenarios and role-playing activities were adapted to include coparenting scenarios of adolescent–grandmother dyads, mother–father dyads, and mother–father–grandmother triads across all lessons.

Assessing proposed adaptations and integrating findings

After our initial adaptation, seven of the ten lessons were piloted in local schools. These seven lessons were chosen because the material had been significantly adapted (Lessons 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8) or newly created (Lessons 9 and 10). Lessons were piloted by three trained facilitators, including both practitioners who participated in our adaptation team plus a third Latinx practitioner who also had experience working with Latinx adolescents. Each practitioner oversaw the piloting in one school, except one person who oversaw the piloting at two smaller-sized schools. Lessons were piloted in four of our eight target schools (two rural/suburban and two urban schools) during 60-minute lunch periods. The four schools were selected in consultation with our opinion leaders (school staff and practitioners) to best represent the range of experiences across the eight schools. School staff helped us identify all pregnant and parenting seniors who attended these schools. Participating adolescents were informed of their rights as research participants and provided written informed consent/assent. We obtained parental consent when the adolescent was a minor.

Thirty-two pregnant and parenting high school seniors participated in these pilot lessons. Most students identified as Latinx ($n = 31$; 97%) and female ($n = 25$; 78%), and many were eligible for free or reduced lunch (62.5%). Most participants were of Mexican or Central American descent (i.e., Honduras, El Salvador) and preferred to speak and read in English ($n = 30$; 94%). The two students who identified themselves as Spanish speakers noted that they understood and were competent in English but preferred to speak in Spanish. Given the small need and staff limitations, we did not offer an alternative pilot lesson for these students, but ensured our facilitators were bilingual and Spanish materials (e.g., handouts, instructions, PowerPoint slides) were made available. Students were representative of the larger Latinx population in the area which primarily identifies as Mexican (82%), Central American (6%; Honduran, Salvadorean, Guatemalan), and Puerto Rican (3%); and representative of the student population in their schools where the population of English Language Learners ranged from 6% to 10%, and students who were eligible for free and reduced lunch ranged from 55% to 74% (Texas Education Agency, 2015; U.S. Census, 2015a). At the completion of each lesson, students completed a lesson-specific evaluation, called the Lesson Evaluation Survey (LES), where students rated the utility of the lesson subtopics and the presenter’s level of engagement using a 4-point scale (1 = not at all, 4 = extremely). Students were also asked to identify activities or lessons they liked most and least. Finally, we held focus groups at each site one week after each lesson ended to identify any global recommendations regarding the curriculum and lesson structure. A total of 21 of the 32 students participated in these focus groups (16 female, 21 Latinx).

The deep and surface adaptations were well received from students based on our pilot evaluation (LES & focus groups). In fact, all lessons were rated above 3.7 on the LES, indicating students found each of the lessons highly useful (see Table 2 for lessons specific averages and key quotes). In addition, students appreciated many of the lesson topics, exercises, examples, and role-playing scenarios; the relevance of our examples; the

TABLE 2
Adolescents' Average Evaluation of the Utility of Each Piloted Lesson

| Lesson | n | M | SD | Favorite Topic | Quotes Describing What Key Lesson/Tool Adolescents Enjoyed Learning in Class |
|---|----|------|--------|---|---|
| 1: Introduction to Team Parenting | 13 | 3.90 | 0.10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of a parenting team Identifying goals/values for your child | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "How every person around my kid has a role or how he helps me." "It gave a better idea of how we can accomplish our parenting goals as a team." |
| 2: Taking Care of Yourself and Your Relationships | 17 | 3.75 | 0.03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of caring for each role Making room for fun! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I can still have fun and my life isn't over." "Spending and enjoying time with your team members can prevent future conflict." "I learned that about taking care ourselves because we're always worried about babies and we forget ourselves." |
| 4: Conflict, Your Body, and Your Child | 14 | 3.86 | (0.10) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of family conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Ways to slow down when in a heated discussion." "(How to use) traffic light to help communicate." |
| 7: Security and Problem-Solving | 20 | 3.73 | 0.19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of addressing problems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Now I know that I need to ask my parenting team how they would like to be approached." "Talking about when the appropriate time to discuss conflict is." "It is helpful because it helps you be able to solve a problem." |
| 8: Discipline and Problem-Solving Methods | 13 | 3.87 | 0.13 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diverse parenting and discipline strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "How to work things or plan things for the future." "I learned about 3 types of parenting styles and what they consist of." "About agreement and compromise." |
| 9: Coparenting After Breakups | 14 | 3.94 | 0.09 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining both parents' involvement after a breakup | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I learned that children should not be in the middle." "It's helpful to know how to introduce a new partner." |
| 10: Coparenting with Grandparents | 16 | 3.87 | 0.05 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding sources of misunderstanding/miscommunication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "We saw different ways to address our concerns while still being respectful." "It was helpful to compare to our partners, and teaching (us) how to let (grandparents) play an active role." |

Note. Lesson averages were computed by, first, creating an average score for each lesson topic and, second, averaging the topic averages. Scores are interpreted using a 4-point scale assessing student perception of the utility of a lesson topic (1 = not at all, 4 = extremely).

conversational nature of the lessons; and the sense of community and support created within the group. For example, one student said “I love how honest these scenarios are”; another student said “I just like having open talks.” Even when students noted that some content was not relevant to their current situation, they appreciated that the topics helped them think about how to prevent coparental conflicts or be prepared to handle certain relationship stressors (e.g., introducing a new romantic partner) if they occurred in the future. Further, students appreciated candid conversations regarding issues that are not typically discussed in adolescent parent support services, such as how to coparent with grandparents or the fact that coparenting teams can be comprised of different people (e.g., other adolescent parents, grandparents, siblings, etc.) and different structures (e.g., dyads, triads, etc.). Further, the lessons allowed students to recognize that there were multiple ways to solve problems, parent or discipline children, and they learned the importance of working together through these differences for the good of the child. Students rarely offered suggestions for improvement. However, one student noted that “the questions and examples weren’t active” within the Security and Problem-Solving lesson. Several students also requested additional resources or practical examples to handle conflict, coparent with grandparents, and coparent after a breakup. These latter requests reflected students’ level of interest in these three topics. Finally, students suggested that take-home activities and resources would be helpful to share with partners and other parenting team members (e.g., the grandparents) who did not attend the lessons.

Integrating findings and adaptations

Based on students’ focus group responses and LES suggestions, the adaptation team made several minor adaptations to the curriculum. Specifically, we added a role-playing activity to the Security and Problem-Solving lesson, provided additional examples in the lessons, and created a resource packet with handouts for each lesson. These resource handouts included optional take-home activities students could use to practice or share the concepts they learned with other family members. These minor adaptations comprised our final adapted curriculum which is currently undergoing a rigorous evaluation.

DISCUSSION

Given the complex experiences of adolescent parents (CDC, 2017; Pittman & Coley, 2011), it is important to develop and implement relevant services that promote positive supportive relationships. This is especially salient for Latinx adolescent parents who make up 31.8% of the adolescent parent population in the United States (OAH, 2016). Within this study, we used the Cultural Adaptation Process (Domenech-Rodriguez & Wieling, 2005) to identify adolescent parents’ and their support networks’ unique experiences and needs, decide what level of adaptation was needed for our program, and then pilot and assess our adaptation. This model was pivotal in our ability to be responsive to the Latinx adolescent parents’ needs within our community. Below, we highlight some lessons learned related to adolescent parents’ unique coparenting needs, the importance of engaging partners, the challenges of serving diverse student needs, and additional considerations to better serve grandparents.

Adolescent Parents’ Unique Coparenting Needs

Our collaboration with community partners yielded several key results that informed the adaptation of our intervention. Such results can help inform research and programs serving Latinx adolescent parents. For example, adolescent parents’ coparenting dynamics were not described as dyadic, but instead involved collaboration with a parenting team that

could include the child's other parent, grandparents, other family members, and new partners. Such information is important as it requires scholars to expand the conceptualization of coparenting dyads to include parenting teams and to identify ways to measure collaboration across such teams. Practitioners should also be aware of these dynamics and find ways to be inclusive of larger parenting teams in their service delivery methods.

Within our focus groups, participants also shared challenges regarding communication and in navigating and coordinating coparenting team members' diverse parenting goals and practices. These challenges were especially salient among parenting teams that lived in separate households, had diverse power dynamics (e.g., adolescent parent and grandparent), or where romantic relationships had ended (i.e., the adolescent parents had broken up). Some adolescents also shared challenges with maternal grandparents' gatekeeping of fathers, which included questioning fathers' abilities and decisions or physically barring fathers from seeing their child until they proved themselves in some way (e.g., as providers). This information informed our surface and deep-level adaptations that included the development of two new lessons (Lessons 9 and 10) and minor adaptation to other lessons. Based on our findings, we encourage scholars to continue to study these multi-layered relationships to identify the processes that foster strong collaboration across these coparenting teams. Further, this information should help practitioners be understanding and responsive to these families' experiences and needs.

The Importance of Strong Partnerships

Our use of the Cultural Adaptation Process (Domenech-Rodriguez & Wieling, 2005) necessitated that we engage with community members and opinion leaders from the very beginning of our process. This collaboration allowed us to adapt the curriculum and identify the need for new lesson content relevant to adolescent parents. Further, although we held long-standing relationships with our school partners, their engagement in this process as opinion leaders helped increase their buy-in into our program processes and curriculum content. Further, our school partners (e.g., parenting teachers) facilitated administrative and student access that was critical for successful implementation in schools. Scholars who specialize in adapting services for Latinx populations have suggested that strong partnerships with community and school partners are critical to implementing interventions in these settings (Cooper et al., 2020). The process we describe in this study supports this idea and showcases a method other practitioners can use to develop and strengthen partnerships to better serve adolescent parents and Latinx communities.

Benefits and Challenges to School Implementation

A part of our surface adaptation included modifying the curriculum and program processes to fit better in a school-based setting, instead of a community-based setting. We made this decision because school-based programs, versus home visiting or community-based programs, can be beneficial for adolescent parents because they help reduce role overload, transportation, and childcare barriers (Martin & Brooks-Gunn, 2015). However, implementing in a school setting leads to challenges as well as benefits.

As mentioned above, school staff helped identify students for recruitment and supported students' engagement, including the ability of students to attend lessons during advisory periods or lunchtime. This ease of access allowed students who would not seek such services, or who might not have time to attend services, to engage in the program. However, the school setting and internal systems (e.g., bell schedule, rules regarding who is allowed on campus) within each school also incurred unique challenges. For example, coparenting dyads did not always attend the same school, and when they did, their schedules did not always allow them to attend our program together. Specifically, we often

offered lessons during lunch; however, several schools host two consecutive lunch periods, each for half of the student body. As a result, some coparenting dyads were available during different lunchtime periods or in different locations. The need to accommodate students' schedules also meant that groups had varying proportions of mothers and fathers (e.g., more mothers than fathers vs. equal mothers and fathers), which affected the dynamics of group discussion and, in particular, fathers' sense of group support.

Offering services during lunch, also meant that we had to compete with other student priorities. For example, students often made-up class examinations, attended tutoring, or participated in clubs during lunch. These schedule conflicts might have led to reduced program attendance. Offering our lessons during an advisory period or a designated academic parenting class helped increase attendance; however, the task of ensuring all students were enrolled in the same advisory period required strong partnerships with school administrators and academic counselors.

Lastly, serving students in the school meant lesson attendance was tied to school attendance. For example, students who missed school because their child was sick or had a doctor's appointment also missed our lessons. These absences did not reflect a lack of interest in our program, but instead a physical barrier to attendance that we did not anticipate. For this reason, we recommend that practitioners offer services using multiple methods, such as offering make-up lessons or offering services in a hybrid model where students can attend in-person or online simultaneously. The benefits of providing web-based programs for healthy relationship programming or enhancing coparenting have been studied in adult couples (Doss et al., 2016; Feinberg et al., 2019), but are needed with Latinx adolescent parents. However, we believe this might be a promising practice in helping students remain involved in school-based programs.

Serving Subpopulations of Latinx Adolescent Parents

Within our study, Spanish-speaking students and adolescent fathers were underrepresented within the focus groups and pilot groups. During our pilot groups, only two students reported they preferred speaking Spanish; thus, because of the limited need, we were not able to provide Spanish-only services. Instead, we provided English and Spanish materials and ensured a bilingual team served their school and engaged these students in the conversation. Similarly, fathers were often underrepresented in our lessons. As a result, they often felt less supported during group lessons. Engaging and serving Latinx clients of diverse backgrounds (e.g., cultural backgrounds, nativity, acculturation, gender) and needs (e.g., Spanish services) is a well-documented challenge (Cooper et al., 2020), especially when attempting to serve and be responsive to smaller subpopulations. Thus, our program experience is reflective of a larger challenge facing many practitioners. To better serve fathers and Spanish-speaking students, targeted recruitment efforts and innovative methods are needed. For example, a video-conferencing tool could help us facilitate lessons and group discussion with fathers and/or Spanish-speaking students from multiple schools and with students who are not attending school. This method might allow students to receive tailored services and develop a support network with students within and across schools.

Additional Service for Grandparents

Our adaptation and pilot focus groups also yielded important information regarding how to serve and further engage grandparents. The adolescents who participated in the pilot lessons noted that handouts would help them share what they were learning in class with their parents. During the grandparent focus groups, several grandparents also noted they enjoyed discussing their experiences with other grandparents and suggested we

create a support group. Given grandparents' high level of coparenting involvement within Latinx adolescent parent households (Goodman & Silverstein, 2002; Perez-Brena et al., 2015), it is imperative that scholars find ways to involve grandparents in their program. However, because many grandparents discussed challenges with scheduling and transportation, it might not be possible to hold weekly lessons with grandparents. Instead, monthly or quarterly support group sessions might be more feasible. These sessions could include information on the key topics the adolescents will be learning in the upcoming month to garner grandparent support and help strengthen program effects. These sessions can be particularly useful when the program introduces topics related to adolescent autonomy, gatekeeping and the importance of allowing the other parent to be involved with their child, and grandparent–parent coparenting dynamics.

Limitations

Despite the importance of this study in adapting a coparenting program to serve Latinx adolescent parents in a school-based setting, we do acknowledge some methodological limitations. First, our sample was mainly comprised of adolescent mothers who were enrolled in school, the fathers of their children, and their own parents. Thus, the sample might represent adolescent parents who experience more positive relationships with and receive more support from the child's other parent and their own parents. Future research would benefit from including adolescent parents who experience negative or adversarial coparenting relationships, as well as those who dropped out of school. In addition, although our sample was representative of the local area, our sample does not represent the diversity of national origin, acculturation, and generational status that exists within the Latinx population across the United States. Our sample was also small, thus limiting the generalizability of our findings to the larger Latinx population. One factor that limited the size of our sample was the timing of the focus groups. Specifically, they were held at the end of the school year. Thus, some students might have had competing priorities (e.g., spending time with friends, making up final examinations) prior to their upcoming graduation. We suggest that lessons and research activities not be scheduled the two weeks before graduation for this reason. Last, because of the small sample size, we did not report outcome data on our adapted measure that assessed coparenting between adolescent parents, as well as coparenting between adolescents and their mother figure. Future research would benefit from evaluating the effectiveness of our adapted program with a larger sample of Latinx adolescent parents.

CONCLUSION

Adolescent parents' complex needs require youth to simultaneously negotiate coparental relationships, while also negotiating adolescent romantic relationships (Halpern-Meehin et al., 2013), nonresidential parenthood (Mollborn & Lovegrove, 2011), and multi-layered parent–child dynamics (Perez-Brena et al., 2015). This study presented an example of how to use the Cultural Adaptation Process model (Domenech-Rodriguez & Wieling, 2005) to adapt the FF (Feinberg, 2003; Feinberg & Kan, 2008; Feinberg et al., 2014; Feinberg et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2018) and SF (Lewin et al., 2015) program for Latinx adolescent parents in a school-based setting. Further, focus group data from adolescents, grandmothers, and school staff provided insights into adolescent parents' support systems, and unique experiences of adolescent parenting and coparenting. This information will help increase the resources available for researchers interested in cultural adaptation methods, as well as showcase a new intervention for Latinx adolescent parents, in particular. Although our program was well received, implementation challenges emerged in a

school-based setting when attempting to provide targeted services to further specialized populations, such as adolescent fathers and Spanish-speaking adolescent parents. Future research and adaptation work are needed to provide cost-effective and specialized programs to these adolescents.

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