

## **“A mi nadie me ayudaba: Scholl Readiness Beliefs and Involvement of Latina Mothers and Preschoolers**

**Jazmin Landa, Kinesiology**

Research Mentor: Renee Baillargeon

### **Abstract**

Research has recently shown that the number of Latino children in the U.S. education system continues to increase. Additionally, Latino children are at a greater risk for not being prepared upon their entrance to school. Such unpreparedness puts Latino children at higher risk for facing lifetime challenges (e.g., school dropout, financial hardships). Scholars have also identified the inconsistency in defining school readiness. Most of the research on school readiness focuses on white, middle-class families and therefore such findings cannot be generalized to Latino families given its lack of culturally contextualized models. As a result, the purpose of this study was to examine Latino parents' perspectives on what school readiness means, as well as what they are doing to ensure that their child is ready for school. The study used a series of qualitative in-depth interviews with low-income, Latina mothers of preschool age children transitioning to kindergarten. Mothers were recruited from a Head Start program in a large Midwestern Northwest suburb. Using an interpretative approach, we analyzed the interviews as well as used the qualitative data analysis program, N-Vivo, to interpret the data. Using these strategies, we hope to have a better understanding of Latino parents' perspectives on school readiness. Such findings will allow us to suggest effective ways Latino parents can contribute to their children's academic success.