



# Culturally Relevant Parenting Approaches Among African American and Latinx Children and Families: Toward Resilient, Strengths-Based, Trauma-Informed Practices

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## Abstract

Children and families of color in the United States (U.S.) have long had to battle to develop a positive identity in the face of discrimination based upon race, ethnicity, immigration status, and gender. Historically, racial-ethnic minorities have experienced various types of trauma exposures in the U.S., including enslavement, family separation, deportation, colonization, discrimination, ridicule, and stereotyping that permeate U.S. society. Yet, they still have managed within their families to advance some sense of shared within-group identities, values, beliefs, and practices that have fostered child and family development. This paper focuses on the experiences of African American and Latinx families who, though distinct in historical and cultural experiences, have some similarities in social disparities that should inform parenting programs. Prevention and intervention that seeks to engage families of color should be sensitive to centuries of racism and structural inequalities that have contributed to their unique socio-cultural contexts (Bernal et al., 2009; Spencer et al., 1997).

We first explore the historical context of racial-ethnic trauma among children of color in the U.S. Second, we build upon the work in traumatic stress as a rationale for examining culturally relevant and responsive adaptations that address linguistics, worldviews, and contexts, describing the ways in which these concepts are evidenced in programming and effects upon family processes, and youth socio-emotional development. We discuss the implications for multi-group intervention, homogenous and heterogeneous group composition, underscoring the value of critical frameworks attuned to psychological trauma that draw upon a strengths-based perspective of culture for African American and Latinx children and families.

**Keywords** Historical and/or racial trauma · Culturally relevant · Culturally responsive · Cultural adaptation · African American · Latinx/Latino · Children · Families

## Introduction

The United States (U.S.) continues to diversify racially and ethnically such that recent census data indicates that the U.S. population by 2060 is projected to be 25.7% Hispanic/Latinx, 13.9% African American/Black, 5.5% Asian, and 15% multiracial Hispanic/Latinx, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander. Native American (US Census Bureau, 2021) .

Racial-ethnic diversification in the U.S. is especially evident in the population under 18 years of age, with 53% identifying as White (not of any other race or ethnicity), a decrease from 74.7% in 2010.

Contrary to deficit perspectives, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) have made substantial gains in education, health, and employment over the past 20 years. For example, both high school graduation and bachelor's degree completion rates continue to increase 75% for African American and Latinx populations in recent years compared to a 29% increase for White Americans (de Brey et al., 2019). Though there are still disparities, Latinx and African Americans also comprise a growing proportion of those employed in the science and technical fields where unemployment and wage disparities are lower (National Science Foundation, 2021).

However, despite gains in education and employment, disparities in income, wealth, health, and mental health

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persist due in large part to centuries of inequitable practices in lending, housing, and under-resourced segregated schools (Darity et al., 2018; Massey, 2015; Office of Minority Health, 2019). One important area that affects other areas of well-being is poverty. African American and Latinx children are faced with living below 200% of the federal poverty level, more than twice the rate of non-Latinx White children (Koball & Jiang, 2018). Poverty and economic deprivation are areas of potential discrimination directly linked to disparities in health and other social outcomes in families and communities (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).

### The Historical Context of Racial-Ethnic Discrimination and Minoritized Communities

Youth of color cope with disparities and discrimination that affects so many areas of their lives. In schooling, Black and Brown youth are more likely to be punished by out-of-school suspension, expulsion, or a referral to law enforcement. Though they comprise 19% of those enrolled, they are 47% of those suspended *in preschool* (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). Whereas the offences that result in disciplinary action for White students are characterized by aggression or property damage, the offences for children of color usually involve perceived disrespect. Additionally, Black and Brown students are more likely to be sanctioned by out-of-school versus in-school punishment, contributing to high school dropout and the school-to-prison pipeline (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). In childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, Black populations face racial profiling in policing with research demonstrating more likelihood to choose “shoot” in response to armed Black targets than “don’t shoot” in response to armed White targets (Goff & Rau, 2020). Racial discrimination includes dominant racial group members’ actions that have differential and negative effects on subordinate ethnic racial groups (Seaton et al., 2018). Penman-Aguilar and colleagues (2016) describe disparities as “differences in health outcomes and their determinants between segments of the population, as defined by social, demographic, environmental, and geographic attributes.” They use the term “‘inequity’ for those differences that are systematic, unfair, and avoidable.” (Penman-Aguilar et al., 2016, p. 1). Persistent racism and discrimination underscore the importance of supporting families in their critical tasks to prepare their children to live in a society that stereotypes and discriminates against them, while instilling within their children a sense of positive identity and cultural heritage to help prepare them to grapple with these social realities (Murry, 2019; Spencer et al., 1997).

Minoritized groups in the U.S. have both shared and distinct experiences of oppression in the U.S. that deserve careful and insightful thought in terms of family programs.

However, the rich and diverse experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) people in the U.S. exceed the scope of any individual paper regarding programs for youth and families. However, given some similarities in terms of the disparities they face in terms of poverty, policing, schooling and mental health, and substance use, this paper focuses on the experiences of Latinx and African American youth and families (Goff & Rau, 2020; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Koball & Jiang, 2018). In the following, we explore some of the historical context of people of color in the U.S.

The experience of Latin Americans in the U.S. is rooted in a history of colonialization of native peoples in the Americas by the Spaniards, who evolved as a mix of indigenous people and Spanish colonizers, *mestizos*. This history includes colonialization, annexing lands in Texas and California, along with waves of immigration to the U.S. from Mexico and multiple South American countries, sometimes referred to as *Reconquista* as Latinx families occupied familiar territories (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002). Latinx families in the U.S., though emanating from multiple countries with varying experiences, share the pain of ethnic and linguistic stereotyping and discrimination, and for some, the ill conditions of seasonal migration, and fears of deportation and child separation (Bouza et al., 2018; Cauce and Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002; Stein et al., 2016). Though there are within-group variations due country of origin, and their varying socio-historical contexts, Latinx families are also bound by some shared commonalities in cultural beliefs and practices, including a focus on concepts like *familismo*, and *respect* (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002). African Americans also emanate from a plethora of African ethnic groups, captured from their countries of origin, brought to the U.S. in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, enslaved, raped, brutalized, and lynched in centuries of brutal discrimination and oppression (Franklin, 1997). They were separated from their families, and punished for any visible links to their names, languages, and cultures of origin, but retained strong but often less visible cultural beliefs and practices in terms of respect for elders and extended family organization (Sudarkasa, 2007). African Americans are also bound by the social designation of race, loosely aligned with a range of phenotypic and biological characteristics that have been used to justify four centuries of social, educational, and legal segregation and discrimination in the U.S. (Kendi, 2016); conditions so rarely mentioned when describing decades of disparities in education, income, and opportunity. Asian/Pacific Islanders are a group composed of peoples across multiple landmasses from China, Japan, Korea, and the Pacific Islands who have experienced stereotypes, discrimination, internment in concentration camps, and persistent but recently centered anti-Asian sentiment. Though also a diverse group, they are often characterized as suffering

silently with issues of invisibility, mental health, and self-injury, partly due to the complex and often stressful label of *model minorities* (Yip et al., 2021). The recent wave of anti-immigrant sentiment has re-ignited the voice of Asian-Americans sparking resistance to hateful acts (<https://stopapihate.org/>). Native American populations have undergone forced migration, enduring brutal treks hundreds of miles across the country from lush territories to dry, arid lands, amid broken land treaties. Many Native American children were sent to settlement schools where they were punished for the use of their native language or cultural practices, intentionally separating them from their families and heritage. The experiences of indigenous people fuel so much of our conceptualization of historical trauma (Sarche & Whitesell, 2012), presumably contributing to the high rates of substance use and suicidality. Abundant research demonstrates that these systemic inequities have traumatic effects on children's development, family well-being, health, and mental health outcomes (Alegría et al., 2002; Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002; Rayburn et al., 2021).

### Race-Based Trauma and Consequences for Children and Youth

*Historical trauma* refers to the complex and collective violations experienced over time and across generations by a group of people who share an identity, affiliation, or set of circumstances (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Mohatt et al., 2014). Historical traumas are a direct result of dehumanization, colonization, and oppression (Mohatt et al., 2014). While not all descendants of an oppressed group will experience traumatic symptoms, some may experience poor overall physical and behavioral health, including low self-esteem, depression, self-destructive behavior, substance misuse and addiction, high rates of suicide, and/or cardiovascular disease (Gone et al., 2019). Family maladaptive coping and conflictual relational functioning may be exacerbated by living in a community with unaddressed grief and behavioral health needs. Parents' trauma symptoms may disrupt prosocial and positive parenting skills and contribute to children's internalizing and externalizing behavior problems (Wieling, Trejo, et al., 2020; Wieling, Utržan, et al., 2020).

*Racial trauma*, or race-based traumatic stress (RBTS), refers to "traumatic exposure to race-based experiences that are collectively characterized by racism, including acts of prejudice, discrimination, or violence against a subordinate racial group based on attitudes of superiority held by overt or covert actions carried out by individuals or society" (Williams et al., 2018). Individuals who experience persistent racist encounters are at risk of suffering from race-based traumatic stress injury (Williams et al., 2018). There is accumulating evidence that racial trauma can result in adverse mental and physical health outcomes for people of color,

including PTSD (Fani et al., 2021). However, RBTS is not considered a mental health disorder; instead, it is considered a mental injury that can occur as the result of living within a racist system and being exposed to race-based violence (Carter et al., 2017). The symptoms of intense fear, anxiety, helplessness, re-experiencing, and avoidance are synonymous to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD, Jernigan & Daniel, 2011). Understanding the implications of having higher levels of exposure to traumatic events and persistent risks related to race-based violence and discrimination is critical for minoritized youth both because of direct consequences to their psychological and emotional development and the documented intergenerational transmission of parental psychopathology and impaired relational functioning resulting from parental PTSD. Parental/caregiver mental health and corresponding parental skills represent the potential for increased risk factors for youth as well as protective buffers against societal traumatic racial stressors (Wieling, Trejo, et al., 2020; Wieling, Utržan, et al., 2020).

From a developmental psychopathology perspective, the impact of traumatic events on the child's adjustment are a complex and dynamic interplay between the child, the environment, parental adjustment, and the child's history of risk and functioning, with direct and indirect pathways (Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993; Pine et al., 2005; Pynoos et al., 1999). Developmental psychopathology research on trauma and adversity has spanned multiple decades, resulting in a broad base of knowledge with compelling evidence on the protective processes associated with resilience, and the vulnerability and risk factors associated with poor developmental outcomes (Gewirtz et al., 2008). Traumatic events in the media depicting "undocumented immigrants in cages and police killings of unarmed citizens are two of the most pressing traumatic events facing adolescents of color," found to be related to depressive symptoms and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD, Tynes et al., 2019, p. 372). However, children and adolescents suffering from traumatic stress or race-based stress are rarely identified with accurate and systematic assessment methods. Thus, they are also not targeted to receive mental health services. Most youth and their families, especially those from minoritized groups, experience barriers to receiving services in their schools and communities (Kataoka et al., 2002; Woodbridge et al., 2016). These various forms of trauma exposure impact communities across ecological systems with significant and potentially lasting consequences for mental health and family functioning.

### The Socio-cultural Contexts of Parenting: Fostering a Positive Sense of Identity and Development

Against the backdrop of historical trauma, racism, discrimination, and disparities, parents of racial-ethnic minority

children endeavor to rear children with the hopes of opportunity, achievement, success, and wellness. Parenting programs attuned to the needs and circumstances of these families stand to address multiple needs of ethnic and racial minority groups. Among these needs are parenting children to cope with racism and discrimination, the socio-economic contexts of Black and Brown families, and attention to the role of cultural values that have been found to be adaptive for minoritized children (McLoyd et al., 2011; Murry et al., 2021; Schwartz et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2019).

Research over the last decade calls on parents to transmit more messages designed to prepare their children for the racism and discrimination they are likely to face while fostering positive adaptation and resilience (Else-Quest and Morse, 2015). There are multiple dimensions of racial-ethnic socialization, including *cultural socialization* in which parents inculcate within children a sense of affirmation, cultural values, and belonging to their heritage found to be related to children's prosocial development, across the developmental spectrum and reported as early as preschool (Hughes et al., 2006; Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020). *Preparation for barriers* is reported more often with older children and seeks to expose and poise children for coping effectively with discrimination. Research suggests that attention to at least cultural socialization and preparation for barriers is tantamount to addressing important socio-cultural needs of families that promote adaptive socio-emotional development, affecting their stress, health, and mental health (Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Hughes et al., 2006).

### The Case for Cultural Adaptation and Culturally Relevant Parenting Programs with Families

Cultural adaptation has been defined as “the systematic modification of an evidence-based treatment (EBT) or intervention protocol to consider language, culture, and the context in such a way that it is compatible with the “client’s cultural patterns, meanings, and values” in ecologically valid ways (Bernal et al., 2009, p. 362). There are several similar terms that have been used to describe attention to the beliefs, practices, values, and worldviews of the populations served including cultural sensitivity. In some of the earliest work on cultural sensitivity, Resnicow and colleagues (1999) distinguished between *surface structure* that attends to the representation of the group in the visual content and materials, including references to people, places, language, food, and clothing familiar to the target audience. *Deep structure* attends to the cultural, social, and historical contexts that might affect motivation, receptivity, and adoption of prevention/intervention strategies (Resnicow et al., 1999). Reese and Vera (2007) state that *cultural relevance* refers to the extent to which interventions are consistent with the values, beliefs, and desired outcomes of a particular community.”

We use the term *culturally relevant* to forward the notion that these intentional efforts to work with diverse populations come as a forethought, not reactive, but proactive in addressing need. Culturally relevant and adapted prevention approaches can improve existing models for delivery to marginalized communities without disrupting fidelity or diminishing model integrity (Castro et al., 2004). In the review to follow, we will demonstrate that these models address issues and needs facing families in ways that deliver added value to their family processes, health, and mental health.

### Search Process

With a growing body of literature focused on adapted parenting programs for different ethnic and racial minoritized populations, this review highlights intentional linguistic, cultural, and contextual components contributing to the effectiveness of these programs that also attend to important issues of culture and discrimination that affect well-being. Accordingly, we sought to identify empirical research examining programs designed for African American and Latinx families per our rationale earlier for focusing on these groups. In reviewing the extant literature, we sought to address the following question: *What are culturally relevant components identified in parenting programs working with African American and Latinx populations?* To address this question, we first identified criteria to determine which programs would be most relevant for this review. Next, literature searches were conducted to identify programs focused on parenting and socio-emotional outcomes with African American and Latinx families. Finally, we included articles if they stated components of the program were developed, modified, or adapted to suit African American and Latinx families.

The initial literature search of peer-reviewed journals did not include a specified range of years. Identified programs focused on U.S. African American and Latinx populations, addressing socio-emotional outcomes, and integrating culturally relevant or responsive practices in the family program, spanning 18 years, nearly two decades. Specifically, we narrowed our focus to programs dedicated to inclusive practices where culture was considered by encompassing the uniqueness of a person's *language* (including native tongue, mannerisms, idioms, and nuances), *worldviews* (i.e., values, customs, beliefs, and traditions exemplified by values of family obligations, respect for adults), and broader social and economic *context* (e.g., coping with discrimination, migration phases, or acculturative stress) (Bernal & Saez-Santiago, 2006). Any combination of the following search terms was used for the current study: culturally relevant parenting program, culturally responsive parenting program, Latino/a/x, Hispanic, African American, and Black. Title



and abstracts were read to determine sufficient relevance to the search criteria, that is, research focused on examining parenting programs designed to foster socio-emotional and academic outcomes of Latinx and African American children; programs specifically focused on physical activity, obesity, and health outcomes were excluded. In the following sections, we review culturally relevant approaches with African American and Latinx families and socio-emotional development that attend to language, worldview, and contexts, particularly discrimination, respectively.

### Linguistic Adaptations

Latinx immigrant families contend with issues of language, documentation, and the desire to inculcate cultural values as protective mechanisms to support their children who are adapting and acculturating to a new country, particularly at a time when anti-immigrant sentiment is high (Bouza et al., 2018; Parra-Cardona et al., 2012). Over one-third of Latinxs in the U.S. report feeling disparaged for speaking Spanish in public (M. Lopez et al., 2018) and Spanish-speaking parents often feel a level of dependency on their children to translate or communicate on their behalf. With this in mind, it is essential that efforts to engage and retain Latinx parents and families include addressing issues of translation and linguistic adaptation in prevention programs (e.g., Caal et al., 2019; Dumas et al., 2010; Pantin et al., 2009; Parra-Cardona et al., 2012). Doménech-Rodríguez and Wieling culturally adapted the Parent Management Training—Oregon model (PMTO)—an evidence-based parenting intervention with over 40 years of demonstrated efficacy and effectiveness across diverse contexts—for implementation and testing with Latinx families in the U.S. (Doménech-Rodríguez et al., 2004). They utilized a rich, multifaceted process to engage the voice of Latinx parents into the intervention not only via translation but “dichos,” sayings that capture not only linguistic but cultural idioms. One example of a *dichos* used from the Spanish language is *el que persevera alcanza* (translated, the one who perseveres achieves, Doménech-Rodríguez et al., 2011). Other sayings that had little significance to Latinx families were changed, such as the idea of “sandwiching” a conversation in which the parent begins and ends with praise putting their request in the middle, were revised since sandwiches are not a common food in Latin America. These were replaced by idioms more familiar to the population such as a dance in which parents and children are in step with each other. The intervention helps parents navigate the complexities of developing English-language proficiency and parenting their multi-lingual children in ways that maintain their authority as parents in the context of systems that intentionally and unintentionally encourage children to leverage language use and child welfare systems against parents. Even the title of the intervention manual,

*Criando con Amor* (Raising with love), was intended to reflect parental cultural values of *familismo* and aspirations for their children.

Other parenting programs for Latinx families, which have been implemented in multiple sites and evaluated, also draw upon Bernal et al.’s (2009) model by integrating language, content, and concepts (e.g., Caal et al., 2019). Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD) is a parent education program specifically developed for Latinx parents of children under 5 years of age. This program is based upon Paulo Freire’s (1970) idea of *education as liberation* encouraging families that helping their children with early literacy is important to advancing the group. This intervention also drew upon *dichos* such as *saber es poder* or *knowledge is power*, intertwining both Latinx language and culture. In a multisite randomized control trial (RCT) across 23 schools, this parenting model implemented in early childhood was found to increase parental educational and literacy activities with their young children (Caal et al., 2019). Interestingly, statistically significant effects were not detected upon parental advocacy, a concept potentially in conflict with parental respect for teachers among Latinx families. Qualitative work in the context of these studies is revealing additional dimensions that might enhance culturally relevant prevention science.

Attention to *language* has also been incorporated in work with African American families. Building upon initial qualitative work, Coard and colleagues (2004) adapted Forehand and Long’s (2002) *Parenting the Strong-Willed Child* intervention. The resulting adaptation, Black Parenting Strengths and Strategies (BPSS) program, integrated *language*, that is, African American language expression, and the use of African proverbs, poems, quotes, storytelling, and symbols to build social and cultural competence to help parents address early development of conduct problems in their children (Coard et al., 2007). In a randomized pilot test, Coard and colleagues (2007) found that parents, whose children ranged from 5 to 6 years old, reported increased satisfaction and positive perceptions of program content and delivery, supporting the feasibility, acceptability, and potential efficacy of this culturally relevant intervention program for African American families.

### Worldview Adaptations

Adaptation of prevention approaches includes the more fundamental process of linguistic translation and integrating relevance to the beliefs, values, and practices that deeply shape the parenting process. *Worldviews* such as respect for adults, culturally informed family roles, and religion are integrally part of the family dynamics based upon the cultural-ecological and integrative models (García Coll et al., 1996; Ogbu, 1981). Culture is a complex notion incorporating shared

beliefs, values, and practices with varying levels of adoption among individuals, groups, and across time (Ogbu, 1981; Spencer et al., 1997).

Programs working with Latinx families have adapted elements of interventions to incorporate *deep structure* facets such as values (e.g., respect, familism) and customs found in Latin America (Caal et al., 2019; Coatsworth et al., 2002a; Marsiglia et al., 2014; Parra-Cardona et al., 2012; Resnicow et al., 1999). For example, Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors, a program developed specifically for Latinx families with children under five (AP/OD; Caal et al., 2019), incorporated language, culture (e.g., music from Latin America and games like Loteria- a bingo-type game from Latin America), values (e.g., respect and familismo), use of metaphors, and sayings from Latinx culture to inform parents in a “culturally sensitive and responsive way” (Caal et al., 2019). In a randomized intent-to-treat model 3 months later, parents in the intervention group exhibited more knowledge about quality early childcare and improved goal setting for their children.

Criando a Nuestros Niños Hacia el Éxito (CANNE) is a program translated from an existing model that evolved to include not only consideration of language but also cultural aspects (Begle & Dumas, 2011; Dumas et al., 2010; C. Lopez et al., 2018). Specific cultural considerations needed for adaptation stemmed from parental concerns across four main domains: sensitivity to cultural differences using praise and rewards (where Latino parents tend to show praise through physical gestures rather than tangible prizes), differences in discipline practices, reluctance to adhere to child-centered routines (where Latino culture is more a collective culture and looks at the family as a whole), and sensitivity to the level of school involvement (responsibility Latino parents delegate to teachers) (Dumas et al., 2010). Qualitative research and a pilot study using CANNE pointed to the role of increased attendance and participation in a pilot of 124 parents of children ages 3 to 6 that demonstrated that parents reported fewer child behavioral problems and reduced parent-related stress (Dumas et al., 2010).

Cultural considerations are also important for African American families. Though the process of enslavement sought to strip away language, culture, and force adoption of Euro-American language, names, and religion, culture is complex and invisible, evident in retention of family values, practices, and organization (Herskovits, 1990; Sudarkasa, 2007). In the BPSS intervention described earlier, Coard and colleagues (2004; 2007) sought to co-create their intervention collaboratively with African American families drawing upon cultural elements by including extended family participation, the use of prayer, role-playing, and storytelling. The intervention sought to support parents in building their children’s social and cultural competence by incorporating cultural values about collective responsibility, cooperation, and

interdependence to reduce problem behavior and enhance positive development.

The integration of cultural values of interconnectedness was also critical to The Fathers and Sons Intervention Program, designed to strengthen relationships among non-resident African American fathers and sons between the ages of 8 and 12 years old while preventing youth risky behaviors (Caldwell et al., 2014). The intentional family-centered, culturally relevant, and gender-specific intervention was made for nonresident African American males and addressed the gap of previous literature focusing on White, middle-class, resident fathers. This program bridges worldview and the socio-cultural contexts of fathering for African American males. For African American families, so much research has utilized a deficit versus strengths lens for these families (Burton & Tucker, 2009). Particularly for African American fathers, saddled with a father-absence lens, little research has sought to examine the unique and distinctive ways in which even non-resident fathers might be present and involved in their children’s lives (Brown et al., 2018; Caughy et al., 2019; Cooper et al., 2015, 2019; Kogan et al., 2012). The results from prevention research with African American father and son dyads demonstrate a process of effects upon father’s parenting efficacy and skills (reported by fathers and sons), decreased depression, and substance use among fathers, leading to reduced aggression and violence intention among the sons (Caldwell et al., 2014, 2019; Thomas et al., 2020). Prevention programs with African American fathers in multiple locales in Flint and Saginaw Michigan demonstrated the efficacy of attending to both the cultural and social contexts of trauma, discrimination, and fathering for African American men.

### Context Adaptations: Addressing Discrimination and Immigration

Prevention efforts with both Latinx and African American mothers and fathers demonstrate the value of programming that is congruent with their cultural values, beliefs, and parenting practices. Yet, their lives are informed by their own familial systems and the experience of being minoritized people in the U.S. It is critical that efforts to understand and support African American and Latinx parents be attuned to the disparities and discrimination facing children of color and their families; identifying effective parenting strategies that are both social and cultural, rooted in values of respect for family, adults, and religiosity.

In the U.S., African American parents and Latinx parents often manage multiple low-income jobs with variable schedules and a need for childcare and transportation (Quinn et al., 2010; Richardson et al., 2014; Roy et al., 2004); important challenges to be addressed in family programs. In many instances, ethnic minority parents are hesitant to participate

in programs as they are found to be either irrelevant, outdated, or insensitive to the structural inequalities families experience in income, housing, schooling, health, and mental health (Alegria et al., 2002; Toure et al., 2020).

### Acculturative Stress

At this point, there are culturally adapted programs that have amassed decades of research on ecodevelopmental parenting programs for Latinx communities (Brincks et al., 2018; Prado & Pantin, 2011). Pantin and colleagues (2003) developed the intervention, Familias Unidas, to assist immigrant parents in reducing acculturative stress by including sessions that discussed both Latinx and American cultures, helping families to navigate the stresses of monitoring and supporting adolescents in a new country. Over time, this intervention with pooled data of 881 youth demonstrates that by supporting positive parenting, effects are exhibited on reduced adolescent internalizing, substance use, and risky sexual behavior (Pantin et al., 2009; Prado & Pantin, 2011). Recent efforts have also included the adaptation of Familias Unidas through a virtual platform (Rojas et al., 2021) where parents get to watch pre-recorded sessions equivalent to the in-person Familias Unidas Intervention, allowing for more equitable access in Latinx communities.

### Immigration and Documentation

In the next iteration of culturally adapted PMTO, with the moniker GenerationPMTO, Parra-Cardona and colleagues (2017) built upon the previous cultural adaptation that included translation and the inclusion of sayings, values, and beliefs of Latinx culture. While both versions promoted parenting strategies that were attuned to their children, the adaptation included specific attention to issues of documentation, immigration, and discrimination that were causing increased anxiety in the context of a presidential administration opposed to further immigration. Furthermore, the intervention endeavored to expose children to cultural values, their heritage, and roots, with the perspective that cultural pride would mitigate less adaptive responses to the discrimination to which young people are exposed (Stein et al., 2016).

Previous ERS research has predominantly focused on African American communities (e.g., Caughy et al., 2002; Coard et al., 2004; Hughes et al., 2006; 2003; Neblett et al., 2006; Stevenson, 1994). However, for Latinx families living in the U.S., ERS strategies are useful in understanding the unique cultural inequities in the current socio-political immigration climate as they seek to foster positive adaptation among their children in the face of racism and discrimination (Andrade et al., 2021; Ayón, 2016; Ayon et al., 2020). Recent literature discusses the meaning of citizenship and

immigrant identities in the U.S. (Ayón et al., 2020; Cross et al., 2020). As such, *immigration-related socialization* has been recognized as a salient strategy not previously identified as an ERS dimension but an increasingly imperative discussion among Latinx families in the current socio-political context. In terms of translational research, parenting programs have supported the role of increased parental engagement in conversations around ethnic-racial socialization, and relationships to more positive child socio-emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes (Anderson et al., 2018; Caldwell et al., 2014; Coard et al., 2007; Parra-Cardona et al., 2012). Ultimately, these factors protect children from adverse outcomes such as mental health disparities and promote positive parent–child relationships, cultural pride, and academic achievement (e.g., Grindal & Nieri, 2015; Rivas-Drake & Marchand, 2016).

Using participatory community-engaged approaches to embody the ecological validity and cultural adaptation processes (Bernal et al., 2009; Doménech-Rodríguez et al., 2004), a randomized trial was conducted among Latinx families in the Midwest, comparing a control condition, the older, and the new adaptation with additional sessions and content to help parents and their children cope with issues relevant to immigration, documentation status, and the increasingly hostile culture toward Latinx immigrants. This research demonstrated that while both adaptations attuned to language and culture demonstrated positive effects upon parenting, the adaptation attuned to the social contexts of immigration, deportation, and the anxiety in which it might instill in children, resulted in unique effects upon parenting among Latino/a fathers and mothers, with effects upon child internalizing at both post and 6-month follow-up. The latter adaptation helped parents to support their children, likely more anxious due to a hostile social context, demonstrating the power of addressing the contexts of development facing immigrant children and families (Parra-Cardona et al., 2017).

### Ethnic-Racial Socialization

Growing research indicates that Ethnic-Racial Socialization (ERS) is a key contributor to supporting African American and Latinx families in coping with the effects of discrimination (Ayón et al., 2020; Hughes et al., 2006). In the BPSS program discussed earlier, the primary methods which African American caregivers used to approach racial socialization with young children were oral communication, modeling, role-playing, and exposure (Coard et al., 2004). Caregivers described practices related to racial socialization and authors found four salient race-related themes emerged given to the children (i.e., racism preparation, racial pride, racial equality, and racial achievement). In a randomized study, Coard and colleagues demonstrated that the program

increased positive parenting practices and more proactive racial socialization messages (Coard et al., 2007).

Research has supported the role of increased parental engagement in conversations around racial socialization, and relationships to more positive child socio-emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes. Though African American mothers were the primary caregivers represented in some of the initial studies, it is also important to highlight how other programs have focused on African American fathers in parenting programs. Components were developed to help fathers communicate with their sons about risky behavior, and their cultural heritage, via ERS, using multidimensional measures of parenting and what fathers teach and model to their sons about being Black. Parenting practices, including racial socialization, were found to strengthen the relationships between fathers and sons and lead to a decrease in boys' risky behaviors suggesting generational transmission from fathers to sons about racial issues, experiences, and survival skills (Caldwell et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2020). Again, explicit communication from parents about issues of race, ethnicity, and discrimination was among a package of parenting approaches found to affect child socio-emotional outcomes.

Culturally relevant prevention science has shown that parenting programs can successfully integrate and address the concerns of ethnic-racial socialization. Longitudinal research with rural African American families has shown that this combination of parenting strategies can buffer the influence of racial stress on parents and children while also leading to more positive parenting and child outcomes (Brody et al., 2021; Murry et al., 2007, 2021). In multiple generations of longitudinal randomized trials with children in the Strong African American Families (SAAF) and teens (SAAF-T, Kogan et al., 2012) programs, protective parenting strategies in which parents prospectively discuss difficult circumstances of discrimination have been found to be beneficial. These strategies have been found to affect youth pride and future expectations of success, reducing the likelihood that youth who experience discrimination will exhibit conduct disorder and mental health challenges. This work is informative in that African American parents who intentionally discuss and prepare their children for discrimination help them to better cope and be less likely to experience deleterious effects on their health, mental health, and well-being. The newest generation of work includes both conceptual and clinical models that explicitly explore the ways in which youth and families intentionally grapple and cope with race-based trauma (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Anderson et al., 2018). This represents the frontier of moving beyond a universal model to address the situations of racism, policing, and discrimination affecting Black Americans who must cope with the trauma of lost lives and find ways to embrace their race and heal from racial trauma.

## Summary And Discussion

With a racial-ethnic diversifying population who face specific issues of immigration, discrimination, and racial trauma, reviewing the available support for families in this critical era is tantamount to their survival. Substantial research has shown that family support is an important factor demonstrating results upon children's socio-emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes and even school-wide violence perpetration (Bierman et al., 2020; Henry & the MVPP, 2012; J. Smith et al., 2018; Webster-Stratton et al., 2008). Research demonstrates that parenting and family-based programs that incorporate attention to linguistics, worldviews, and contexts not only improve positive parenting, but also reduce stress, and improve health and mental health for parents and children alike, supporting the efficacy of culturally relevant adaptations for racial discrimination and trauma (Anderson et al., 2019; Brody et al., 2021; Murry et al., 2021). The strongest effects are exhibited in prevention science approaches attuned to the social contexts of discrimination, anti-immigrant practices and policies, and the social realities of minoritized families (Parra-Cardona et al., 2017). Cultural socialization is proactive and healing in terms of affirming identities and heritage (Caldwell et al., 2014; Coard et al., 2007; Thomas et al., 2020). Furthermore, addressing issues of discrimination forthright, fosters adaptive responses beneficial to the anxiety and mental health of children and parents alike, conditions not fully recognized in services to minoritized populations (Table 1).

### Social Determinants of Health Delivery Modality and Group Composition The Study of Power and Privilege

In this manuscript, we describe culturally relevant parenting programs that have been developed over the past decades that attend to language, world views, and contexts. Beginning with more surface adaptations that provide translation and positive representation of diverse minoritized families to integrating their cultural worldviews and social contexts, intentionally addressing racial trauma and discrimination. Culturally based programs designed to support African American and Latinx parents with intentional efforts to preserve cultural values and attend to pressing issues such as racial discrimination and immigration status are at the forefront of program development and adaptation, extending prior initial research focused on linguistic translation and attention to culture (Bernal & Sáez-Santiago, 2006). Parenting strategies for African American and Latinx families attuned to their socio-cultural contexts seek to foster a positive identity for children in the face of these challenges, to help them understand and cope with issues of discrimination



**Table 1** Culturally Relevant Parenting Programs

Study	Study Characteristics				Presence of Specified CR Practices	
	Program Name	Sample	Method of Assessment	CR Measure Used	Language	Worldviews Context
Anderson et al., 2018, 2019	Engaging, Managing, and Bonding through Race	10 African American parent-child dyads, children ages 10–14 years	Five 90-minute session intervention pilot trial with pretest/posttest assessment (120-min interviews)	Calculate, Locate, Communicate Scale (Stevenson, unpublished data)	No	Yes
Beasley et al., 2021	Legacy for Children™ (Legacy)	26 Latina mothers and their children less than 6 months–3 years	10 sessions & 60-min interviews	Qualitative interviews	Yes	No
Breitenstein et al., 2012	Chicago Parent Program	291 African American & 213 Latino parents, children 2–4 years	Reducing behavior problems and increasing parenting skills up to 1-year post-intervention across two trials conducted over 9 years	NA	Yes	No
Brody et al., 2004, 2017; Murry et al., 2007	Strong African American Families Program	332 African American mothers and their 11-year-old children	Seven weekly meetings, 1 h each	Racial Socialization Scale (Hughes & Johnson, 2001)	No	Yes
Caal et al., 2019	Abriendo Puertas/ Opening Doors	922 Latino parents and caregivers of preschool children	Multisite randomized control trial was conducted across 23 schools across a 10-session program	Self-developed scales (e.g., Language and learning)	Yes	No
Caldwell et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2020	Fathers and Sons Intervention Program	287 African American father-son dyads, sons ages 8–12 years	15 sessions, roughly 2 h each	Racial Socialization Scale (Martin, 2000)	No	Yes
Coard et al., 2004, 2007	Black Parenting Strengths and Strategies	30 African American primary caregivers and children mean ages 5 years 3 months	90-to-120-min structured interviews	Parent Interview for Racial Socialization developed by the authors	Yes	Yes
Dumas et al., 2011	Criando a Nuestros Niños Hacia el Éxito	124 Latino parents of children ages 3–6 years	12 sessions, 2 h each	Parent Experiences of Racial Socialization Scales (Stevenson, 1994b)	Yes	Yes
Pantin et al., 2003, 2009; Prado & Pantin, 2011; 2019	Familias Unidas	167 Hispanic families with children in 6th and 7th grade	Mixed design up to 12-month weekly sessions	NA	Yes	Yes
Parra-Cardona et al., 2012, 2017	Criando con Amor, Promoviendo Armonía y Superción	12 Latino families, children ages 6–12 years	2.5-to-3-h assessments up to 12 sessions	NA	Yes	Yes

*Note:* NA = Not Available; CR = Culturally Relevant; culturally relevant practices include addressing a person's *language* (including native tongue, mannerisms, idioms, and nuances), *worldviews* (i.e., values, customs, beliefs, and traditions exemplified by values of family obligations, respect for adults), and broader social and economic *context* (e.g., migration phases, acculturative stress, ethnic-racial socialization, discrimination, social support availability, or relationship to one's country of origin) (Bernal & Saez-Santiago, 2006).

and documentation status in developmentally appropriate ways, rooted in cultural values of family and respect for adults.

With the racist and discriminatory contexts facing Black and Brown parents, it is no longer the standard to conduct programming that ignores the racism and discrimination these families face; effects upon child internalizing and externalizing behavior emanating from racial trauma and discrimination are better addressed forthright in programming, in ways that foster more adaptive responses in children and among parents (Brody et al., 2021; Parra-Cardona et al., 2017). For many years, there has been some resistance to specific prevention programming in favor of more universal programming that could be broadly disseminated. The increasing proportion of the population comprised by Black and Brown people, disproportionate exposure to poverty, and structural inequities demand that we intentionally and effectively help minoritized families cope with the challenges that face them. These are the programs that demonstrate the most powerful effects on stress and mental health.

Given the more profound effect of family programming that attends to socio-cultural contexts, the issue facing broader implementation and dissemination is how to scale-up programming for diverse families, African American, Latino/a, Asian, and Native American, that are sensitive to their unique cultural values and social conditions. In this review, programs developed for other populations have been adapted for use with African American and Latinx families. In some cases, the adaptation was a totally redeveloped model that incorporated culture and parental racial-ethnic socialization in other cases. In other examples, additional modules and content were integrated into existing parenting models that only modestly increased the duration of the intervention by 1–2 sessions, while maintaining fidelity (Parra-Cardona et al., 2017). There need not be a tension between cultural relevance and program fidelity (Castro et al., 2004). In the field of medicine, advances in “precision medicine” are characterized by “tailoring the medical treatment to the individual characteristics of each patient” (National Research Council, 2011; Topol, 2014). Advancing prevention science in similar directions that deliver more cost-effective approaches with precision, directly addressing the social determinants of health, are at the core of reducing disparities in health and mental health (World Health Organization, 2008).

In this review, we have addressed programs with populations impacted by health disparities, including mothers, and some intentionally focused on fathers. Given the roles of mothers and fathers in families and the potentially distinctive contributions they offer in parenting and socialization (Caughy et al., 2019; McHale et al., 2006), more programming should engage fathers who can influence their children’s growth and development. More research is also needed to identify additional dimensions of culture and ethnic socialization that families might adopt. While

cutting-edge observational methods suggest additional dimensions important to families (Smith-Bynum et al., 2016), deeper dives into ways to help parents and children address issues of disparities in the school-to-prison pipeline, policing, and incarceration are needed to advance the field of racial trauma, adaptive coping, and socialization.

While the field has made advances in exploring parenting approaches, generations of structural inequities in the U.S. have produced dire disparities in poverty, wealth, income, housing, and other deeply rooted social determinants of health. There are prevention science approaches that begin to address issues of poverty and economic empowerment (Forgatch & DeGarmo, 2007; McLoyd et al., 2011). Multi-faceted and multi-level interventions that dismantle the root causes of racism and discrimination deserve immediate attention, development, and if efficacious, broader dissemination (Smith et al., in press).

### Delivery Modality and Group Composition

Over the past several decades, the literature has continued to promote systemic modifications to treatment across mental health disciplines so that approaches are inclusive and applicable for racial and ethnic minority populations (e.g., Bernal & Sáez-Santiago, 2006; Griner & Smith, 2006; Stevenson, 1994; Sue, 1998). Prevention programs have been developed that include African American and Latinx children and families, some via home-visiting models and others via family groups (Olds, 2002; Smith et al., 2004). Home visiting programs deliver support directly to the family but often are delivered to new or early childhood parents; home-visiting minimizes the need for transportation and other resources that might prevent participation (Olds, 2002; Webster Stratton et al., 2008). These programs provide crucial developmental knowledge and enhance parenting skills with infants and toddlers throughout the period in which children enter school age. Family groups, though more resource intensive in terms of transportation and other resources, offer the prospects for community-based group support which could potentially lead to ongoing support and even sustainability with intentional effort and support. There are strengths and limitations of both modes of delivery.

Parenting programs are being developed that consider the distinctiveness of minoritized populations, including several that space did not allow us to address here fully. Native American families suffer from the historical trauma of forced migration and child separation into boarding schools to assimilate them into American culture and need far more attention to this trauma given high rates of substance abuse and need far more attention to this trauma given high rates of substance abuse and suicide. Approaches are needed that are healing and culturally attuned. Asian American families have experienced internment in concentration camps, and

the recent re-emergence of anti-Asian violence, all of these pressing issues deserve attention to their specific contexts. The implications suggest that these interventions might function best in groups specifically developed to address their issues. So what of the prospects for cross-racial interaction in family programs? This is a topic with which the field must grapple in terms of fostering some conversations among groups of more diverse parents that might be enlightening for all; but could also be more difficult and complex to deliver in a multi-cultural society, particularly given the variations in language and culture that could emerge. Rather than choosing "all or none" approaches in delivering intervention, there may be opportunities for homogenous groups with shared language and cultural heritage, along with other opportunities for cross-ethnic conversations. This is an area about which more community voice and research are necessary highlighting the value of qualitative along with quantitative research in family science (Yoshikawa et al., 2008).

### The Study of Power and Privilege in Family Systems Research: Pushing the Field Forward with Critical Frameworks

Multicultural and socio-culturally attuned practices (e.g., Hartwell et al., 2012; Knudson-Martin et al., 2017) have increasingly grounded family scholarship over recent decades. Positioning family systems along axes of privilege and oppression, Letiecq (2019) developed the concept of family privilege to describe "the benefits, often invisible and unacknowledged, that one receives by belonging to family systems upheld in society as superior to all others" (Letiecq, 2019, p. 398). McDowell and Jeris (2004) argued for greater use of critical race theory in family research, refusing to describe disparities without referencing the racist systems that created them. Children and families of color who are disenfranchised by systemic racism not only deserve equitable access to quality prevention, interventions, and community spaces, but they also deserve programming that recognizes the power of race in shaping identity and development.

We believe critically conscious social justice frameworks addressing race and culture are imperative and have significant implications for future youth and family scholarship. Centrally addressing race and antiracism as a philosophy and practice is positioned within broader anti-oppression frameworks concerned with dismantling systems that deny persons access to human rights, social resources, power, and dignity through social marginalization (Corneau & Stergiopoulos, 2012; Crenshaw, 1991). Also aligned, decolonizing frameworks committed to de-centering Eurocentric paradigms and colonial power structures in intervention research have significantly improved the delivery and impact of interventions within Native American communities (Fellner, 2016). They

have important implications for programming with youth and families in other culturally diverse communities.

Youth and families benefit from programs and interventions that not only consider privilege but also their cultural backgrounds, values, and lived experiences in key processes, including program design, adaptation, recruitment, and analyses. The culturally relevant preventive parenting programs reviewed in this manuscript have the potential to "break the link" between the historical and current lived traumatic experiences in ways that are healing across generations, fostering adaptive response in parents and children, boding well for their health and mental health.

### Declarations

**Competing Interests** The authors declare no competing interests.

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