



NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER ON  
HISPANIC  
CHILDREN  
& FAMILIES

# Protective and Risk Factors in Low-Income Hispanic Children's Early Home Environments

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Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison

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# 1 in 4 of all U.S. children are Hispanic



Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2015). America's children: Key national indicators of well-being, 2015, Table POP3. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

# Roughly 1 in 3 Hispanic children live in poverty



Source: DeNavas-Walt, C., & Proctor, B.D. (2015). Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014, Table B-2, Current Population Reports, P60-252. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

# Vast majority of Hispanic children are U.S.-born



Source: Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2015). America's children: Key national indicators of well-being, 2015, Table POP3. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

# 1 in 4 Hispanic children have a parent who lacks legal status



Source: Analysis by researchers at the National Research Center for Hispanic Children & Families

# Conundrum from a Hispanic child lens

Low-income Hispanic children:

- Lag behind their peers in cognitive and academic skills.
  - Have social skills that are at par or exceed those of their peers.
  - Experience steeper improvements in cognitive skills, catching up (and at times) exceeding their African American peers.
- What are the contributing family life and home environment ingredients?

For better policy and practice, we need better overarching frameworks

Deepen our understanding of racial/ethnic differences by considering:

- Economic investment
- Family stress
- Socio-cultural
- Developmental cascades
- Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children

\*Actively incorporating role of mothers and fathers

# Lives of Hispanic children and families

Important role of generating descriptive facts

What we've learned from existing data:

- Survey of Income and Program Participation
- American Time Use Survey
- National Survey on Family Growth
- Early Childhood Longitudinal Program – Birth Cohort
- Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing



# Our presentation today

Family  
demographic  
portraits

Household  
economic  
circumstances

Time use

Child care

Maternal well-  
being

Parenting

Home  
environment

Cognitive  
and social  
skills

By Hispanic ethnicity

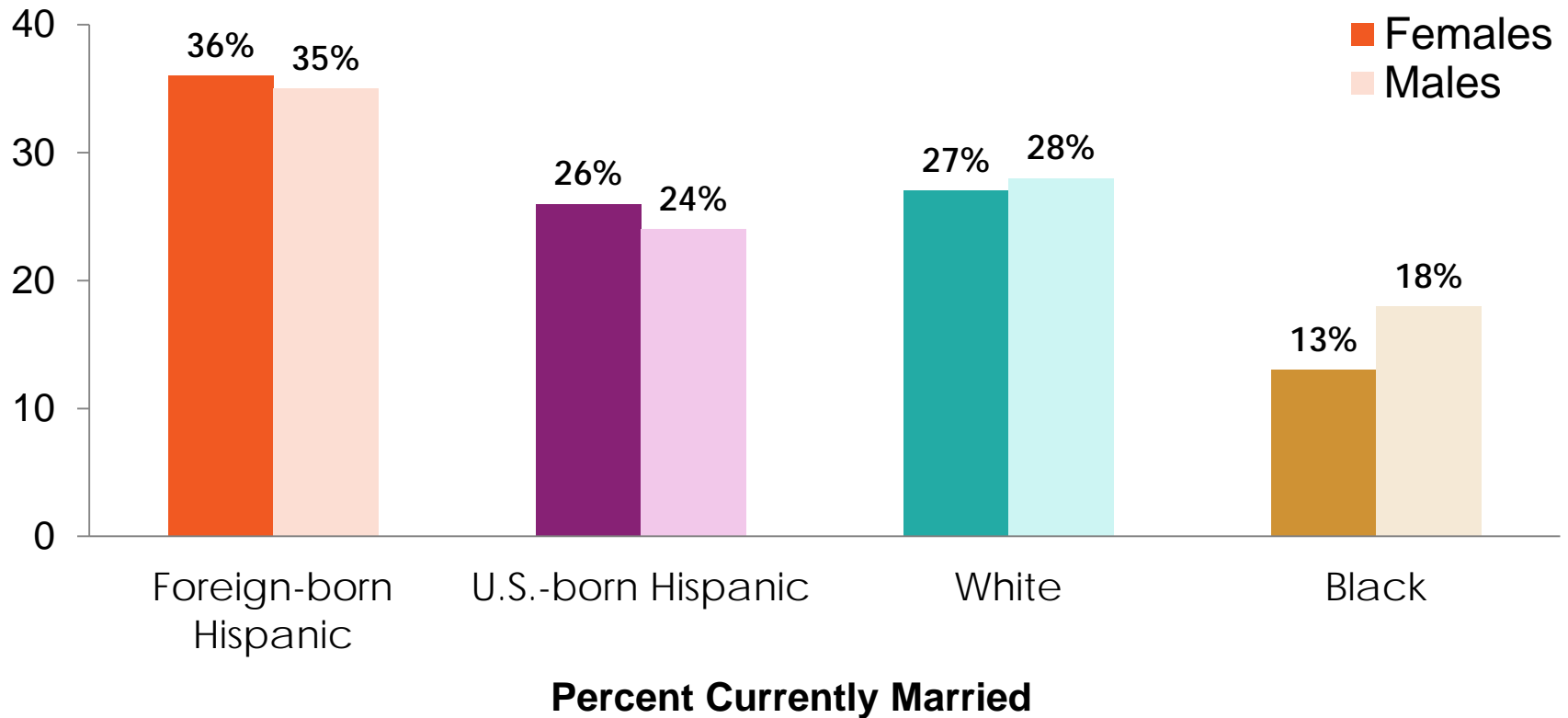
# Family Portrait



# Families and Households

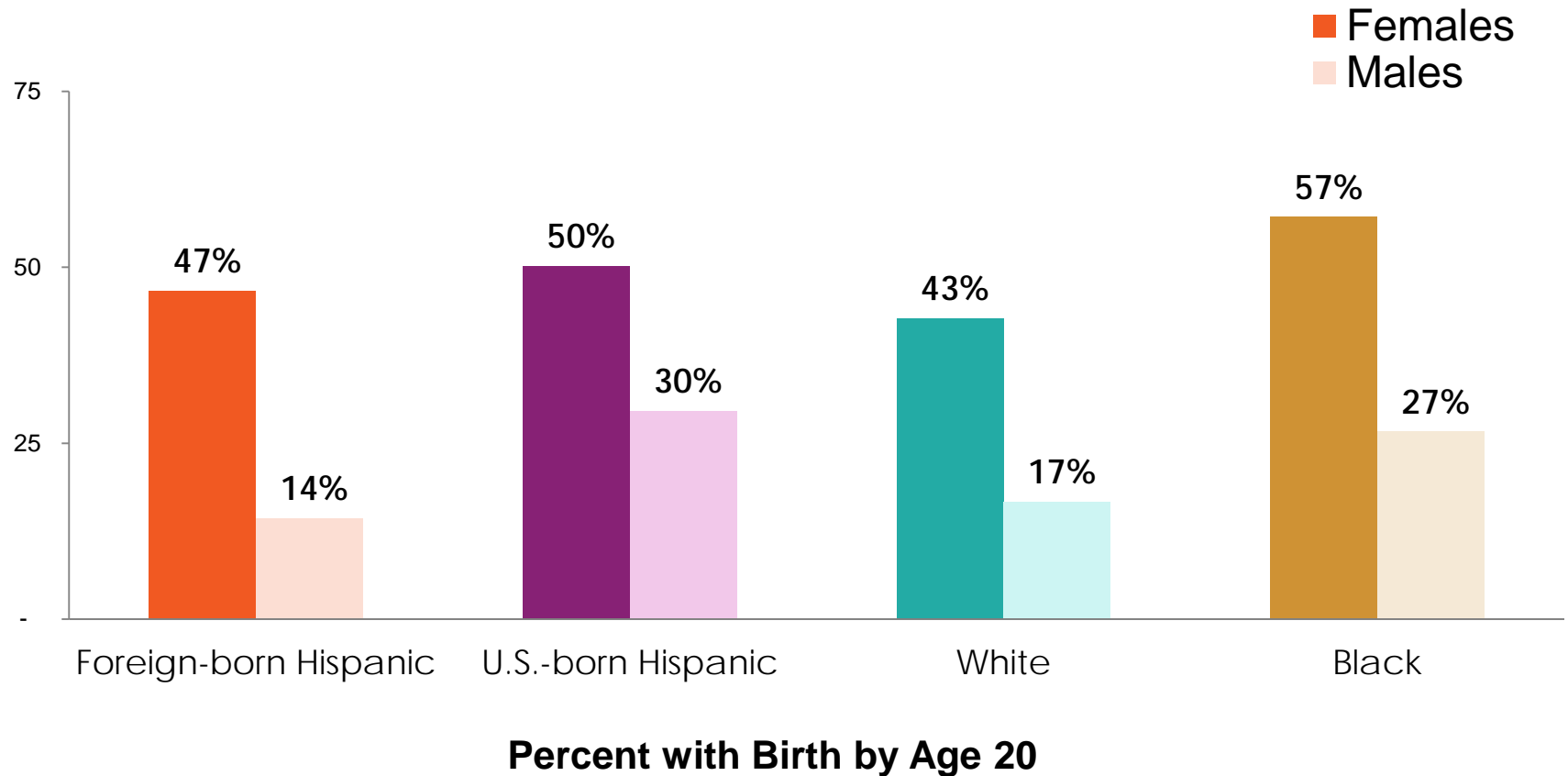
- Low-income Hispanic families and households, especially those with immigrant parents, are advantaged in a number of ways
- Family and economic stability:
  - High levels of employment
  - Stable two-parent families
  - High levels of family functioning
- Divergent family experiences between U.S.-born and foreign-born Hispanic families

# Low-income, foreign-born Hispanics are more likely to be married than any other group



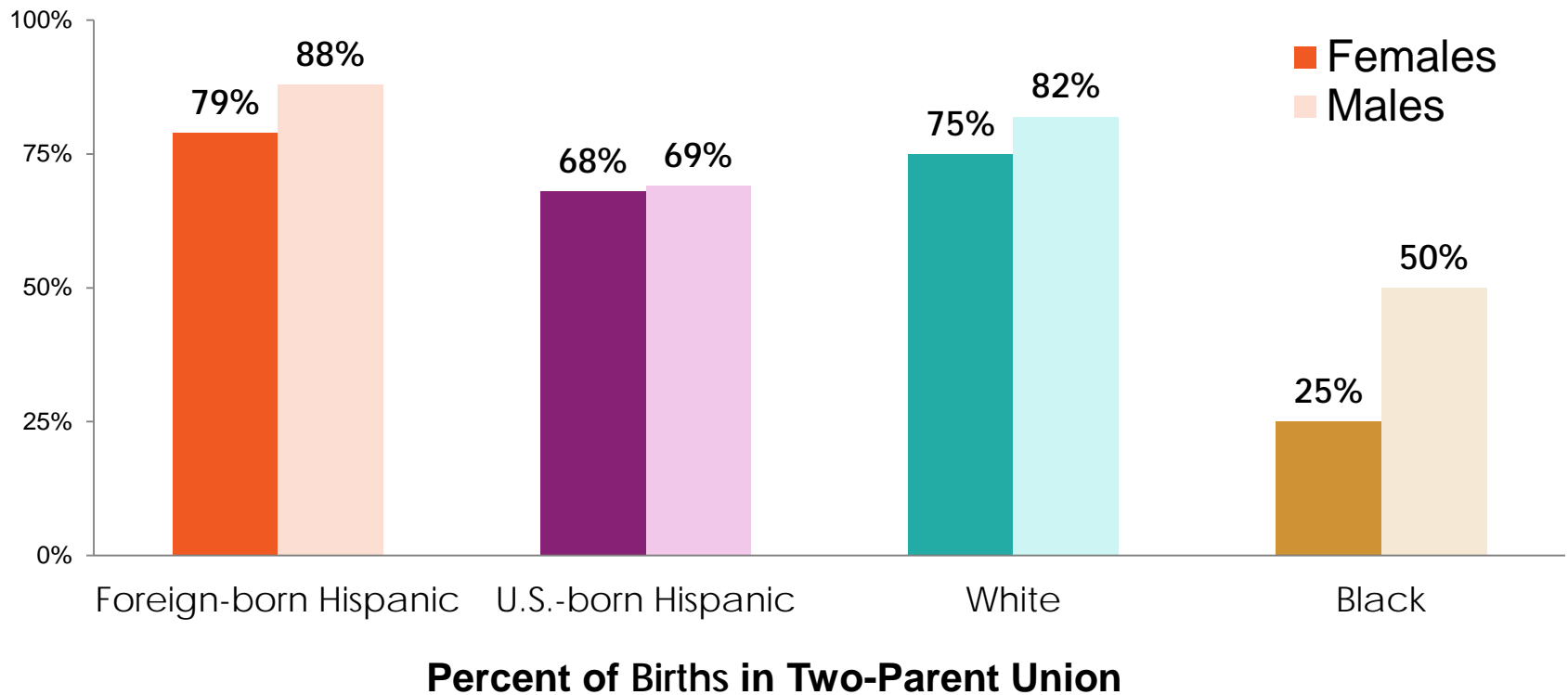
Source: National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), 2006-2010

# Roughly half of low-income Hispanic women have had a birth by age 20



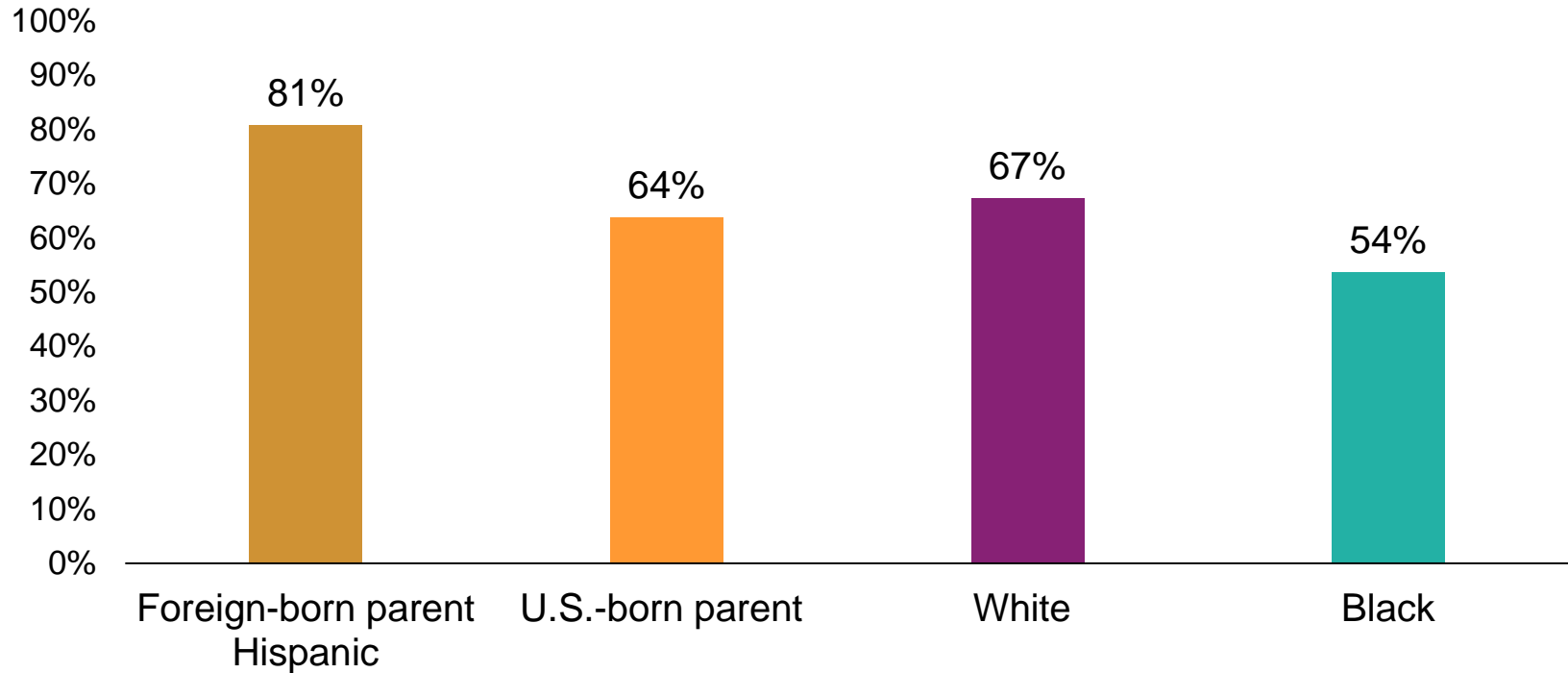
Source: National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), 2006-2010

# Most births to low-income Hispanic men and women occur in a two-parent union



Source: National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), 2006-2010

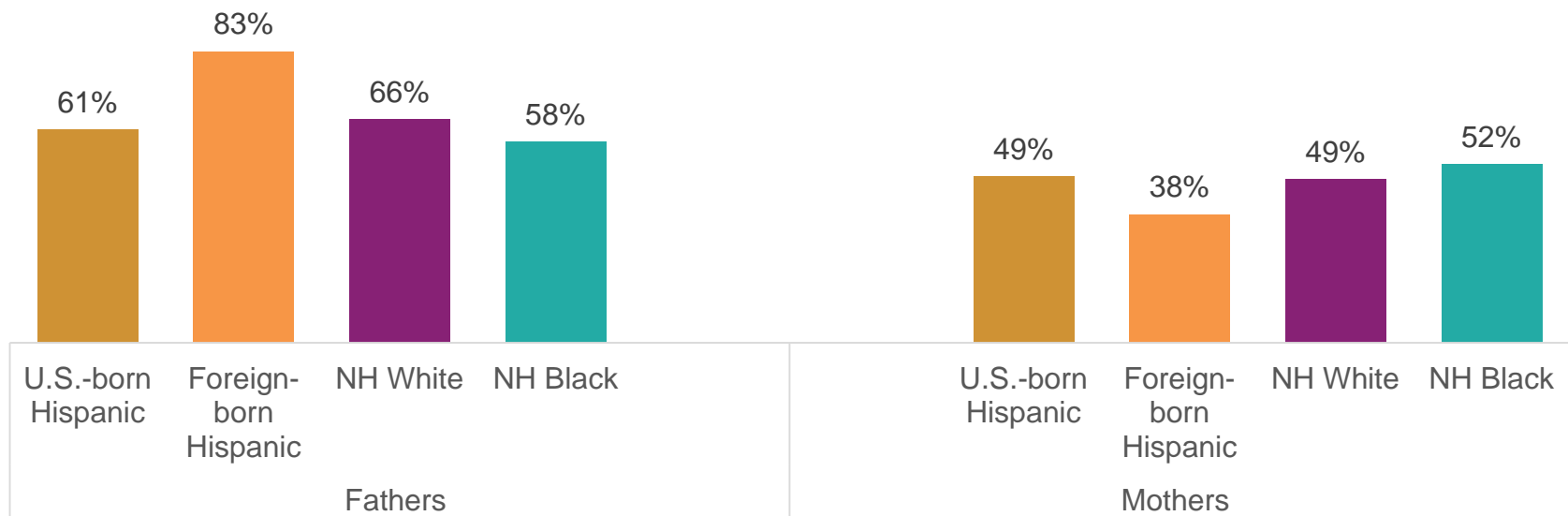
# Majority of low-income Hispanic children live with an employed adult



**Percent of Children Living with Employed Adult**

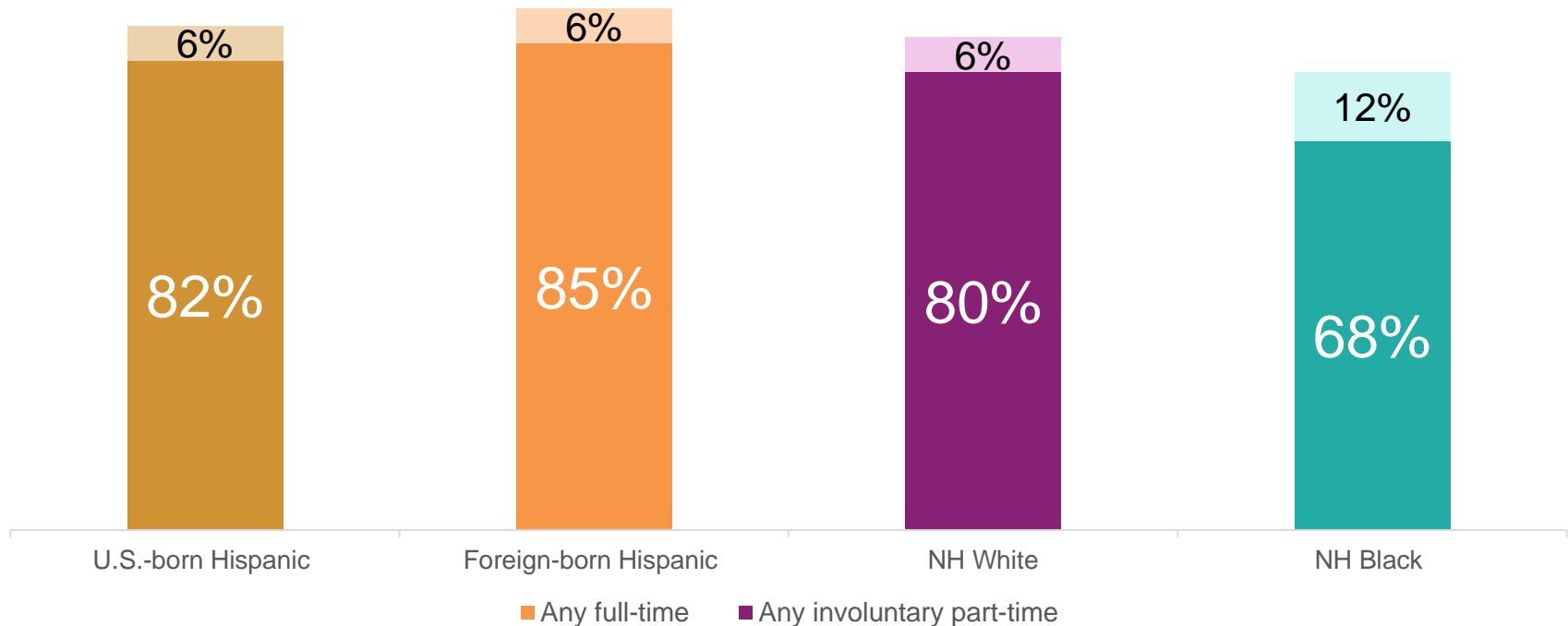
# Most low-income **fathers** are employed. Less than half of low-income **mothers** are employed.

Percent of low-income parents of children under the age of 18 in the United States who are employed, by gender, SIPP (2014)



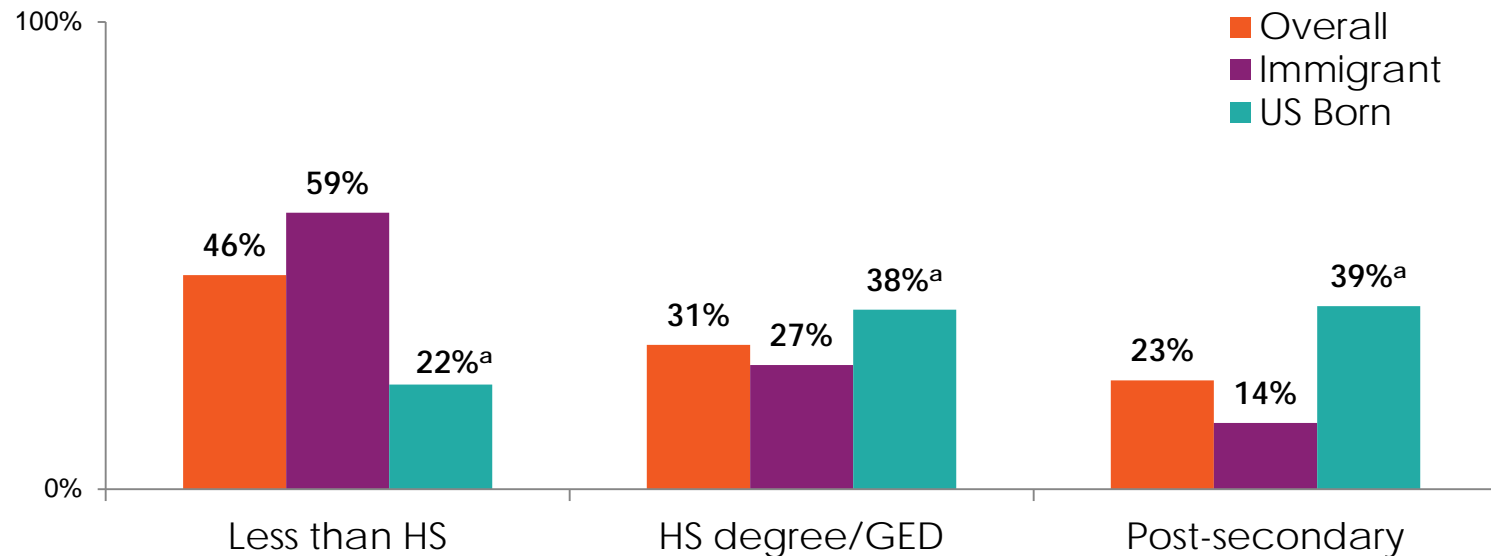


# Most employed low-income Hispanic fathers have a full-time job.



Employment status of low-income fathers of children under the age of 18 in the United States, SIPP (2014)

# High levels of employment is coupled with low levels of education



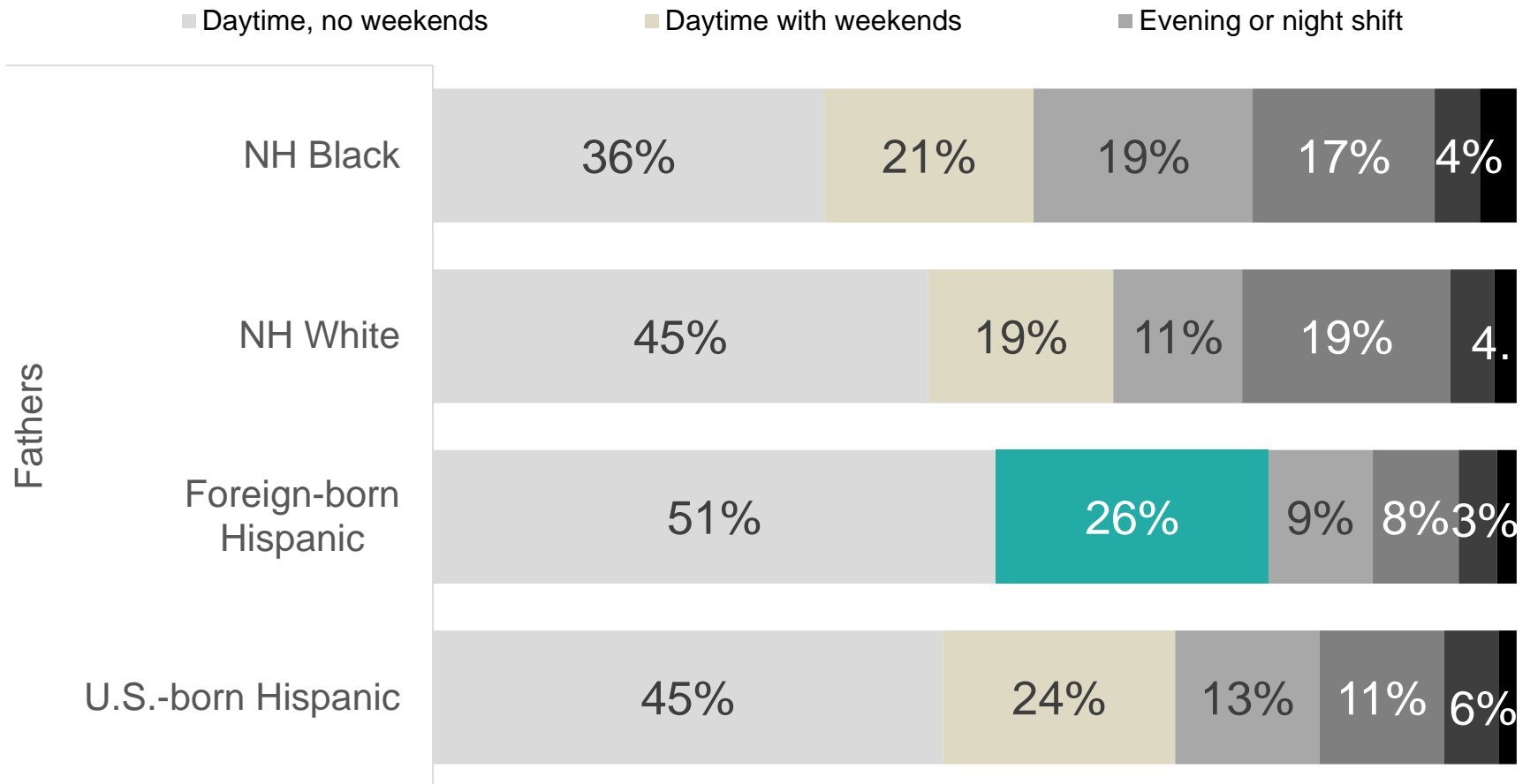
## Hispanic fathers' educational attainment by nativity status, 2006-2010

Source: National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), 2006-2010

a. Indicates significant differences between immigrant and non-immigrant Hispanic fathers at the  $p=.05$  level or below.

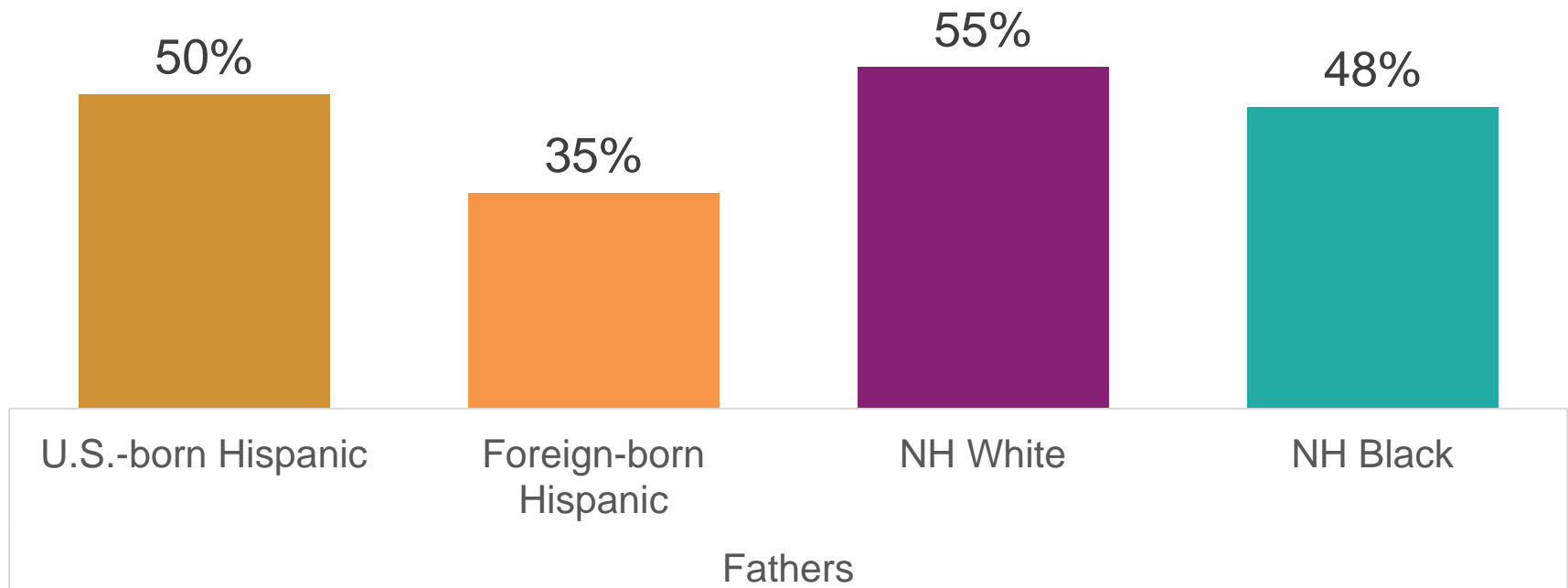
# One-quarter of low-income foreign-born Hispanic fathers work daytime with weekend schedules.

Work schedules of low-income fathers of children under the age of 18 in the United States, SIPP (2014)



# Just a third of low-income foreign-born Hispanic fathers have access to employer-sponsored health insurance.

Access to employer-sponsored health insurance benefits for low-income fathers of children under the age of 18 in the United States, SIPP (2014)



# Summary

- Low-income Hispanic families possess many characteristics that are associated with adult and child wellbeing
  - High levels of two-parent, stable families
  - Especially among foreign-born
- High levels of employment and...
  - Low levels of education
  - Jobs may not be ideal for family life
  - Gender differences
- Nativity matters

# Economic Stability, Time Use, & Child Care



# Highlights

- Low income but stable.
- Source of income stability is earnings, primarily from fathers.
- Lower take-up of public benefits with lack of knowledge as one barrier, but also immigration concerns. Thus, less likely than peers to extract benefits from stabilizing aspect of monthly public benefits.
- Father's time spent with children is traded with time spent in paid work (vs. leisure or other tasks).
- Nonparental care use among 3-5 year low income Hispanic children is comparable to white peers, though lower than Black peers.

# The gap between rich and poor is much larger among children in Hispanic HHs than children in nonHispanic HHs

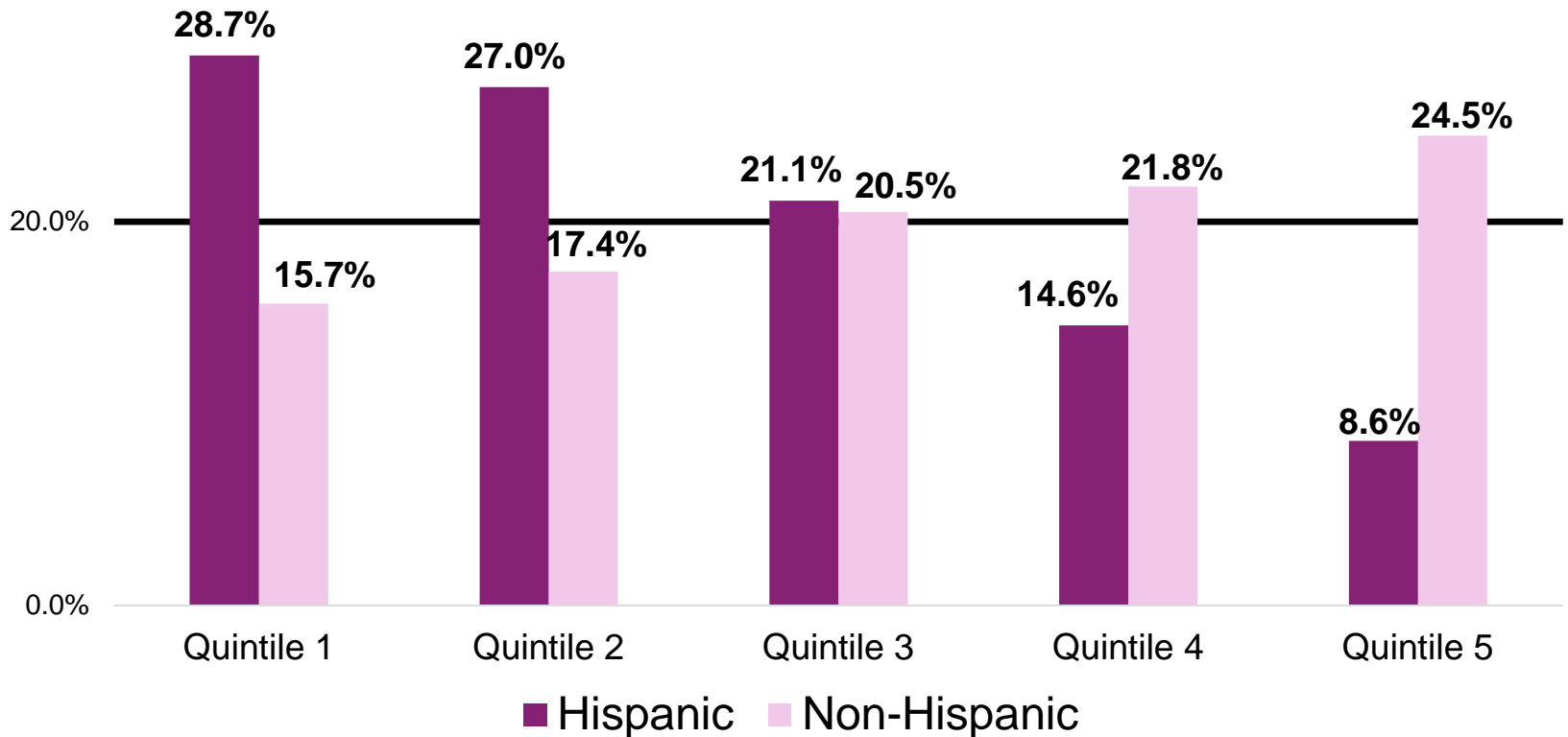


Figure 1. Household Income Quintile Distribution of Children, SIPP 2004, by Hispanic Ethnicity



Income instability is higher among all low-income HHs vs. high income. But, Hispanic low-income HHs are more income stable than other low-income HHs

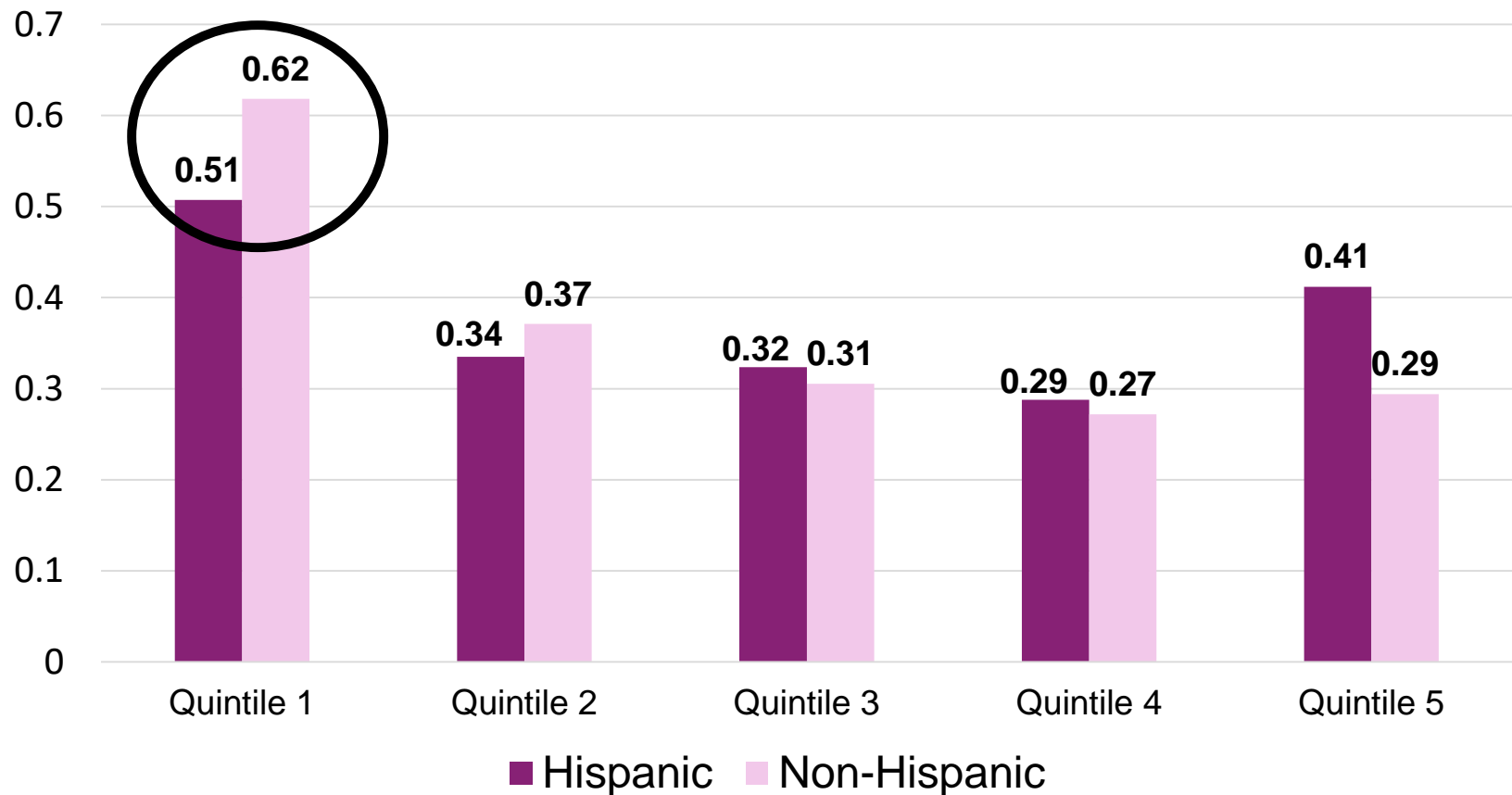


Figure 2. CV of households with Children, SIPP 2004, by Hispanic Ethnicity and Income Quintile

# Children in low income black HHs benefit the most from the income stabilizing influence of social assistance

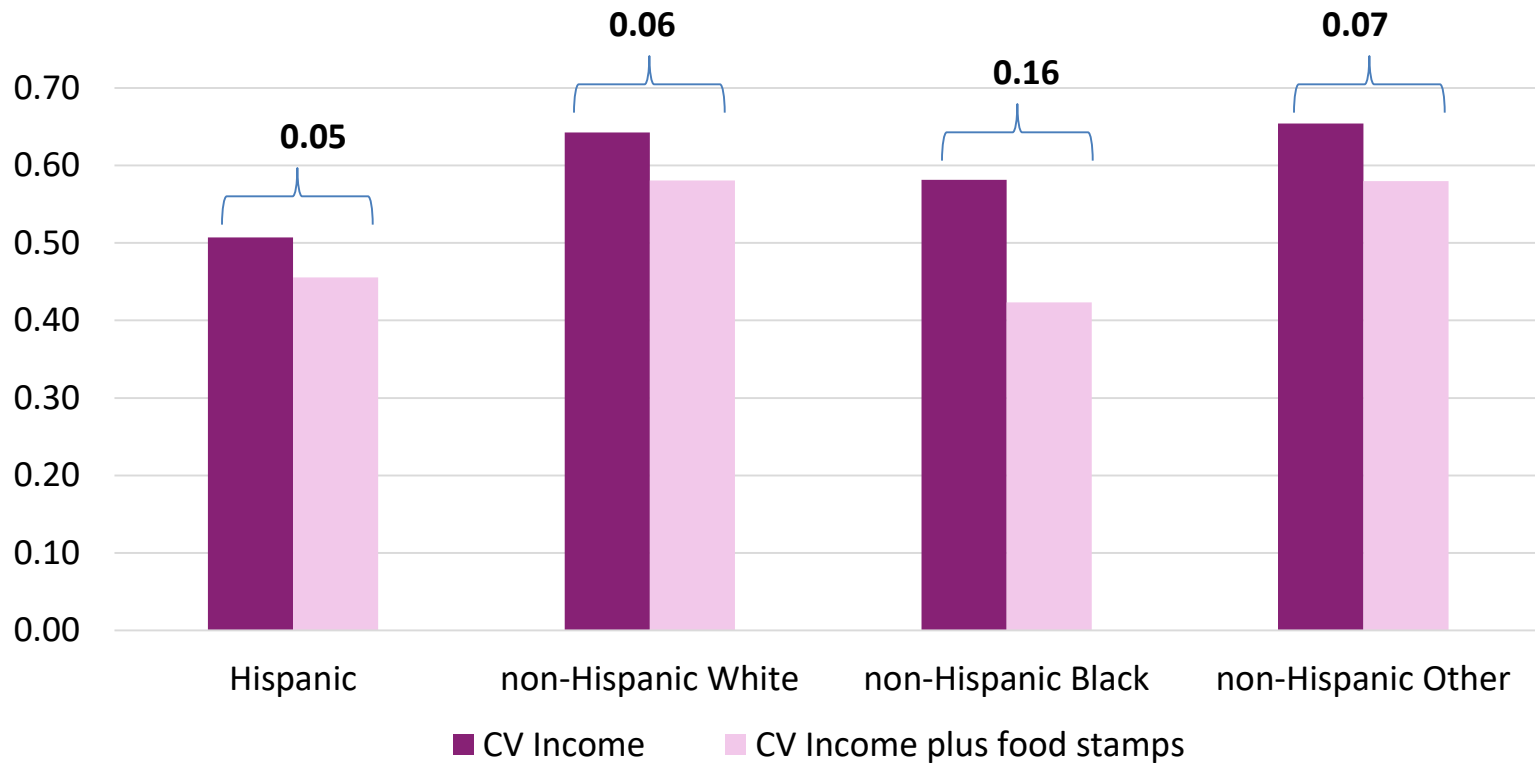


Figure 3. CV of income vs. income plus cash value of food stamps, among HHs in quintile 1

# Higher earned income stability among Hispanic children

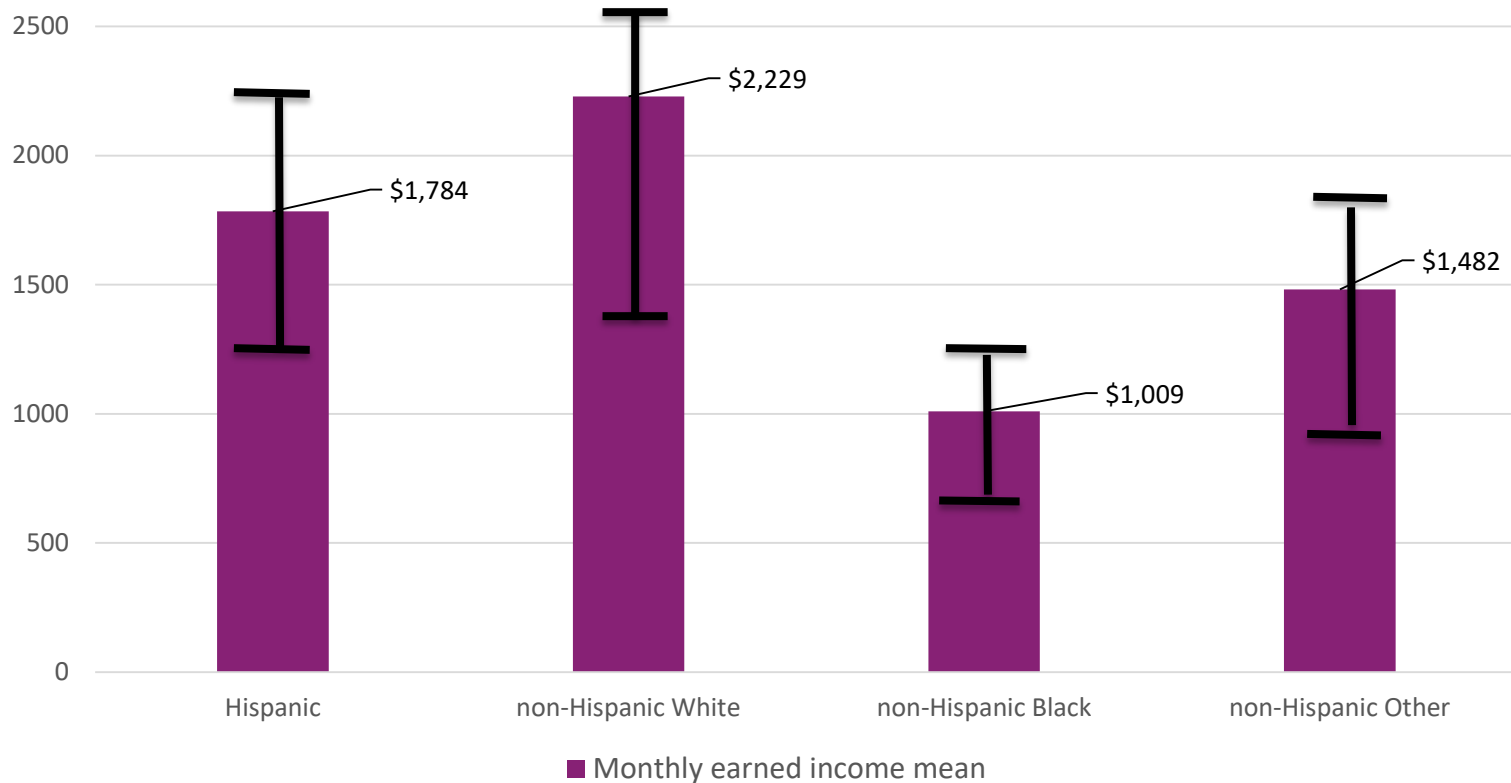
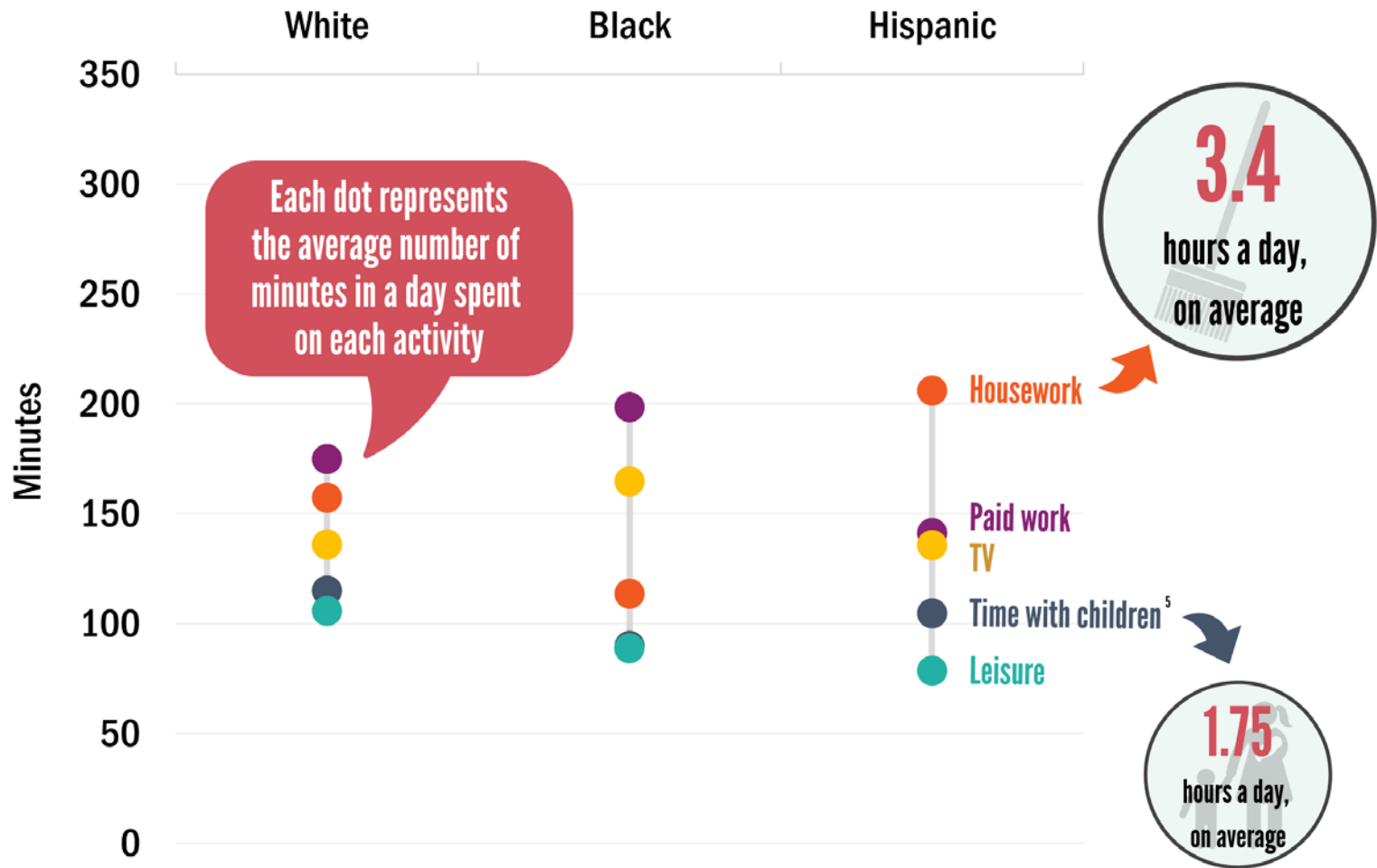


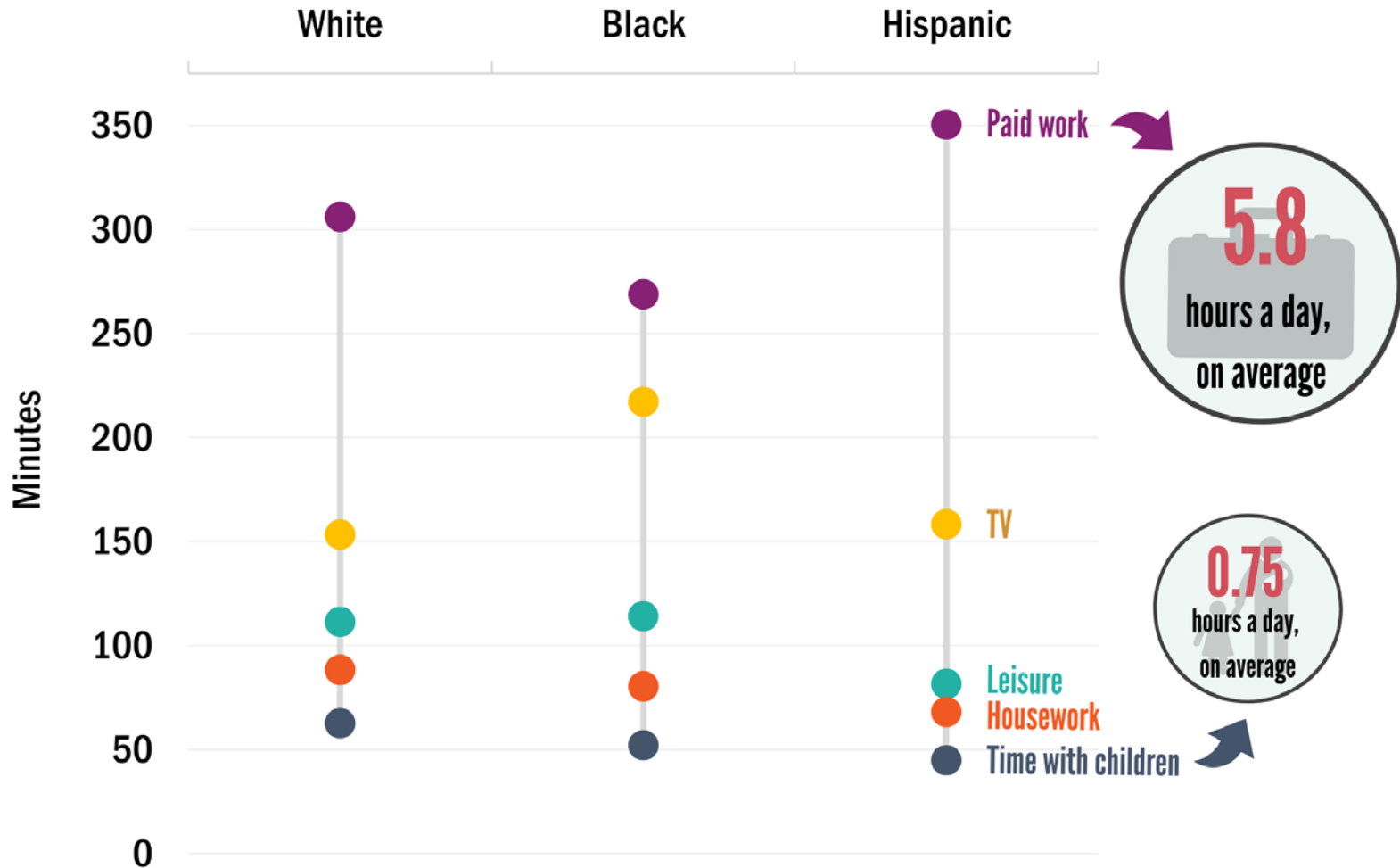
Figure 4. Monthly earnings mean and monthly earnings standard deviation, among HHs in quintile 1

Low-income Hispanic mothers spent substantially more time on **housework** and less time on **paid work**<sup>4</sup> or **leisure** than low-income white or black mothers.



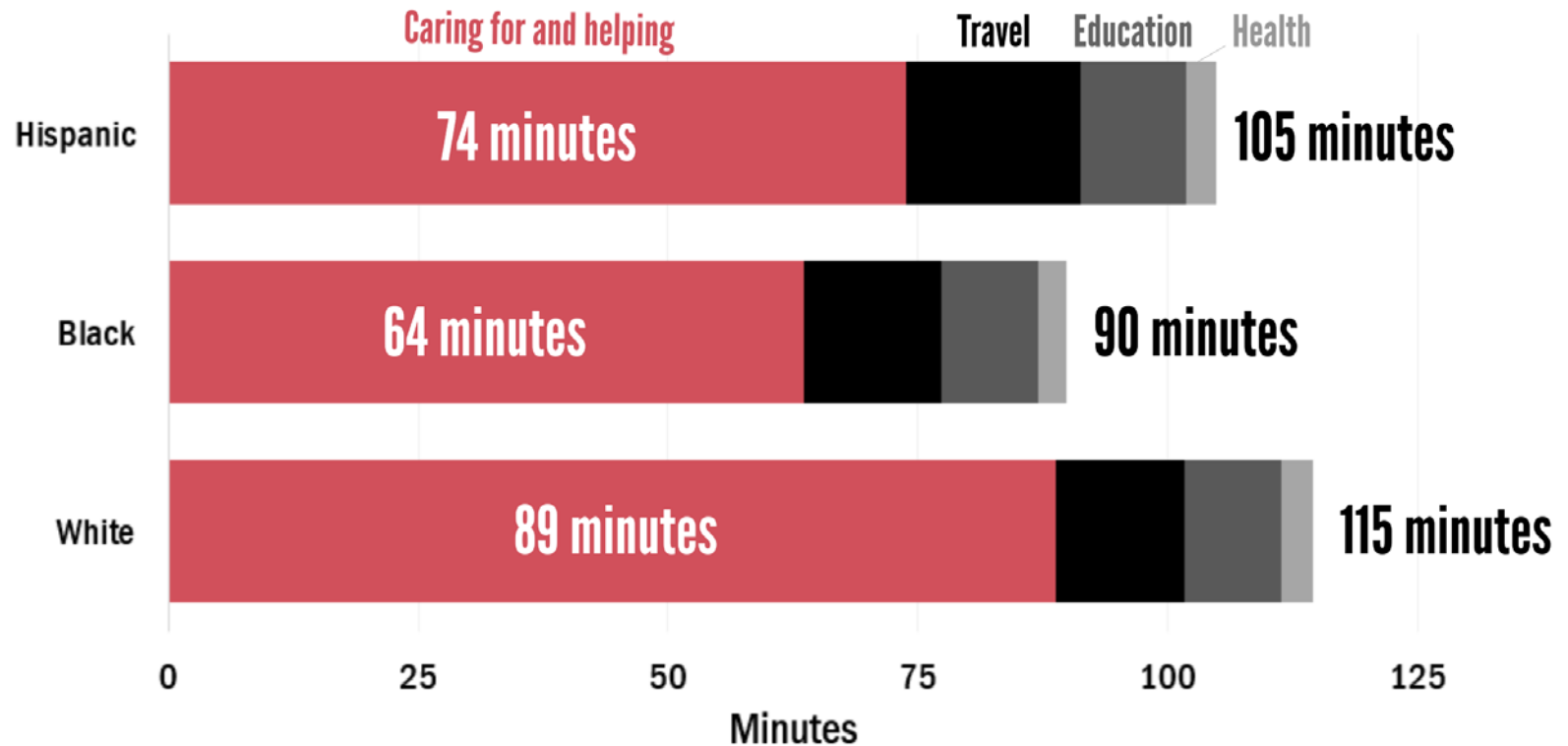
Source: 2003-2013 American Time Use Survey

Low-income Hispanic fathers spent substantially more time on **paid work** and less time on **housework** or **leisure** than low-income white or black fathers.



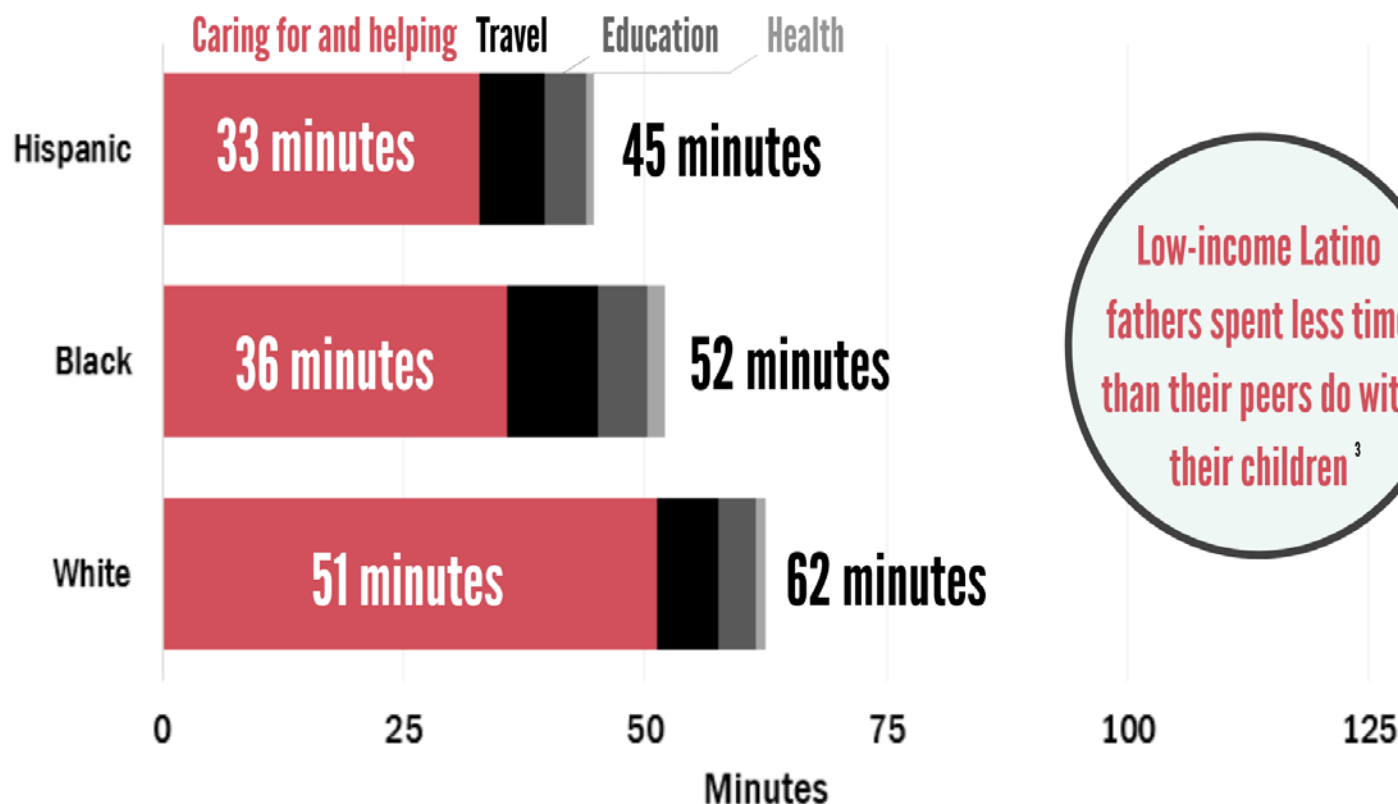
Source: 2003-2013 American Time Use Survey

In an average day, low-income Hispanic mothers spent nearly 2 hours (105 minutes) with their children. Of that time, roughly 74 minutes were spent **caring for and helping** their children.



Source: 2003-2013 American Time Use Survey

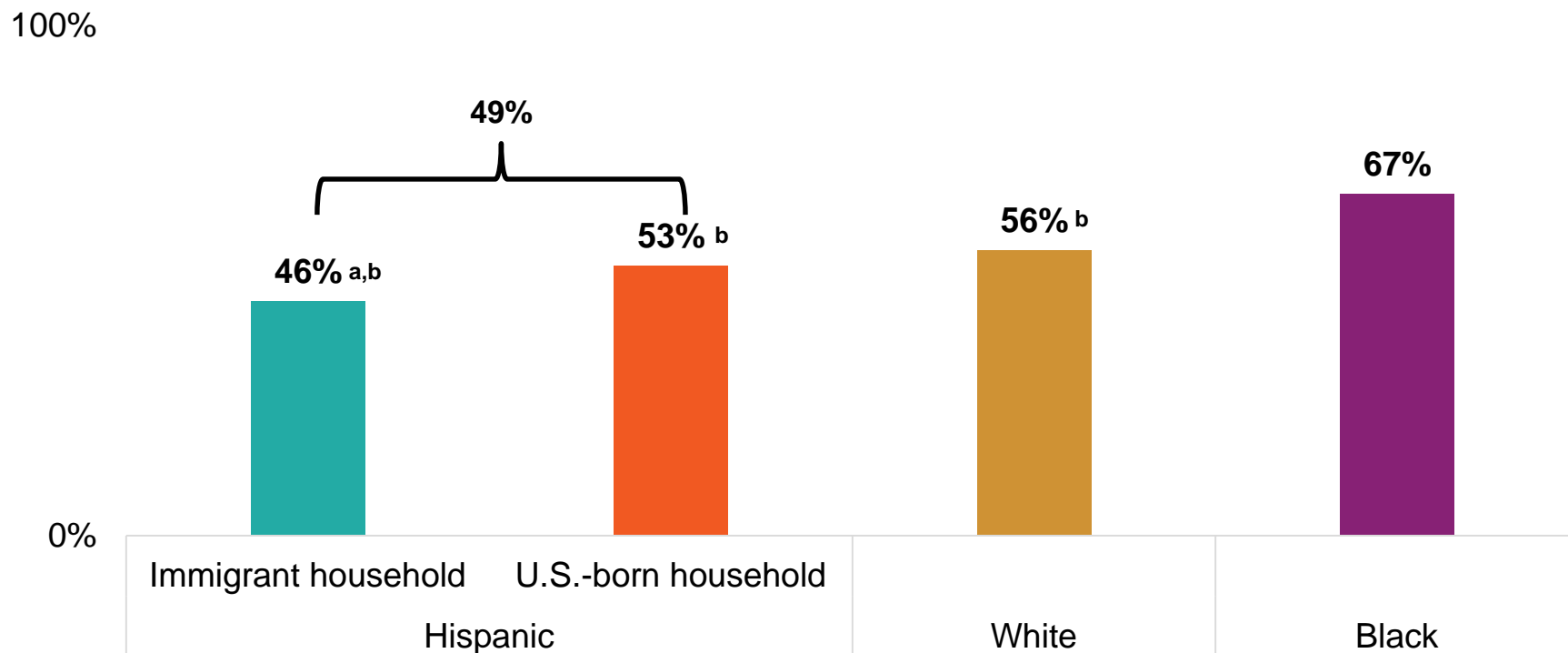
In an average day, low-income Hispanic fathers spent 45 minutes with their children. Of that time, roughly 33 minutes were spent **caring for and helping** their children.



Low-income Latino fathers spent less time than their peers do with their children<sup>3</sup>

Source: 2003-2013 American Time Use Survey

# Approximately half of young Hispanic children in low-income households are in ECE arrangements



**Use of any nonparental care for low-income children (ages 0-5),  
by household nativity and race/ethnicity, NSECE 2012**

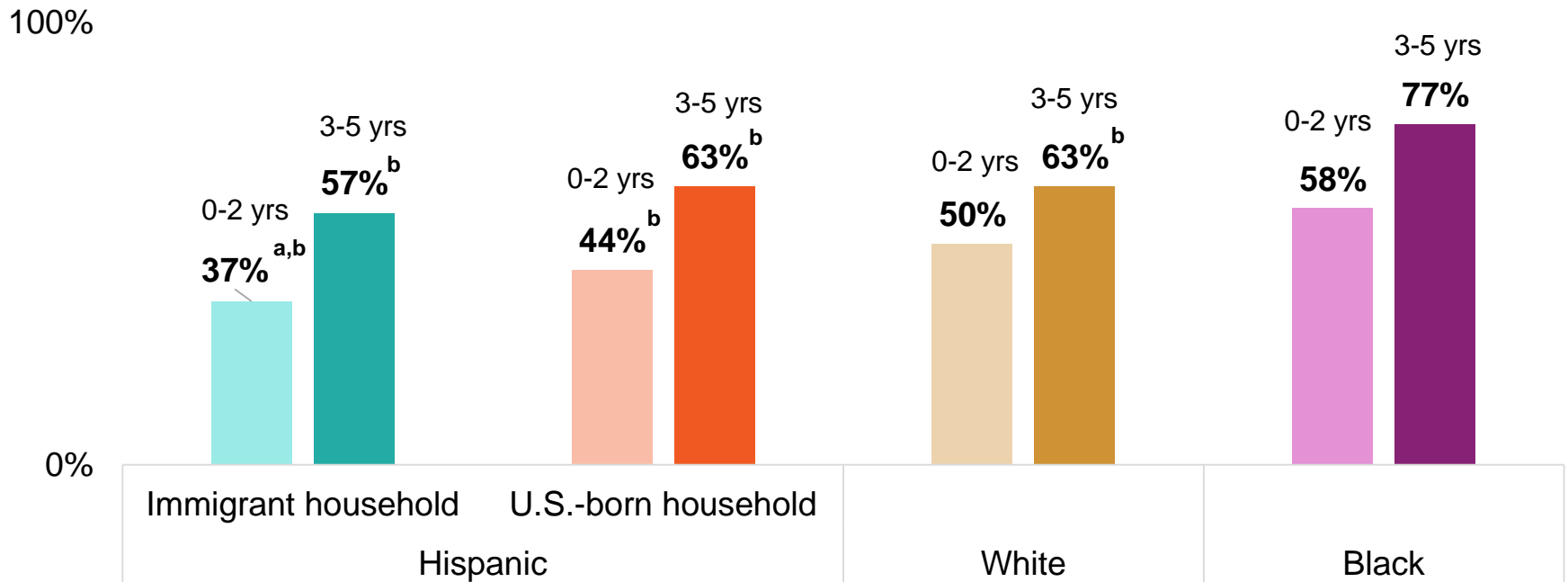
Source: 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education

<sup>a</sup> Difference relative to white children is significant ( $p < .05$ )

<sup>b</sup> Difference relative to black children is significant ( $p < .05$ )



# ECE participation gaps by race/ethnicity are smaller for preschoolers than infants and toddlers



**Use of any nonparental care for low-income children, by child age, household nativity and race/ethnicity, NSECE 2012**

Source: 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education

<sup>a</sup> Difference relative to white children is significant (p < .05)

<sup>b</sup> Difference relative to black children is significant (p < .05)

# Summary

## Income and Income Instability

- Hispanic children concentrated in lower income groups
- Despite higher income instability among poorest groups overall, lowest-income Hispanic children are more income-stable than lowest-income non-Hispanic children

## No evidence of less time spent with children compared to peers

- Residential low-income Hispanic mothers spend more time with children than low-income black mothers
- Time spent with children converges among low-income fathers by race/ethnicity

Hispanic preschoolers appear to be accessing nonparental care arrangements at similar levels as peers

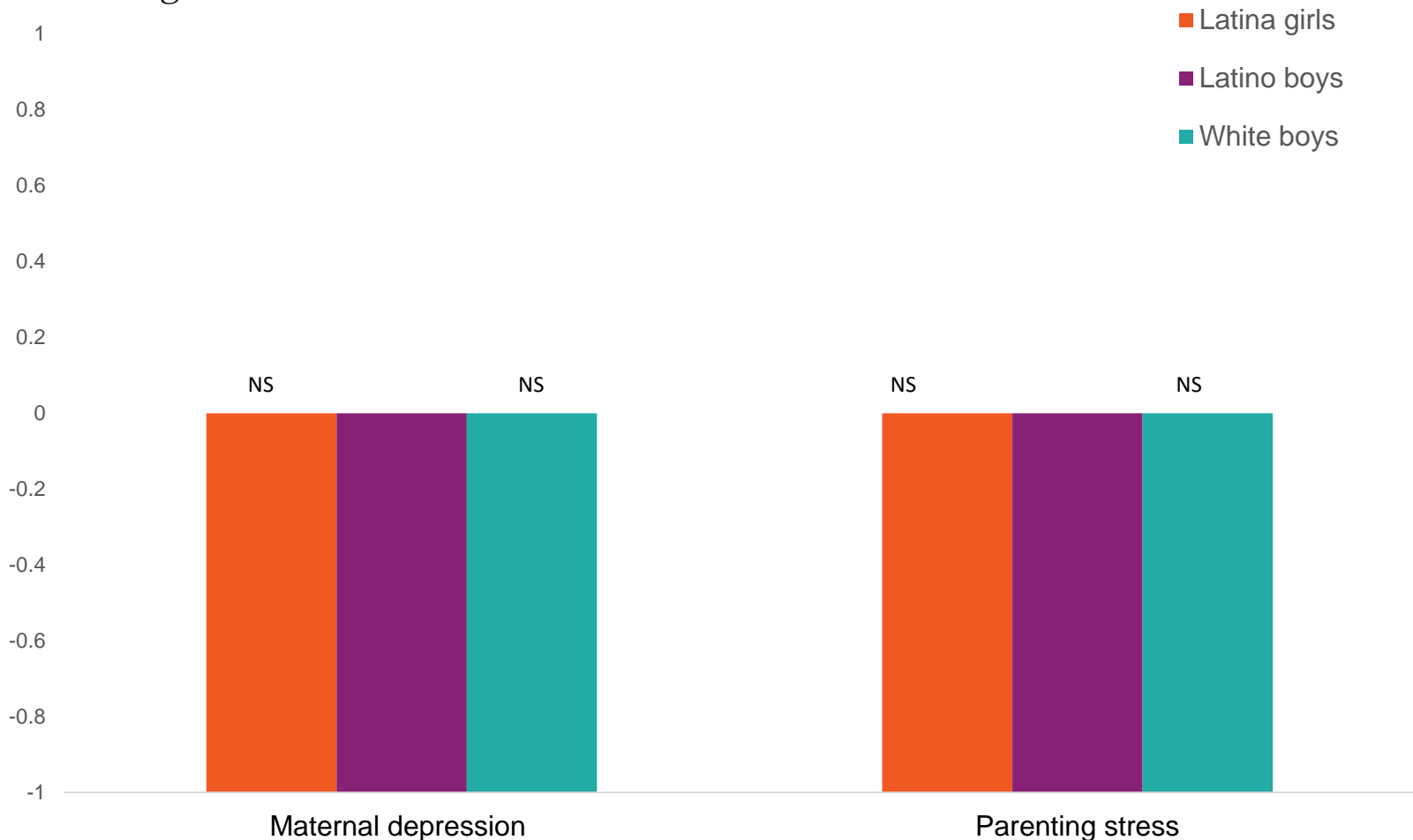
# Maternal well-being



# Latino parents and their children

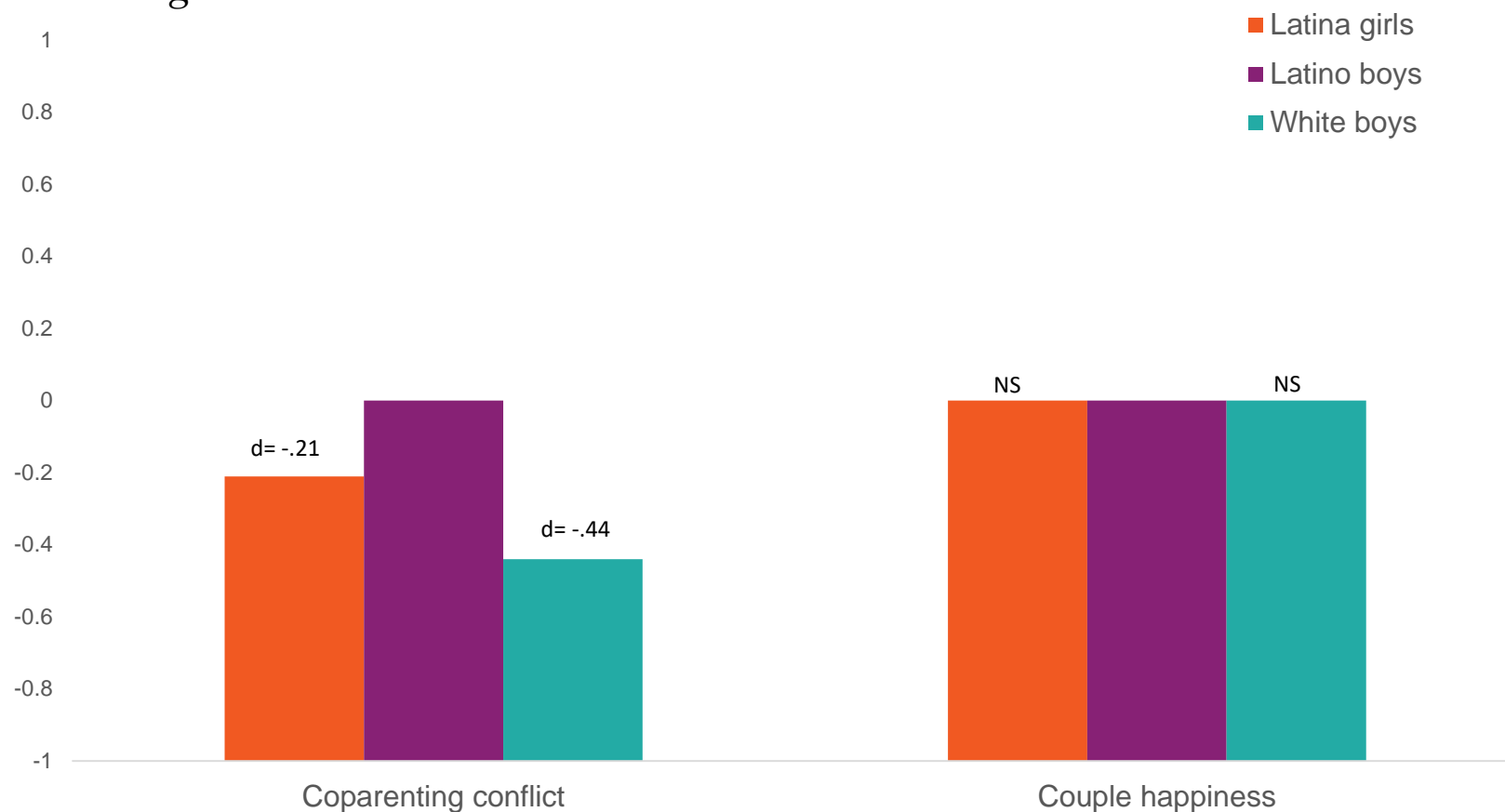
- Children's wellbeing depends on large part on the wellbeing of their parents, the quality of the parenting they receive, and the early home experiences
- We use ECLSB, sample of babies born in 2001, to
  - Look at parent's mental health and the quality of the marital relationship
  - Examine Latino children's skills as compared to white boys, a group that generally excels on skills needed for school

Throughout early childhood, Latino boys have mothers who reported similar levels of mental health as mothers of white boys and Latina girls.



**Significant differences (d= Cohen's d effect size) between Latino boys and their peers in family functioning; adjusted for household resources**

Throughout early childhood, Latino boys were more likely to have mothers who reported coparenting conflict than white boys and Latina girls.



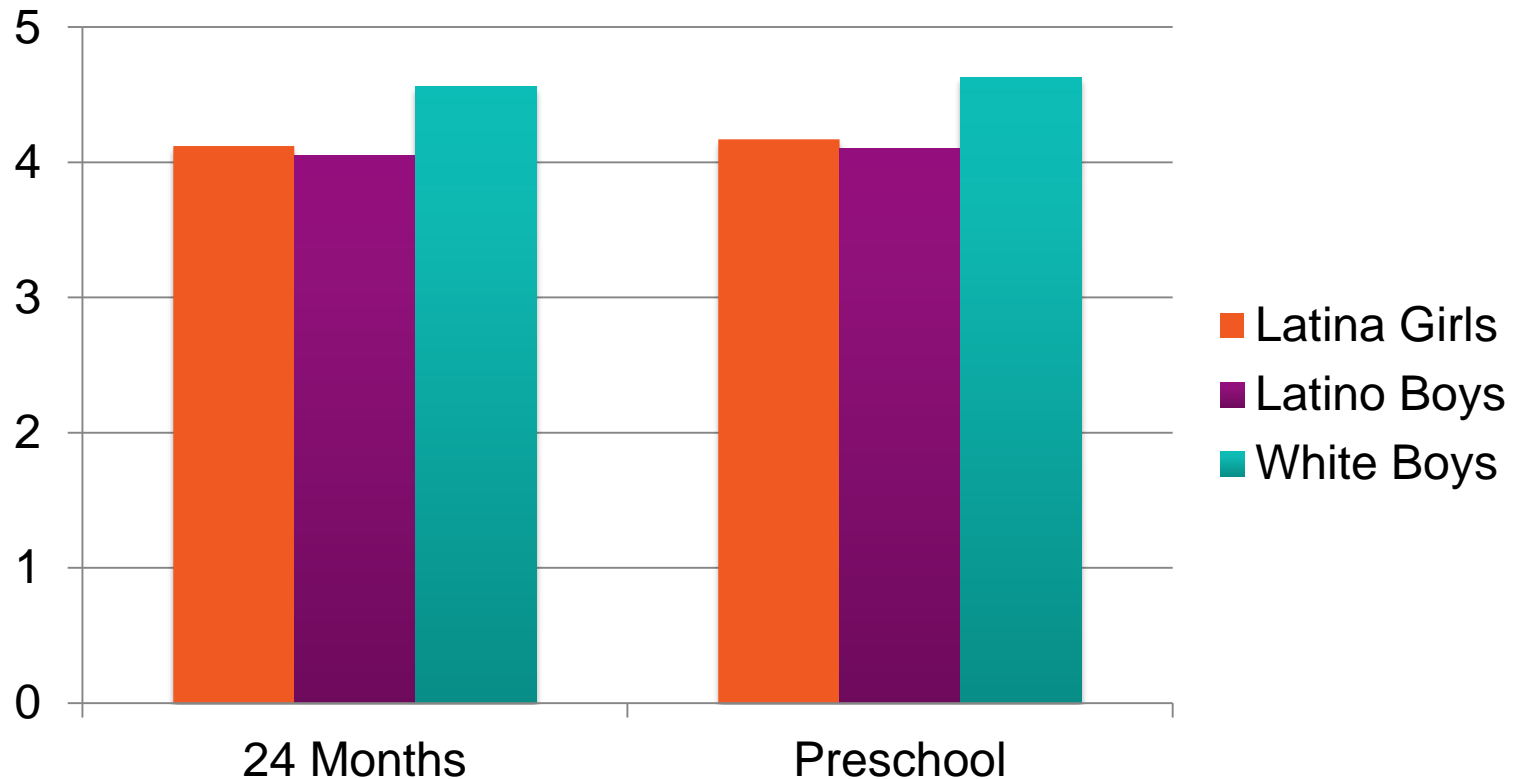
**Significant differences (d= Cohen's d effect size) between Latino boys and their peers in family functioning; adjusted for household resources**

Source: Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort, 2001-2008

# Parenting



# Mothers of Latino boys (and girls) exhibit less responsive/sensitive parenting than mothers of White boys

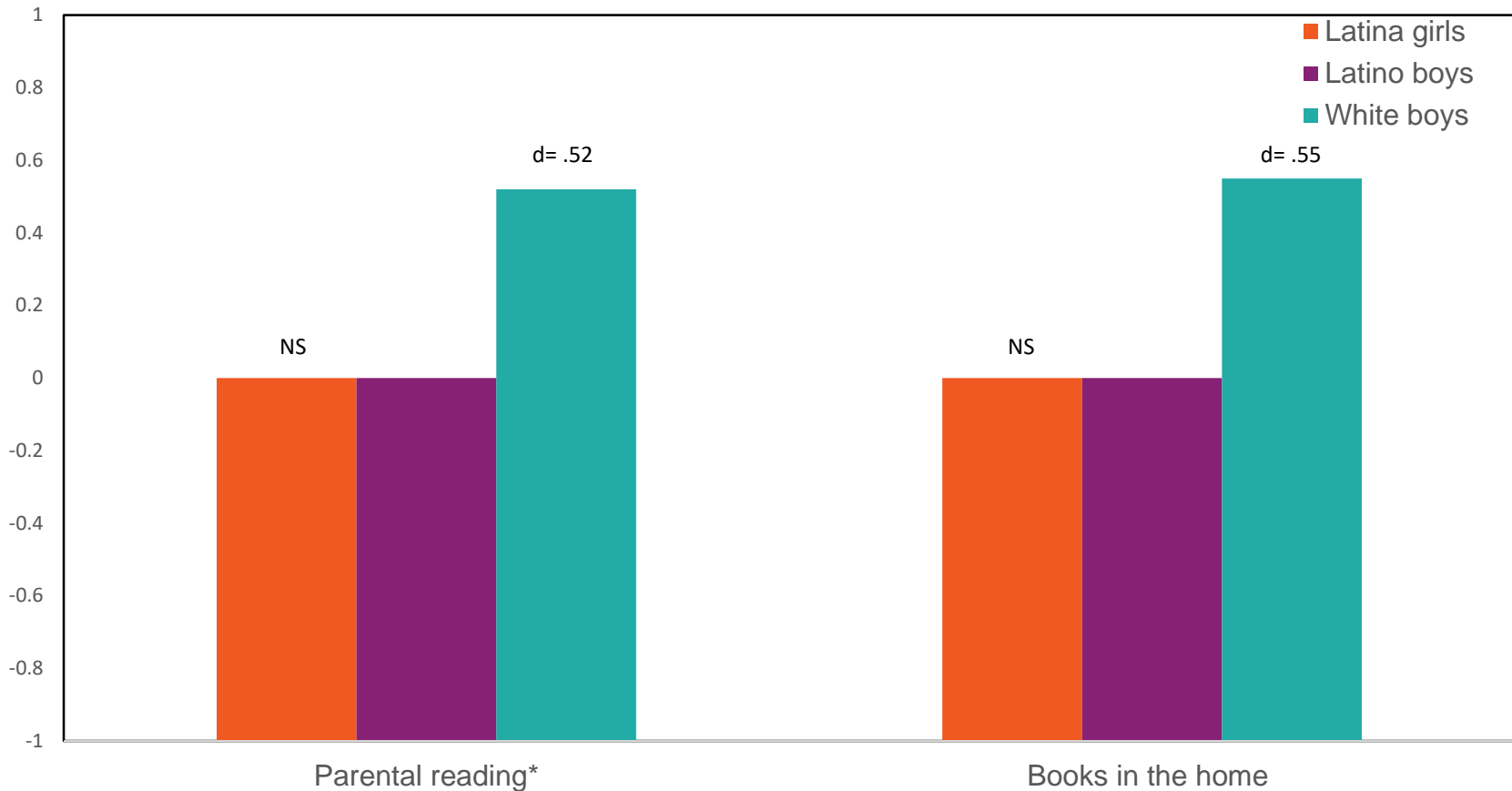


**On a composite scale of 0-5 (not responsive to highly responsive), mothers rate their responsiveness as a parent.**

Source: Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort, 2001-2008



Compared to white boys, Latino boys were less frequently read to and had fewer children's books.

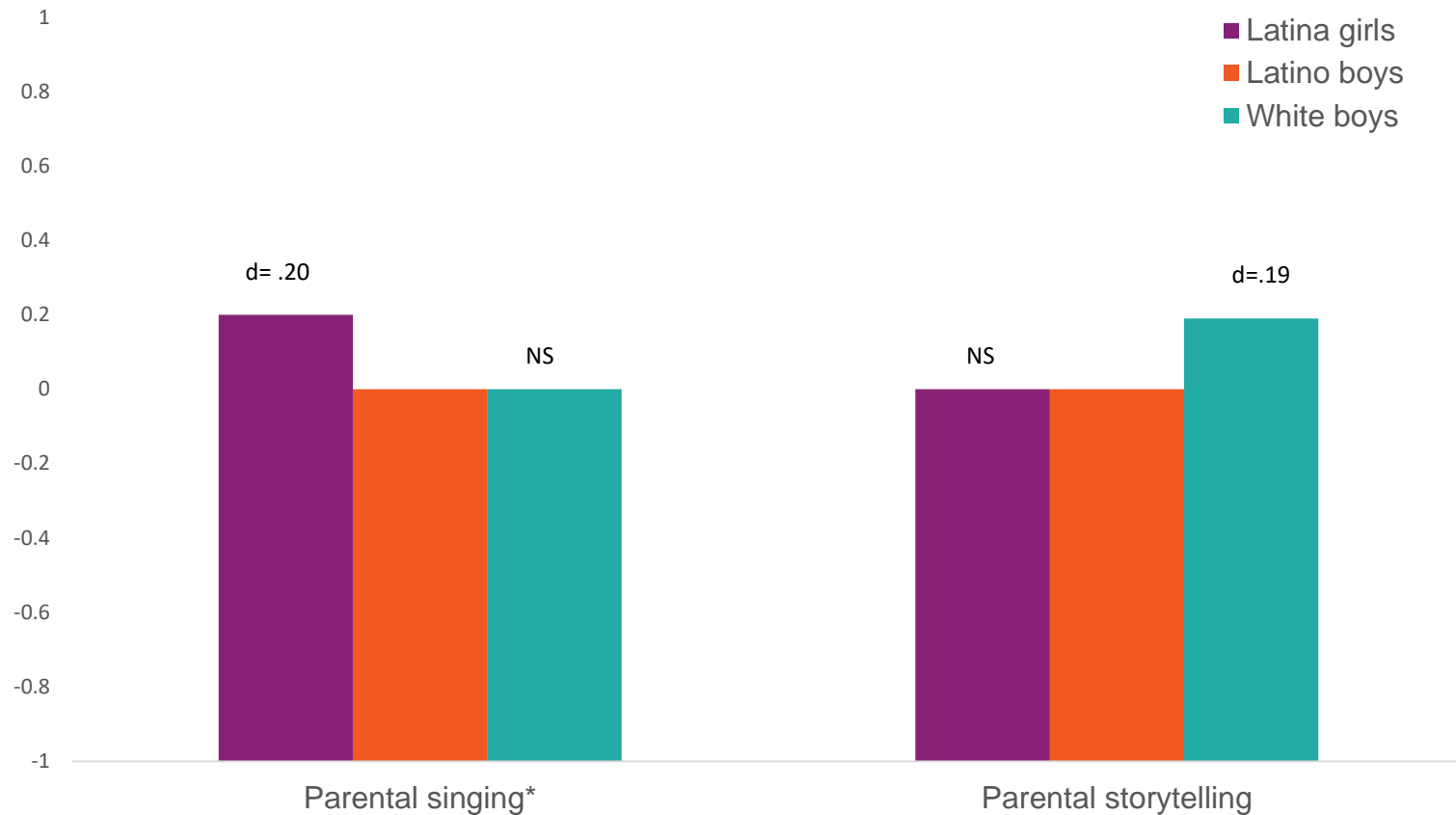


**Significant differences (d= Cohen's d effect size) between Latino boys and their peers in parental investments; adjusted for household resources**

\*Parental reading, singing, and storytelling is a composite of mother and father-reports for children living in two-parent households and is mother-report only for children living in one-parent households.

Source: Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort, 2001-2008

# Compared to white boys, Latino boys were less frequently told stories.



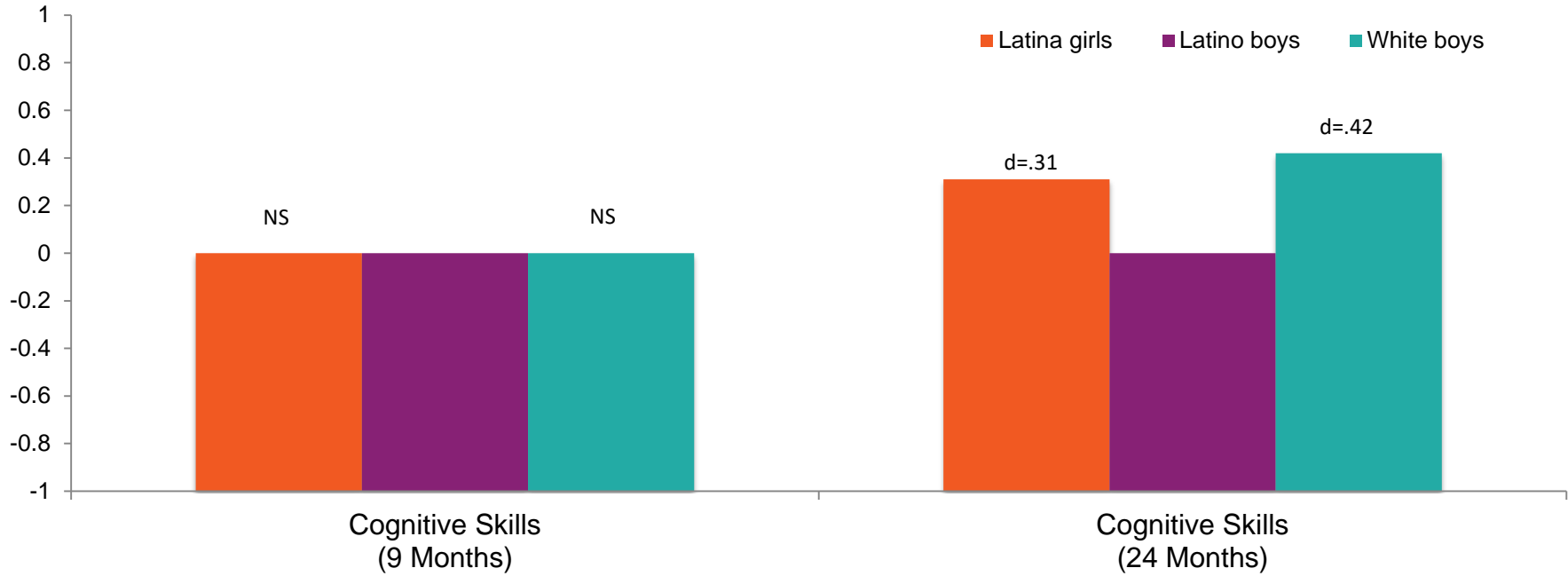
**Significant differences (d= Cohen's d effect size) between Latino boys and their peers in parental investments; adjusted for household resources**

\*Parental reading, singing, and storytelling is a composite of mother and father-reports for children living in two-parent households and is mother-report only for children living in one-parent households.

# Cognitive and social skills



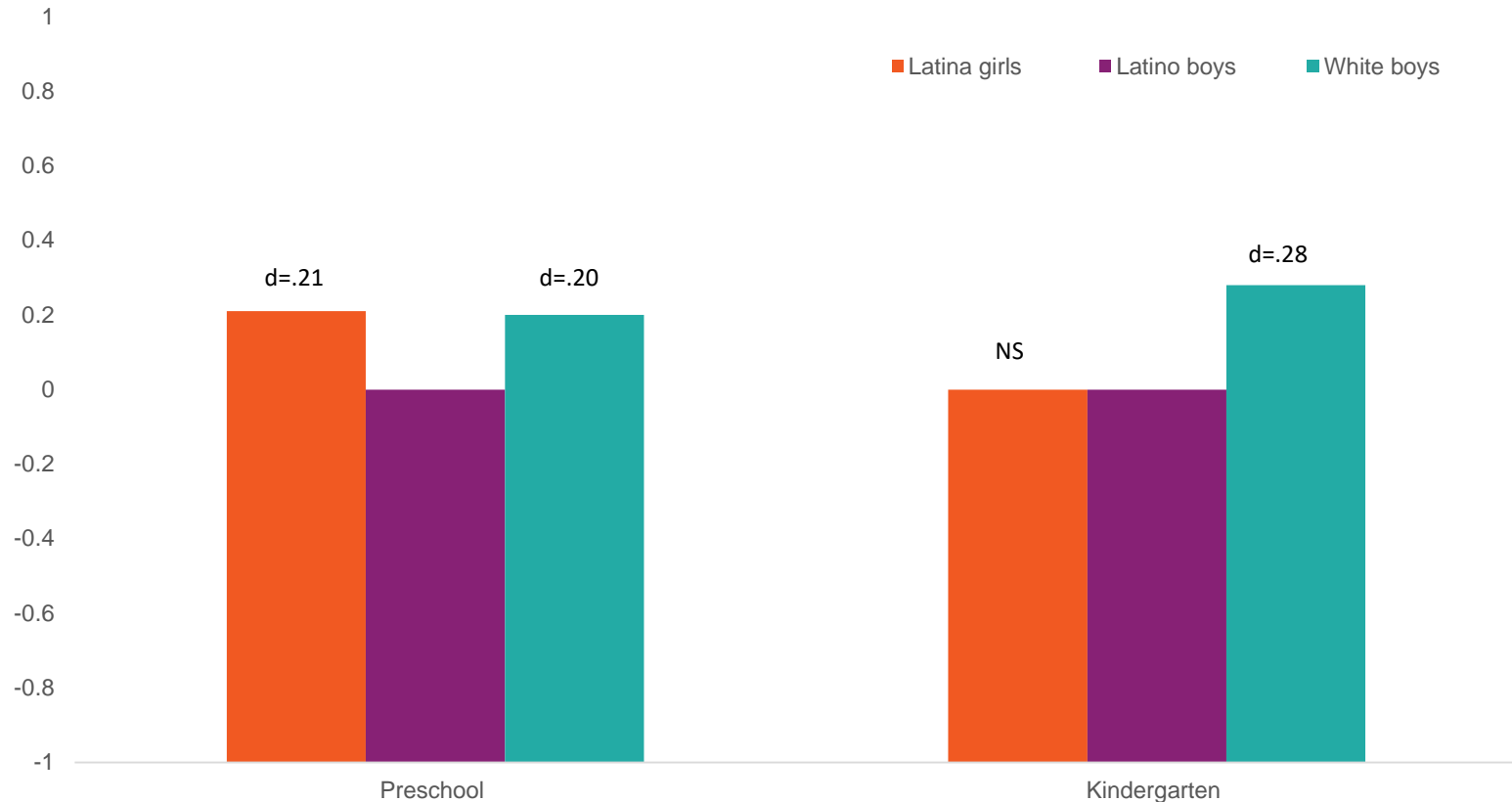
At 9 months, Latino boys' cognitive skills (e.g., language, active exploration, problem-solving) are similar to white boys' and Latina girls'. But by 24 months, Latino boys' cognitive skills are lower than white boys' and Latina girls.



**Significant differences (d=Cohen's d effect size) between Latino boys and their peers in cognitive skills at 9 and 24 months; adjusted for household resources**

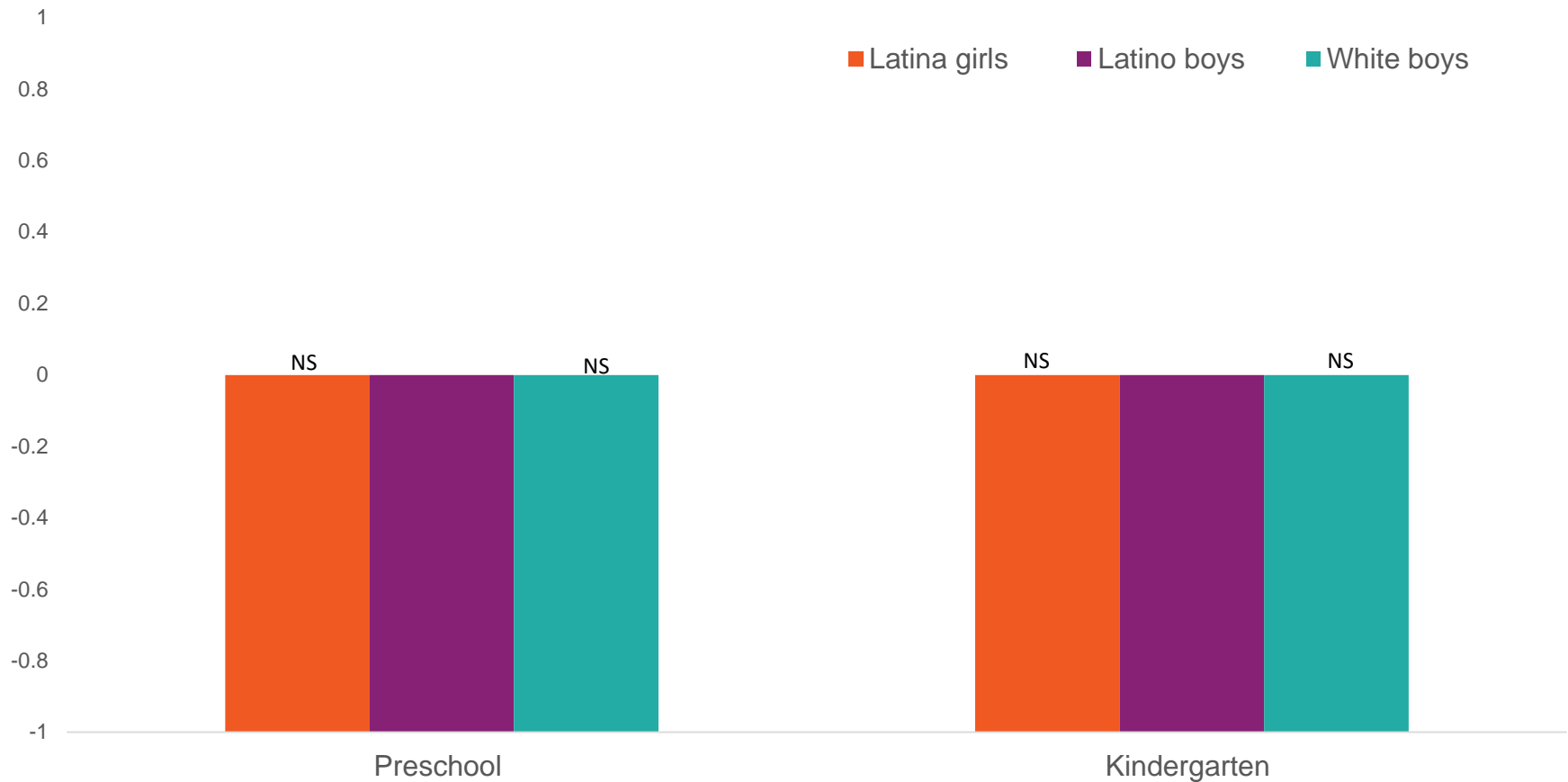
Source: Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort, 2001-2008

At preschool, Latino boys had fewer expressive language skills (i.e., ability to reproduce a narrative in their own words) than white boys and Latina girls.



**Significant differences (d=Cohen's d effect size) between Latino boys and their peers in cognitive and social skills at 9 and 24 months; adjusted for household resources**

# Latino children's social skills are similar to white boys at preschool and kindergarten



**Significant differences (d=Cohen's d effect size) between Latino boys and their peers in cognitive and social skills at 9 and 24 months; adjusted for household resources**

# Summary

- Latino children live with two parents who are relatively happy, report low conflict and depressive symptoms
- Although Latino children are read to less often than white boys, they hear stories as often as white boys especially when they are older
- Latino infants show similar levels of cognitive abilities in infancy, but their language skills lag behind their white peers by Kindergarten
- However, in terms of social skills Latino children show no deficits

# Implications for early childhood programs

- Latino children live with two parents who are relatively involved and provide warmth and support, but do not provide as much cognitive stimulation as peers.
- Targeted support for Latino parents and children:
  - Enriching activities
  - Encouraging story telling
  - Supporting social skill development
- Family functioning is also relatively positive
  - Offer support for parents – improve mental health and coparenting
  - Be deliberate about reaching BOTH parents for programs and services



# Policy implications

- Demographic and economic imperative
- Public policies
  - Education
  - Poverty
  - Immigration
- Understanding which specific dimensions of public policy and practice facilitate or impede access

# Center Mission and Objectives

**Mission:** A hub for research to help programs and policy better serve low-income Hispanics across three priority areas:

- Poverty reduction and economic self-sufficiency
- Healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood
- Early care and education

## **Primary Objectives:**

1. Conduct Research
2. Build Capacity
3. Communication and Dissemination

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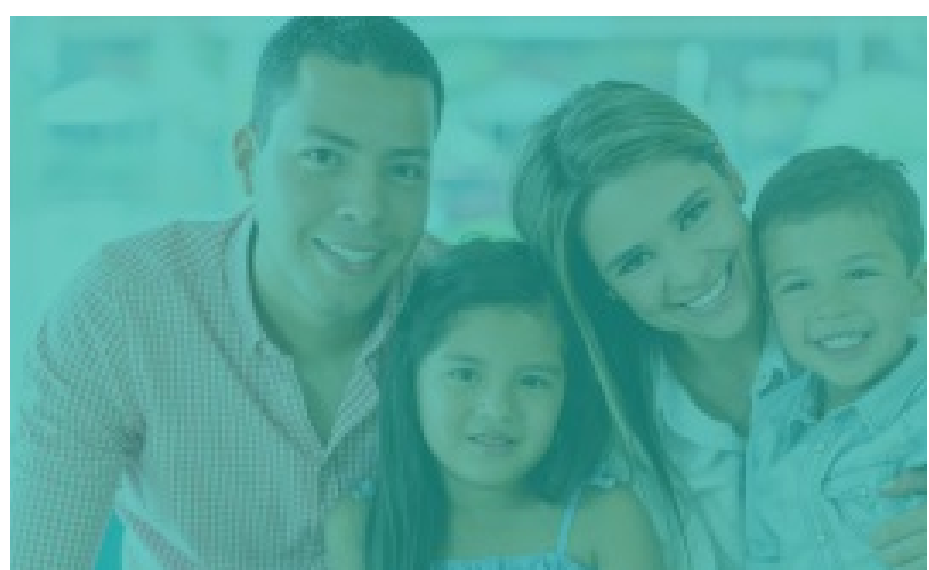
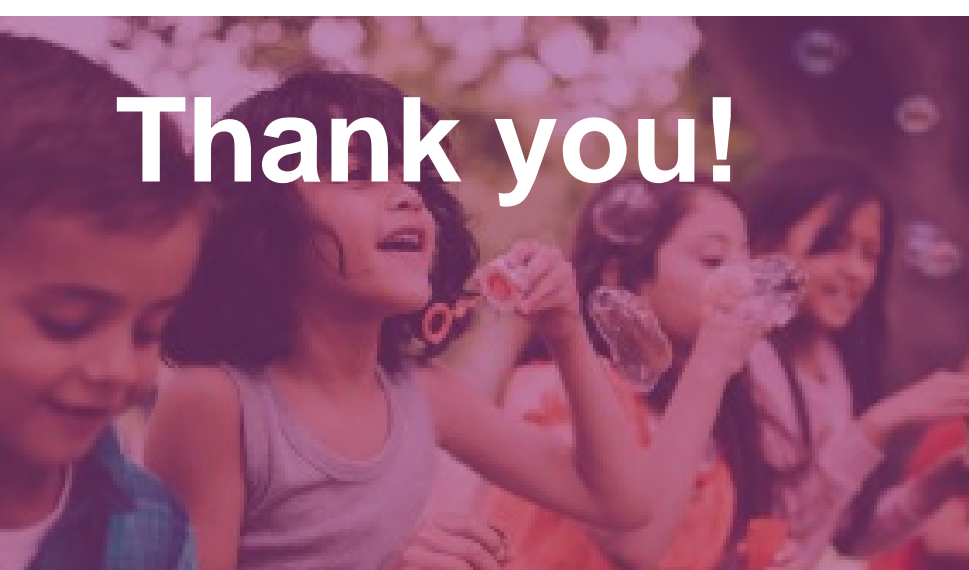


# Questions and Answers



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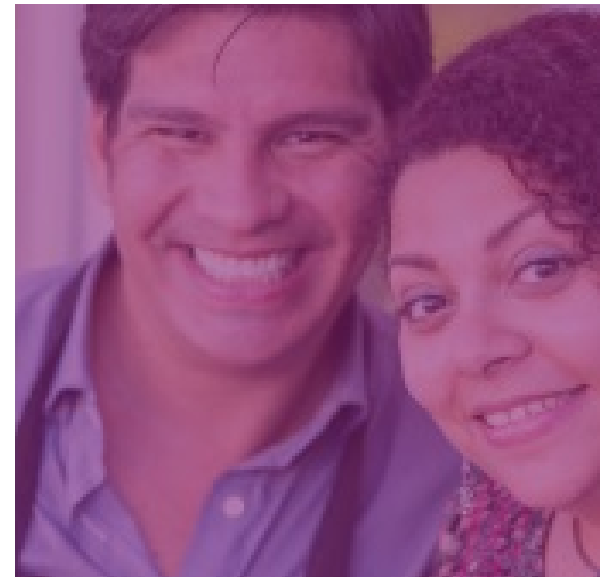
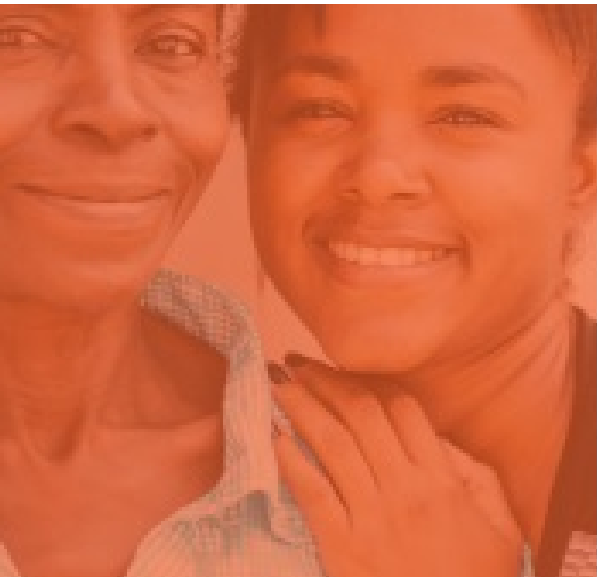


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