Impact of Family, Culture, and the Environment on Hispanic Children's Leisure Activity

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Research completed in partial fulfillment of PhD requirements at the University of Arizona College of Nursing
Purpose:
- Investigate the leisure time activity patterns of Hispanic children who reside in northern Indiana.

Questions
- 1: How do Hispanic families describe leisure time activities?
- 2: How do culture, family, and the community environment influence a Hispanic child’s participation in leisure time activities?
Setting/Sample

- 10 English-speaking Hispanic women who are mothers to children between 6 and 10 years old.

Method:

- Ethnographic study rooted in Social Ecology and Photovoice philosophy
- Participants photographed their children’s fun activities for one week.
- Engaged in photo-elicited interviews
Results
Family

I give everything I have
Types of Activities

- Girls:
  - More sedentary, inside with family or alone
  - Intellectually stimulating or creative play

- Boys:
  - More active, often outside with family or friends
  - Unstructured play and sports
Family Roles in Activities

- Direct Participation
  - Communication
  - Encouragement
  - Role Modeling

- Facilitation

- Monitoring for Safety
Reasons for Participation

- Health: Multi-dimensional concept
- Bonding: Time spent together as family
- Life preparation: Preparation for adult life
- Fun and relaxation: Enjoying life, taking time to relax
Reasons for Participation

- Girls
  - Building self-confidence
  - Creative expression

- Boys
  - Socializing
  - Testing limits by facing fears
Cultural Influence

- Tensions created by living in U.S.
  - Work at expense of family life and fun
  - Fitting in, yet maintaining identity
  - Traditional roles and new expectations
  - Teaching responsibility in a permissive society
Preparing for a Better Life

- Leisure time: When children are prepared to live a better life – one that is happy, healthy, and secure.
- Aimed at resolving the tensions of work at expense of family time and traditional roles and new expectations.
- Expressed in the types of activities, family roles, and reasons for participating.
Preparing for a Better Life

- **Girls**
  - Traditional role: Wife and mother
  - New expectation: Working woman

- **Boys**
  - Traditional role: Providing for the family.
  - New Expectation: Helping provide care within the home
I’m thinking she needs to be a student:

She needs to learn to care for herself:
- If they were not doing this....:

- He is testing gravity I guess:
Leisure time: When children learn to prioritize:
- Work first, but remember to have fun.

Aimed at resolving tensions of work and fun, work at the expense of family time, and teaching responsibility in a permissive society.

Expressed through:
- Explicit scheduling of leisure time; priority of duty first, then encouragement to have fun
- Teaching children to prioritize through natural consequences
- Monitoring for acceptable activities
Unifying Cultural Theme: A Life in Balance

- Life balance (physical, mental, emotional, cultural, spiritual balance) was viewed as health.
- Maintaining cultural values
- The importance of fitting in
- Striking a balance between mainstream and Hispanic cultures
  - Children as expert multi-cultural navigators
- Prepare for adult life that is financially secure that provides time for family and having fun
Conclusions

- Cultural relevance
- Meaning of sedentary activities
- Importance of family
- Enlist the help of patient and family when designing interventions
- Policy Implications
References