

# Early Childhood Screenings: Latino Community Engagement in Carver County



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## BACKGROUND

*“One in every five Minnesota families with children has at least one child with a special health need.”*

- Minnesota Department of Health, 2015



### SCREENINGS AT THE CRITICAL PERIOD

- **Early childhood is a critical period for physical, emotional, and social development.**
  - It is at this time that stress or socioeconomic deprivation can have lasting impacts on a child's health. It is also at this time that health-promoting interventions can be profoundly beneficial to a child's immediate and future health trajectory.
- **Early childhood screenings assess vision, hearing, psychological development, immunizations and physical growth risk factors that may affect learning.**

### INTERVENTIONS

- **Government programs are available to support families with children diagnosed with developmental delays.** The screenings determine if a child is eligible for the Individual Family Service Plan and the Minnesota Early Intervention program **at no cost** to the child's family.
  - The services include follow-up consultations, kindergarten readiness preparation, and continued support throughout education.

### CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Carver County, located in South MN, has an increasing population of Hispanic residents, primarily of Latino descent, who have considerably low enrollment rates in early childhood screenings. They also demonstrated the **lowest level of kindergarten readiness** (44% as compared to 63% of white kindergarteners in 2010).<sup>1</sup>**

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## OBJECTIVE

- **Our goal was to learn about the concerns of the Latino population in Carver County and encourage enrollment in childhood screenings for their children at earlier ages.**



Image credit: www.anthonovicino.com

## METHODS

1. **Interview key informants** who have been identified as leaders in the Latino community.
2. **Conduct focus groups** with Latino parents.
3. **Obtain feedback from Latino parents** who have experience with childhood screenings.

## RESULTS

### PERCEPTION OF SCREENINGS

- **Misconceptions**
  - **Insurance** was thought to be required
  - **Immigration status** was thought to be relevant to eligibility checks for screenings
- **Misinformation**
  - There were miscommunications between community members over the screening process

### BARRIERS

- **Lack of Resources**
  - Ex: **time, money, and transportation**
- **Low English Proficiency**
  - Families with low English proficiency had limited understandings of their healthcare provider's recommendations
- **Cultural Differences**
  - Some Latino families had **perceptions of development** that were in conflict with that of their provider
  - **Unique child-rearing methods** that are not practiced in the U.S. may cause developmental assessment tools that are American-based to be less effective for Latino children



Image credit: blog.smu.edu.sg

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### PROPOSED FLYER

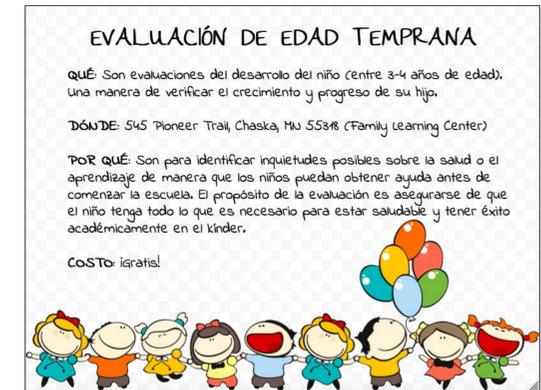


Image credit: Shutterstock

- Inform via:
  - **Flyers** in public areas
  - **Presentations** in churches
- Provide **culturally relevant services**
  - Bilingual staff and cultural liaisons are needed for effective communication
- Address **socioeconomic barriers**
  - Utilize **mobile clinics**

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The perception of early childhood screenings in the Latino community in Carver County has been muddled with miscommunication and tension over socioeconomic class, immigration status, and cultural differences..
2. Implementing more culturally-appropriate outreach projects is the first step to addressing this issue.

**The Carver County health and education systems must adapt to the increasingly diverse population that they serve. Immediate investment in these critical changes will build Carver County's resilience and benefit the community for many years to come.**

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*RCP is a program of the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). To learn more about RCP or this year's partnership with Carver County, visit [rcp.umn.edu](http://rcp.umn.edu).*

1. Chase, Richard. (2013). *School Readiness Report Card*. Retrieved from <http://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Publications/Studies/School%20Readiness%20Report%20Card/School%20Readiness%20Report%20Card%20-%20All%20Fact%20Sheets.pdf>