

# **Growing Up in America: The Extent and Impacts of Discrimination on Young Children from Immigrant Families**



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# Presenters



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# Logistics

- Slides and audio from today's webinar will be available at [www.migrationpolicy.org/events](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/events)
- The reports discussed today are available on our website:
  - *The Educational, Psychological, and Social Impact of Discrimination on the Immigrant Child*, by Christia Spears Brown is available at: <http://bit.ly/1F3yBzw>
  - *The Impact of Discrimination on the Early Schooling Experiences of Children from Immigrant Families*, by Jennifer Keys Adair is available at: <http://bit.ly/1OvtgpV>
  - *Economic, Social, and Health Effects of Discrimination on Latino Immigrant Families*, by Cecilia Ayón is available at: <http://bit.ly/1EQyk8F>
- If you have any problems accessing this webinar, contact us at [events@migrationpolicy.org](mailto:events@migrationpolicy.org) or 1-202-266-1929.
- Use Q&A chat function on the right of the screen throughout webinar to write questions. Or write [events@migrationpolicy.org](mailto:events@migrationpolicy.org) with your question.



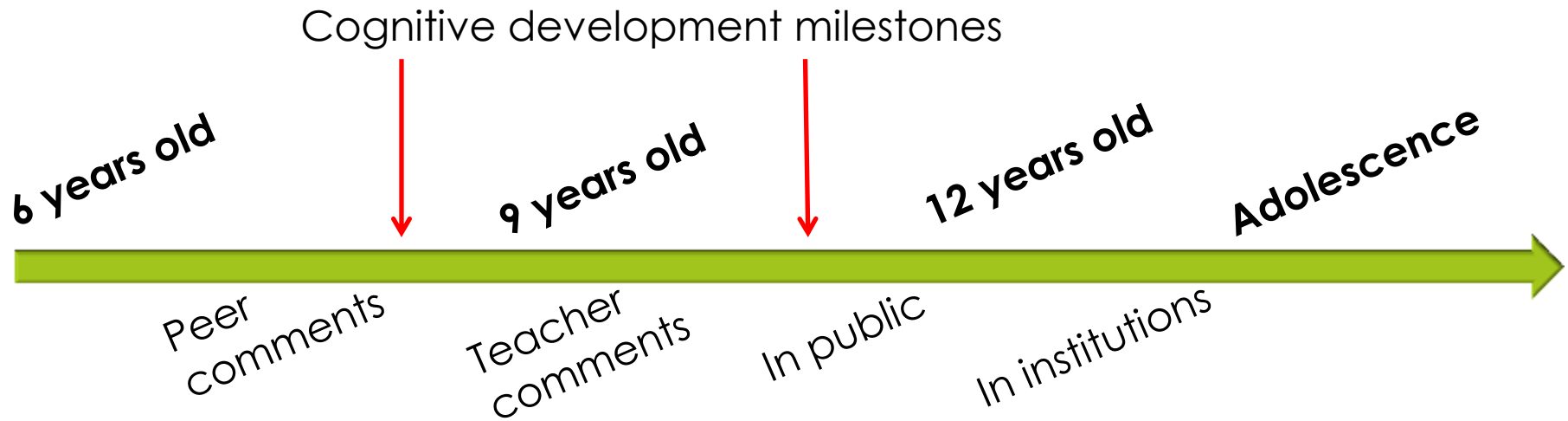
# Today's Presentation

- Discuss three reports on the impact of discrimination on young children of immigrants
- Differentiate between the “personal” discrimination that children perceive and “structural” discrimination they might not perceive.
- Focus on discrimination in education settings
- Discuss impacts of discrimination on child development
- Provide recommendations to address discrimination and buffer children against its impacts
- The reports were developed for a workshop on discrimination attended by a range of scholars and funded by the Foundation for Child Development.

# The Effects of Immigrant Children's Experiences with Discrimination

Christia Spears Brown, Ph.D.  
Department of Psychology  
University of Kentucky

# What forms of discrimination do children notice and when?



*Context of immigration and structural discrimination:*  
Poverty, Residential segregation/instability, Language difficulties,  
Discrimination aimed at families, Immigration policies

# Developmental Trends

Understanding of stereotypes and perspective-taking skills

↓ 9 years old

Peer comments

“They call me lots of names because I am Mexican.”

“In PE class, a lot of kids call me a beaner.”

“Some people at school get called wetbacks.”

# Developmental Trends

Authority figures can be wrong or unfair

9 years old

12 years old

Teacher  
comments

“The teacher assumes I can’t speak  
English.”

“I am invisible in class.”



# Developmental Trends

Broader perspective-taking skills



*12 years old*

*In public*

“When you go somewhere, like a restaurant, I sat down and waited to be asked then a family came in they attended their children instantly, because they were White.”

# Developmental Trends

Understanding of abstract concepts



12 years old

Adolescence

Institutional

“Sometimes at jobs you apply for you are rejected because they are discriminating.”

# Psychological and Physiological Outcomes

Symptoms similar to PTSD

Worry      Depression  
Hopelessness  
Anxiety      Aggression

Daily perceptions of discrimination associated with increases in cortisol

Immune system impairments, blood sugar imbalances, heart disease, memory and cognitive impairment, weight gain, sleep problems

All predictive of mental and physical health problems

# Academic and Economic Outcomes

Lower academic  
Performance

Lower school  
belonging

Less

enjoyment of school

perceived value of school

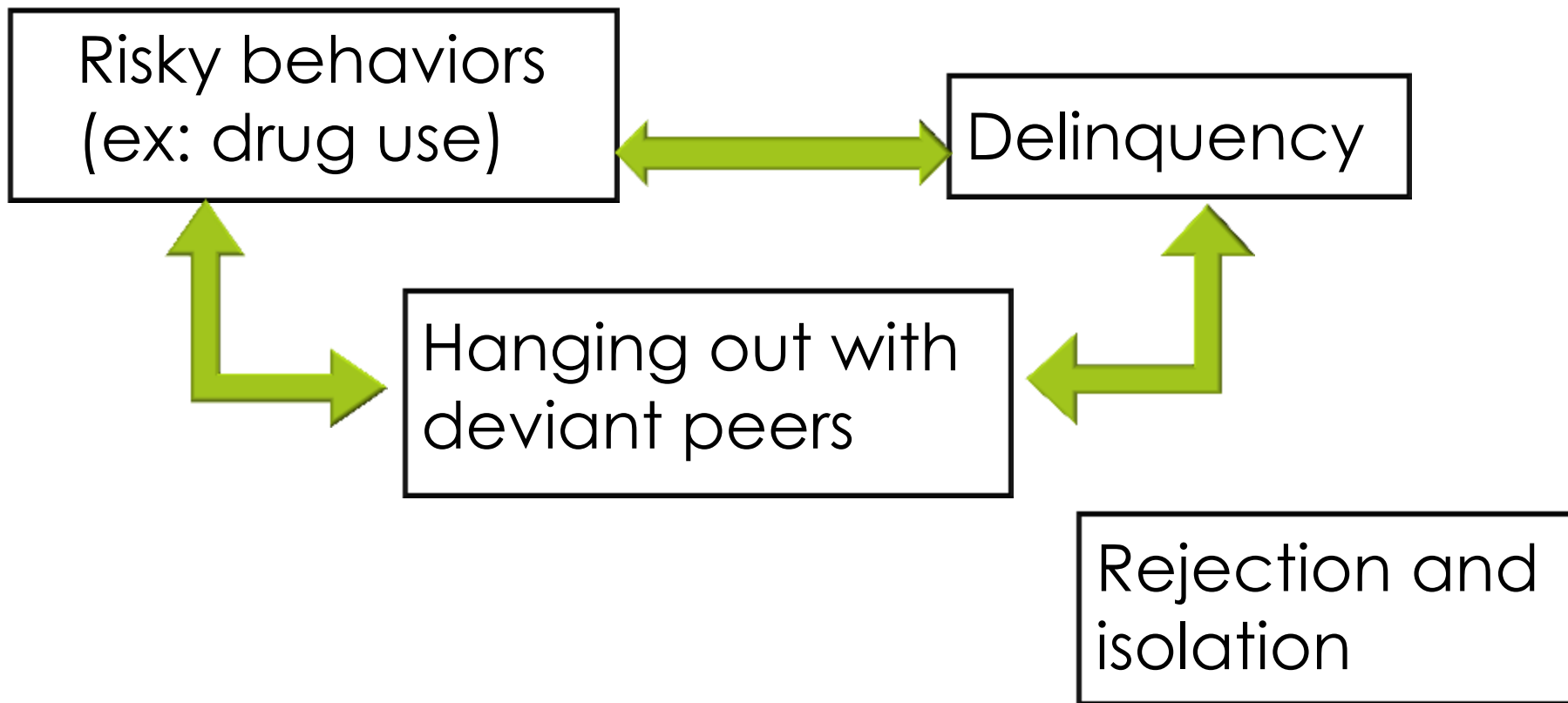
belief in ability

academic engagement

*Controlling for grades*

All predictive of dropping out of school and future employment opportunities

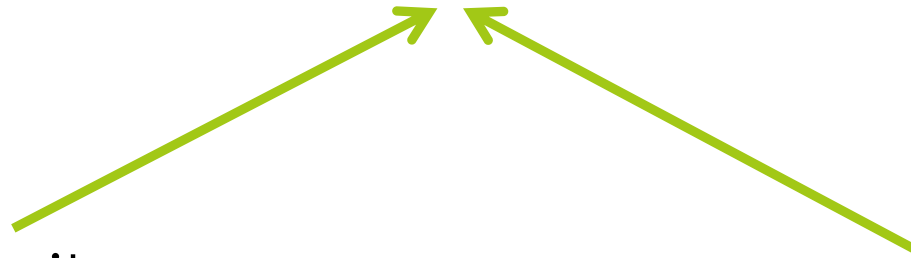
# Social and Anti-social Outcomes



All predictive of poor mental health and dropping out of school

# Protection against discrimination

Strong and positive ethnic identity



School diversity

Teacher's positive attitudes about diversity

Family discussions about cultural pride and discrimination

# Schools' Attitudes Matter



# Developmental Concerns







# **The Impact of Discrimination on the Early Schooling Experiences of Children from Immigrant Families**

**Jennifer Keys Adair, PhD**  
***The University of Texas at Austin***

# Effects of discrimination in early schooling

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- Discrimination in the early years of school affects development as well as academic performance in the short and long term.
- Discrimination disengages parents. Early grades are when parents are usually the most involved.
- Discrimination prevents schools from being seen as positive contexts of reception, places that welcome and help parents and families overcome the struggles and discrimination they face in the larger society.

# Types of Discrimination: PreK-3

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## Personal

Negative Interactions at School

Narrow Learning Experiences

Low Intellectual Expectations

Devaluation of Home  
Languages

## Structural

Segregation

Lack of High-Quality and  
Bilingual Programs

Low Teacher/School  
Engagement with Parents

Misdiagnosis of Special  
Education

Pursue reciprocal,  
equalizing  
relationships with  
parents and  
communities

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Recommendation #1



# Support rich discourse and representation of cultural and ethnic communities

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## Recommendation #2



Include more  
dynamic,  
sophisticated  
learning  
experiences

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Recommendation #3



Produce teachers who  
are connected to  
immigrant families  
AND are rigorously  
trained in early  
childhood pedagogy

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Recommendation #4



# Invest in creative education strategies for schools serving children of immigrants

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Recommendation #5





# **Economic, Social, and Health Consequences of Discrimination on Latino Immigrant Families: A Review of the Evidence**

Cecilia Ayón, MSW, PhD



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

# Discrimination

- Individual level
  - Micro-aggressions
  - Horizontal/intra-group
- Language and skin tone
- Institutional or structural

# Economic Consequences

- Workplace environment and exploitation
  - Loss of wages/wages are withheld
  - Long working hours
- Community and workplace raids

# Social Consequences

- Support
  - Mixed findings
- Segregation
  - Limitations to networks
- Isolation

# Health Consequences

- Discrimination can lead to poor health outcomes
- Barriers to services
  - Eligibility limitations
  - Eligibility verification
  - Climate of fear and mistrust

# Impact on Latino Immigrant Family Functioning and Parenting

- Positive parenting
- Parenting self-efficacy
- Unprepared to address issue of discrimination with children

# Implications



# Questions and Answers

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# For More Information

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