

# Play and Learning Strategies (PALS) for Spanish-speaking Latine families

Walking the line between standardization and adaptation in  
developing culturally and linguistically responsive  
parent-coaching interventions

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# Acknowledgements

## Principal Investigators

Susan Landry and Tricia Zucker

## Research Staff

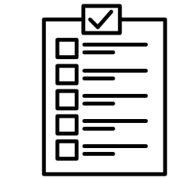
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# Background



Standardization

Adaptation



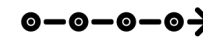
Different child ages  
and parent identities



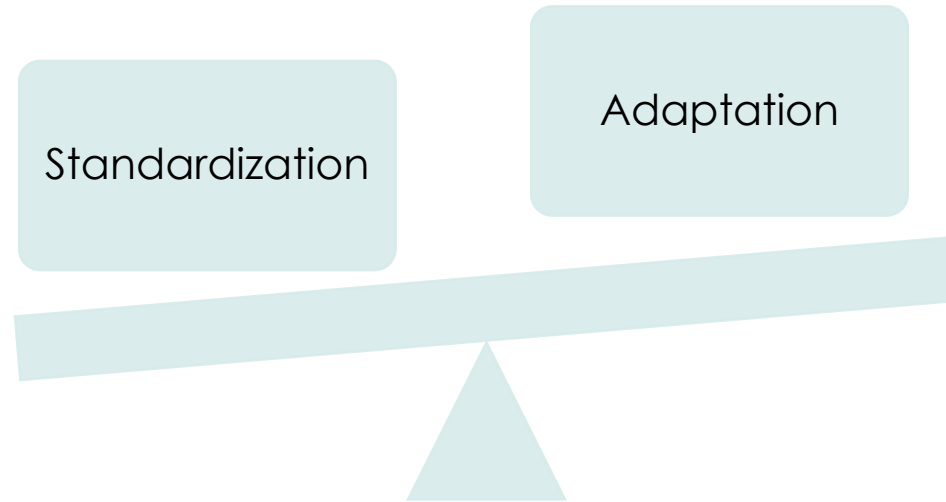
Different languages



Different regions and  
cultures



Changes in society  
and technology



# Roadmap

1. PALS overview
2. How is PALS responsive by design, and how has it been adapted in the past?
3. Is PALS in Spanish effective for Spanish-speaking Latine parents? (Subgroup analysis of archival data)
4. What initial lessons can we learn from the first cohort of DUAL PALS? (New data)
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# A Brief History of PALS



- Parent-coaching intervention
- Based on 16-year longitudinal study (Landry et al., 2001; Smith et al., 2006)
  - At-risk due to preterm birth and/or economic disadvantage
  - Specific behaviors (e.g., maintaining child interest, responsiveness, labeling) predicted child outcomes through early adolescence
- Consistent, positive outcomes for parent behaviors and child social-emotional and language skills (Guttentag et al., 2014; Landry et al., 2006, 2008, 2017).
- More research needed to
  - Understand whether effectiveness and engagement differ by parent background
  - Develop new adaptations tailored to parents' linguistic and cultural strengths (Larson et al., 2020).

# Key ingredients of PALS

1. Trusting relationship between parent and coach

2. Series of in-person or remote sessions

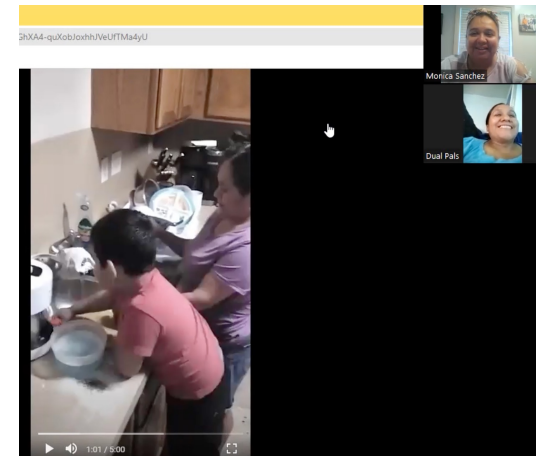
3. Connecting parents with resources beyond PALS

View videos of authentic parent-child interactions

Señales Positivas



Reflect on videos of own interactions with coach



# The PALS curriculum

## Three key areas

1. Responsiveness:  
How to respond in a **sensitive** and **contingent** manner
2. Guided Learning:  
How to provide appropriate **cognitive, language, and literacy** stimulation
3. Self-Regulation:  
How to help children manage their **emotions and behavior**

## Number of sessions varies by study

- 15 sessions in Landry et al., 2021
- 8-9 sessions in new DUAL study



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# How is PALS responsive by design?

- *Five Goals Interview* at initial home visit
  - Coach learns about parent, establishes rapport
- Coach call guides leave room for **authentic conversations**
  - Coach listens and draws out parents' reflections on what works with their child
  - Builds on parents' expertise and knowledge
- Flexible for parents
  - When/where/how to meet
  - Frequency of visits (weekly or biweekly)
  - Technology to access program (tablet, wifi hotspot if needed)
- Weekly PALS coach meetings
  - Support other coaches through challenges, specific families' needs
  - Reflect on own coaching practices

# How has PALS been adapted in the past?

- General adaptations based on parent feedback:
  - Spanish-language option
  - Shorter videos and sessions
  - New videos that better reflect parent identities
  - Remote sessions and remote coach visit options
- Past adaptations for specific populations:
  - Partnering with community mentors to connect parents to local resources and each other (Dieterich et al., 2006)
  - Mothers experiencing depression (Baggett et al., 2021)
  - Mothers with intellectual disabilities (in development)
- New adaptations for Spanish-speaking Latine families (DUAL project)
  - New session on **valuing and maintaining the home language**
  - New strategies for **supporting Spanish in bilingual contexts**

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# Method



- Secondary analysis of RCT testing the effects of PALS and a PK classroom intervention (Landry et al., 2021)
- Parents and their **3-5 yr old child** recruited through Head Start classrooms in greater Houston, TX area
- Parent-child dyads randomized to PALS or no PALS conditions
- Video observations of book reading and free play at pretest and posttest
- Bilingual coders rated targeted parent behaviors (e.g., contingent responsiveness, verbal scaffolding, scale of 1-5)
- For this analysis, we divide the sample into **3 groups** based on ethnicity and PALS language to determine if **group membership moderates PALS effect on targeted parent behaviors**

# Participants in each subgroup

	<b>Group 1: Latine parents w/ PALS Spanish (n=137)</b>	Group 2: Latine parents w/PALS English (n = 115)	Group 3: Non-Latine parents w/ PALS English (n = 138)
Child Hispanic/Latino (parent report)	<b>100%</b>	100%	0%
Child African-American (parent report)	<b>1%</b>	6%	93%
PALS in Spanish*	<b>100%</b>	0%	0%
Spanish is most-spoken home language	<b>88%</b>	31%	0%
Parent highest grade	<b>10.45 (3.22)</b>	12.22 (1.84)	13.43 (1.76)
Parent educated in US	<b>23%</b>	96%	84%
PALS condition (T vs. C)	<b>T=69, C=68</b>	T=63, C=52	T=64, C=74

\*Parents randomized to PALS chose Span or Eng coaching. A regression strategy (Peck, 2013) was used to determine which language *would* have been selected by control group parents

# Does group moderate PALS effect on parent *book reading* behaviors?

<b>Book Reading Scales</b>	Language Building Strategies	Book Comp. Techniques	Enthusiasm and Engagement	Contingent Responsiveness	Intrusiveness and Tone
Pretest rating	0.290*** (0.051)	0.377*** (0.051)	0.280*** (0.051)	0.184*** (0.048)	0.0776* (0.033)
PALS condition	<b>0.425*</b> (0.198)	<b>0.482*</b> (0.202)	<b>0.688***</b> (0.207)	<b>0.909***</b> (0.196)	<b>-0.141*</b> (0.058)
Group 1: Latine parents w/ PALS Spanish	-0.039 (0.197)	-0.049 (0.201)	0.316 (0.206)	<b>0.486*</b> (0.195)	<b>-0.140*</b> (0.058)
Group 2: Latine parents w/PALS English	-0.142 (0.216)	-0.080 (0.220)	0.111 (0.225)	<b>0.589**</b> (0.213)	<b>-0.133*</b> (0.063)
PALS x Group 1	0.202 (0.284)	0.358 (0.289)	0.0385 (0.297)	-0.183 (0.281)	0.118 (0.083)
PALS x Group 2	0.474 (0.300)	0.286 (0.305)	0.134 (0.313)	-0.487 (0.296)	<b>0.202*</b> (0.088)
Constant	1.446*** (0.176)	1.425*** (0.188)	2.236*** (0.205)	2.649*** (0.197)	1.068*** (0.055)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.145	0.188	0.161	0.149	0.042

Reference = Group 3: Non-Latine parents with PALS English

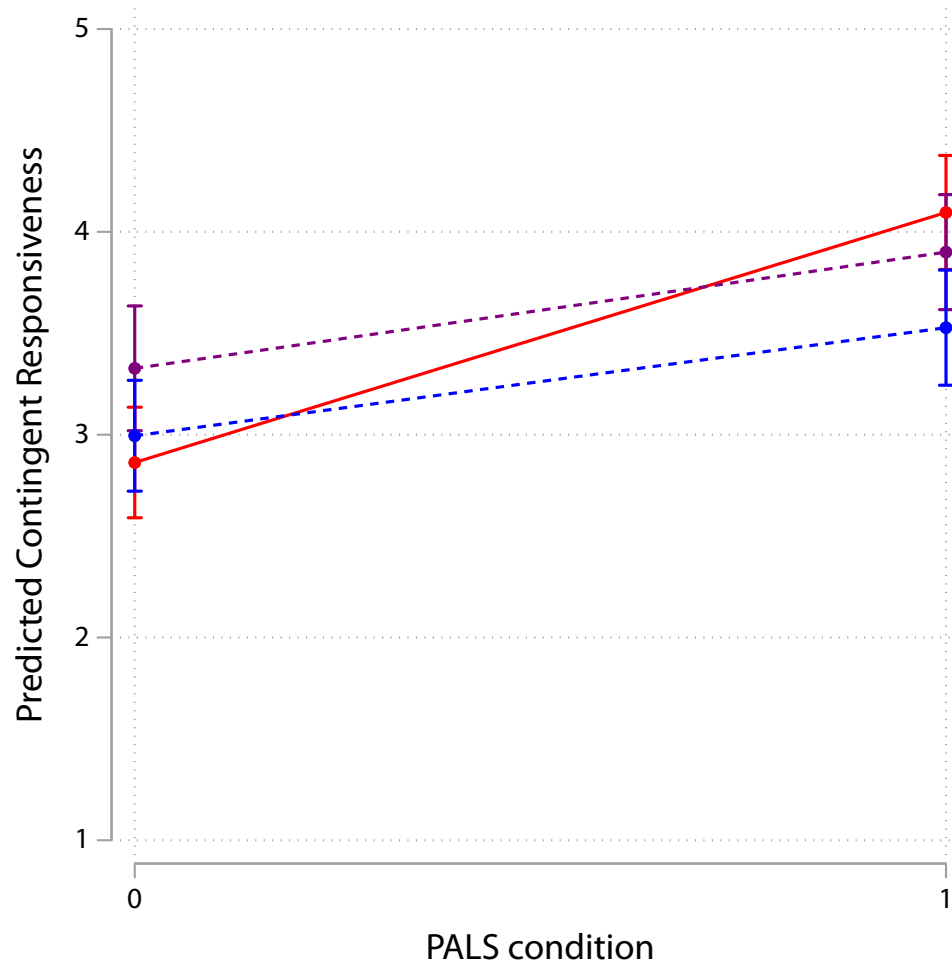
# Does group moderate PALS effect on parent *play* behaviors?

<b>Free Play Scales</b>	Contingent Responsive- ness	Verbal Content, Label Frequency	Verbal Content, Label Quality	Verbal Scaffold	Warmth
Pretest rating	0.333*** (0.0517)	0.410*** (0.042)	0.326*** (0.052)	0.318*** (0.053)	0.428*** (0.0483)
PALS condition	<b>0.505**</b> (0.193)	0.263 (0.155)	-0.035 (0.152)	<b>0.496*</b> (0.206)	<b>0.513**</b> (0.191)
Group 1: Latine parents w/ PALS Spanish	-0.139 (0.191)	<b>-0.366*</b> (0.154)	<b>-0.304*</b> (0.151)	-0.0868 (0.205)	-0.111 (0.189)
Group 2: Latine parents w/PALS English	0.326 (0.204)	-0.045 (0.165)	-0.148 (0.162)	0.0566 (0.219)	0.166 (0.202)
PALS x Group 1	<b>0.726**</b> (0.276)	<b>0.701**</b> (0.222)	<b>0.734***</b> (0.218)	<b>0.650*</b> (0.295)	<b>0.682*</b> (0.273)
PALS x Group 2	0.0676 (0.286)	0.110 (0.231)	0.377 (0.226)	0.0876 (0.306)	0.117 (0.283)
Constant	1.930*** (0.218)	2.494*** (0.207)	2.328*** (0.190)	1.208*** (0.178)	1.726*** (0.216)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.210	0.275	0.148	0.180	0.257

Reference = Group 3: Non-Latine parents with PALS English



# In parents' play behaviors, effect of PALS was significantly higher for Latine parents who received PALS in Spanish



Group 1: Latine parents w/ PALS Spanish

Group 2: Latine parents w/PALS English

Group 3: Non-Latine parents with PALS English

Next steps:

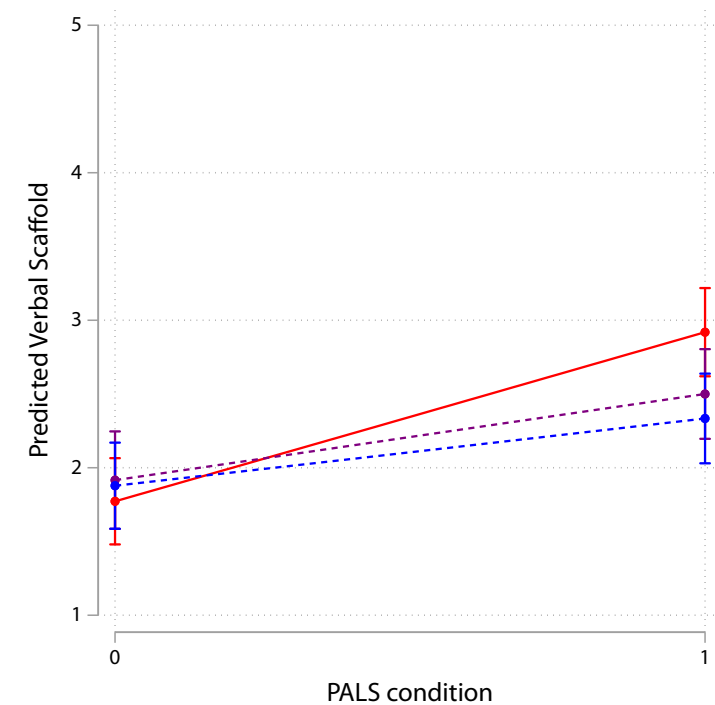
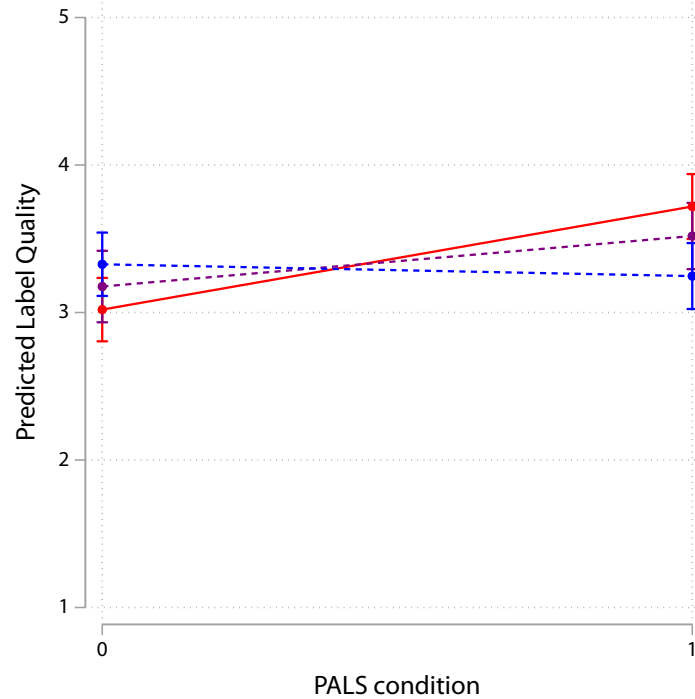
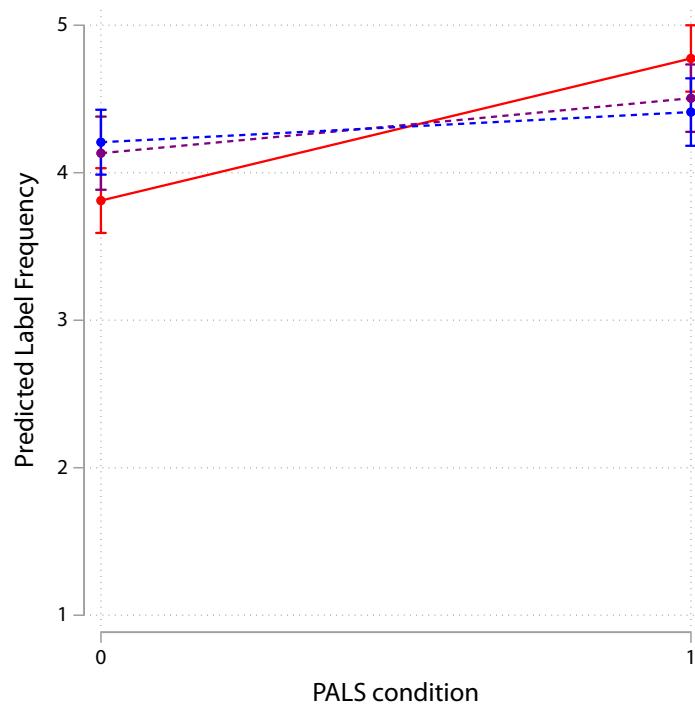
- What is driving these differences?
- How can we ensure that PALS is engaging and effective for parents of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds?
- Are there differential effects on child outcomes in each language?

# In parents' play behaviors, effect of PALS was significantly higher for Latine parents who received PALS in Spanish

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# What initial lessons can we learn from DUAL PALS?

- New RCT testing the effects of PALS and a PK classroom intervention in bilingual PK classrooms in Houston
- Cohort 1: 52 families (T=27, C=25), all speak Spanish at home
- Retention challenges:
  - 30% attrited before started PALS, the rest completed **5.1** sessions on average
- Data sources: Five goals interview (n = 10), exit interview (n = 10)

Name of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Coach: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## FIVE GOALS INTERVIEW

### GOAL ONE: Learn about a typical 24 hour period

*¡hora hablaremos más acerca de cómo funcionan las cosas para usted y su niño/a se despierta?*  
palabras, ¿cómo es un día típico para usted? Por ejemplo, ¿usualmente que

How we're going to talk about how things work for you and your child at home. In other words, what is a typical day like for you? For example, what happens in the morning?

Child ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questionario para Padres al Completar el Programa de DUAL

Vos gustaría saber su opinión sobre el programa de DUAL para mejorarla para futuros padres. Tengo algunas preguntas y me gustaría que conteste honestamente para reafirmar el programa para familias.

1. Al recordar todas las sesiones PALS, comenzando con "Leer las Señales de los niños," ¿Cuáles de las estrategias de PALS han sido de mayor ayuda para usted?

## 3 things that children need most

- Love, “para no sentirse solos” (x 5)
- Involved parents (**involucrados** y **pendientes**), attention (x 4)
- To go to school, **educación** (x 3)
- To do what they like, to be children (x 2)
- Good environment at home and school (no stress)
- To learn right from wrong
- Respect from their parents
- To be played with
- To be taken places
- To be read to
- Encouragement
- Communication
- Understanding
- Confidence
- Discipline
- Happiness
- Support
- Health

“I really enjoyed the program and working with you, **it really helped me be more sensitive and talk more with [my child]**. I know it was difficult to get me to talk more but I got really comfortable with you and enjoyed it.”

## Most helpful PALS strategies

- Signals and responding (x 7)
  - “Responding to their emotions, reading signals that I didn’t notice before.”
- Guiding behavior (x 5)
  - “Before I yelled, and now I will be different.”
- All the strategies (x 3)
  - “All of them, I have practices the lessons with all my children, even the adults.”
- Verbal scaffolding
  - “Linking objects and actions”

## What can we change?

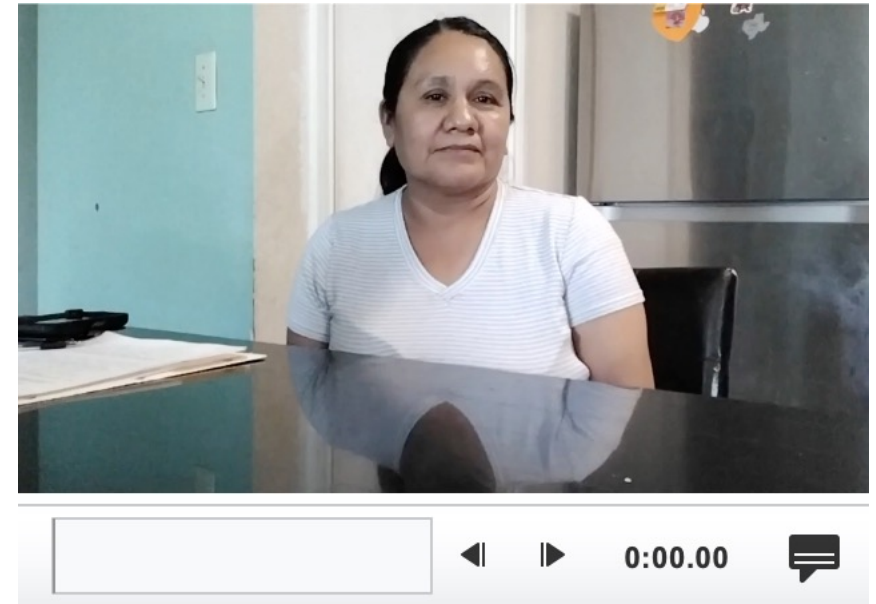
- Don’t change anything (x 7)
- Include more videos of older children (x 1)
- Promote it more on social media (x 1)
- Provide more tech support (x 1)

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# Centering community voices and perspectives in PALS

- **Coaches** know parents well and hear their feedback directly
  - **Better systems** for recording this
  - Ensuring it **informs future adaptations** for specific communities
- PALS coaches often share aspects of their identity with PALS parents and play an important role in shaping PALS for their communities
- Need to provide multiple ways/venues for parents to share feedback
- Need better ways to **continue collaborating with PALS parents** to design future adaptations



# Thank you!

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