Leveraging technology for learning in Latino families

Findings from the Chula Vista field site

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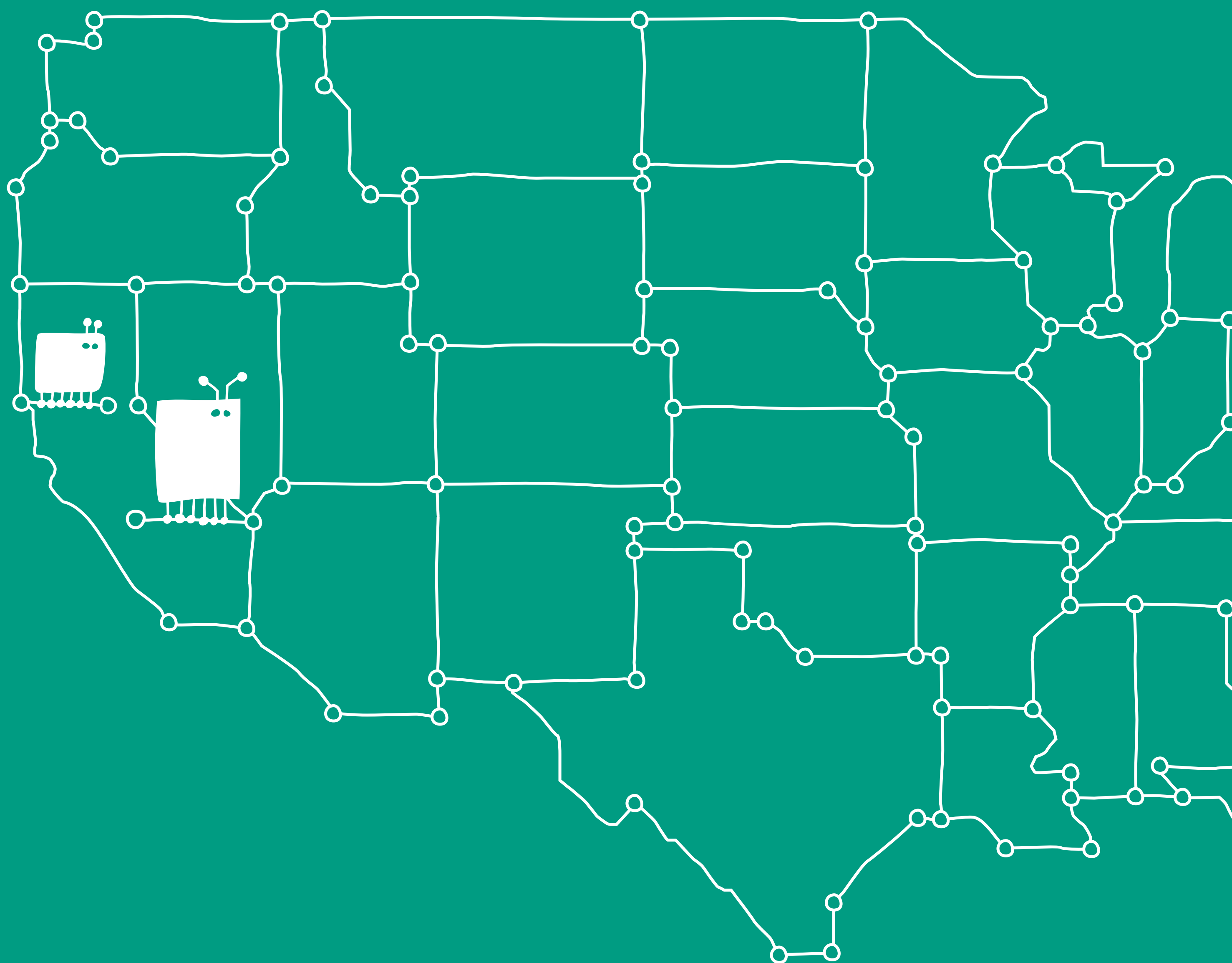

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introduction

Increasingly, broadband access and related digital technologies are being recognized as crucial to closing persistent social gaps between lower- and higher-income families. Efforts ranging from school district-level initiatives, to President Obama's repeated calls for outfitting under-served schools across the nation with high-speed Internet access via E-Rate, all draw attention to the growing linkages between students' technology-related skills, learning, and academic attainment. Similarly, research by the Social Science Research Council points to adults' growing needs for meaningful online access, given the range of information and opportunities—from health and education resources, to employment and related training—available online.

Studies in the U.S. and beyond have emphasized that having broadband access at home is most strongly associated with meaningful connectedness—which refers to individuals' abilities to use the Internet broadly, intensively, and productively to achieve their own goals (Kim et al., 2004; Livingstone & Helsper 2007; Lopez et al., 2013). Connecting only at school and in public community locations is not sufficient for developing the levels of comfort and sustained use that lead to real learning gains, both formal and informal, for parents and children.

Over the past 12 months, Vikki Katz (Rutgers University) has led a multi-sited study to understand how Connect2Compete—currently the only national effort to increase home-based broadband access for families with school-age children—has been implemented in three distinct localities (Chula Vista, CA, Sunnyside, AZ, and Denver, CO). The program emerged from the United States' 2010 National Broadband Plan with the goal of providing broadband at home for $9.95 per month, a discounted refurbished computer, and free local skills training to families with children receiving free or reduced-cost lunch at school. To roll-out the initiative at scale, Connect2Compete was organized as a public–private partnership, meaning that local telecommunications companies provide discounted broadband access directly to families in school districts across the country, and in some locations, offer them the reduced-cost computers and skills training as well.

The goal of the research is to explore how different versions of the Connect2Compete program have been deployed in three school districts. The study identifies key variations among parents, children, schools, and communities that influence (1) family decisions about adopting broadband and related technologies, and (2) how these technologies are integrated (or not) into a broad range of family routines and activities. The overarching aim is to take the lessons learned from talking with families and educators to guide future efforts to tailor digital equity initiatives to the needs, interests, and concerns of low-income families. This research has been funded by the Bezos Family Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

This report summarizes findings from Chula Vista, California, the first of the three sites where the research was conducted. Like all three sites, the Chula Vista school district serves high-poverty, predominantly Mexican-heritage student populations, and is working to encourage home-school connections through a variety of technology initiatives, with the Connect2Compete program as a central element of those efforts. The research focused on Mexican-heritage families because children of Mexican descent, born either to immigrant or U.S.-born parents, account for a full 16% of all U.S. children (Child Trends, 2012). These families also experience greater social disparities than other groups of U.S. Hispanics, as children of Mexican immigrants are more likely to grow up in poverty than any other U.S. children, and to have parents who have neither completed high school nor speak English well (Child Trends, 2012; Johnson et al., 2005; Lopez & Velasco, 2011). These are families that therefore stand to gain the most from digital equity initiatives like Connect2Compete.

Methods

This report summarizes findings from interviews conducted with 52 parents and 48 children attending two K-8 schools in Chula Vista Elementary School District, between July 27 and August 12, 2013. These families had all attended an informational meeting about Connect2Compete in May, 2013 at their school sites. Staff members at the two schools recruited families from the attendance lists for interviews. Families qualified for interviews if their focal child was still enrolled at the school, qualified for free or reduced-cost lunch, and identified as being of Latino heritage. Thirty-four families at each of the two school sites were eligible to participate; interviews were completed with 26 families at each school,[1] indicating a 77% response rate of eligible participants.

[1] There were two instances where children chose not to be interviewed. We consider this a good sign, as it indicates that children understood that their participation was voluntary, even if their parents had already given consent. Interviews with two other children were not included in analyses because they had not met the minimum age requirement (6 years old).

During the 2.5-week study period, Katz and her research team of bilingual, bicultural graduate and undergraduate students from the University of California–San Diego conducted in-depth, separate interviews with parents and their focal child, in their preferred location (i.e., at school or at home) and language (i.e., Spanish or English), for approximately an hour each. Parents were compensated with $25 in cash. Younger children were given two Sesame Street computer games and older children received activity and craft books.

Parents and children answered complementary questions about their technology adoption decisions, how connectivity affects family communication and activities, and how these new technologies are integrated into their media environments. Katz complemented family interviews by interviewing the school principals and district administrators for their perspectives on the Connect2Compete rollout.

Between November 3 and November 6, 2014, Katz and Carmen Gonzalez returned to Chula Vista to share the findings in this report with district leadership and with interviewed parents and children. This visit had two interlinked goals. The first was to conduct "member checks" on the validity of what we had found and concluded in our report. The second to discuss, based on our findings, what kinds of interventions these local stakeholders would suggest to improve digital equity efforts in their district and others like theirs. A brief summary of these meetings is included at the end of this report.

Community description

Chula Vista is located in Southern California next to the U.S.-Mexico International Border and has a population of approximately 244,000.[2] The city's demographics reveal a diverse community, with 58% of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino; 20% as White; 14% as Asian; and 4% as Black or African American.

The Chula Vista Elementary School District (CVESD) is the largest K-6 district in the state of California. It operates 56 elementary schools and serves close to 30,000 students. The student body is primarily Latino/Hispanic (69%), with substantial White (12%) and Filipino (9%) populations.[3] Approximately 36% of CVESD's students are classified as English-language learners, and 50% qualify for free or reduced-cost meal programs.

When compared to the district, the two schools where we recruited families had larger Latino student populations (89% and 90%, respectively), more English-language learners (49% and 57%, respectively), and higher rates of students on reduced- or no-cost meal programs (89% and 86%, respectively).

[2] Source: 2010 U.S. Census
[3] Source: http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/

Family demographics

All interviewed families self-identified as Latino or Hispanic. As Table 1 shows, parents are mostly female (92%) with a median age of 35. A majority of parents (65%) are married, and 51% reported that they had not completed high school. The median household size is five, and 65% of parents reported an annual household income of less than $25,000.[4] Approximately half (54%) of interviewed parents (mostly mothers) are employed either part- or full-time, and another 39% described themselves as homemakers or stay-at-home moms. Foreign-born parents (77%) had lived in the U.S. for a median of 13 years. Whether immigrant or U.S.-born, parents reported that their family had lived in their neighborhood[5] for a median of 10 years.

Table 1: Interviewed family demographics

	Parents	Children
Number of interviews	52	48
Median age	35	9
% Female	92	48
% Interviewed in Spanish	75	30
Education		
% Without high school diploma (parent)	51	—
Median current grade (children)	—	4
Median household size	5	—
% Annual household income less than $25,000	65	—
% Parent married	65	—
Parent employment		
% Employed (full- or part-time)	54	—
% Homemaker	39	—
% Unemployed	8	—
% Parent born outside the U.S.	77	—
Median years living in U.S. (immigrant parents only)	13	—
Median years living in neighborhood (all parents)	10	—

[4] The 2015 federal poverty level for a five-person household is $28,410 (aspe.hhs.gov).
[5] Neighborhood was self-defined by interviewees.

A majority of parents chose to be interviewed in Spanish (75%); by contrast, 70% of their children completed their interview in English. When asked about family language use at home, 29% of parents reported that only Spanish is spoken at home and 39% that mainly Spanish is spoken, but also some English (see Table 2). Parents identified different language dynamics among their children, with 23% of parents noting that their children speak mainly English but also Spanish with each other, and 21% reporting that their children only speak English with each other.

Table 2: Parents' reports of languages spoken at home

	Among parents and children	Among children only
% Only Spanish	29	15
% Mainly Spanish but also English	39	19
% Spanish and English equally	14	8
% Mainly English but also Spanish	15	23
% Only English	4	21

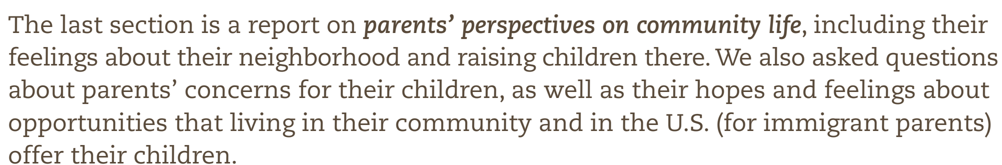
overview of report

In the pages that follow, we summarize our results from interviews conducted with 52 parents and 48 children in two Chula Vista schools. The findings are presented thematically; in cases where parents and children were asked complementary questions, their responses are presented sequentially. Quotes included in each section are representative of the dominant themes in the data on that particular subject.

We begin by discussing families' ***technology adoption histories***, as a means of providing context for what kinds of devices and experiences families had prior to the introduction of Connect2Compete in the district. This section also includes parents' and children's perceptions of the Connect2Compete program, its intended purpose, and what they felt it reflected about the district's priorities.

The second section focuses on ***families' media environments***, which includes parents' and children's perspectives on who uses what technologies, for what purposes, and with whom, at home. Parents' concerns about their children's technology use, and parents' and children's perspectives on the strategies that parents use to monitor and manage their children's uses of technology are also included in this section.

The third section focuses on ***home-school connections***. We cover parents' and children's perspectives on doing homework and parents' capabilities to help their children completing assignments, including how technology is implicated in these families' routines. We also report on parents' comfort levels with their children's schools, using school-related technology programs, and contacting teachers. Finally, we review parents' and children's perspectives on educational media use at home, including what kinds of devices and content they consider educational, and for what purposes.



The last section is a report on ***parents' perspectives on community life***, including their feelings about their neighborhood and raising children there. We also asked questions about parents' concerns for their children, as well as their hopes and feelings about opportunities that living in their community and in the U.S. (for immigrant parents) offer their children.

technology adoption histories

Parents were asked to give an account of their families' histories with the Internet, computers, and other digital technologies. While many parents found it challenging to remember when the household got their first computer or how long they have had Internet access, about one-third of interviewed families have had Internet at home for years. There were only two families who indicated that the Connect 2 Compete (C2C) computer was their first computer in the home, and most families already had a computer and/or other devices, like tablets, prior to the C2C offer.

When we asked parents why they had decided to purchase their first home computer, they were most likely to cite their children's education as a driving reason for the purchase. As a result, purchasing a computer generally coincided with the eldest child entering upper grades in elementary school, when computers were considered essential for homework and general schoolwork. Despite most parents not feeling very familiar with computers, they repeatedly emphasized how important it was to have one in the house, first for educational purposes, and over time, as a more generalized household necessity.

Reflecting on how computer and Internet use had changed in their families over time, parents reported that their families used them differently from when they had first adopted these technologies. For parents who reported frequent use prior to the Connect2Compete program, the computer had shifted from being their personal device to being a household device as their children grew older. For parents who went online less often, computers were used primarily by their children for school at first, and parents generally became more comfortable with the technology over time. These dynamics differed between and within families, as family members often had different levels of comfort or expertise with a particular device or with the Internet. In general, families reported some form of evolution in use since these technologies had first been introduced into their home.

> "Teníamos unos amigos que… dijeron que teniendo la computadora se iba a ayudar más al niño cuando entrara a la escuela. Somos primerizos, no tenemos mucha experiencia—cualquier cosa que nos dicen, ah órale.
> Some friends… told us that having a computer would help our child when he started school. We're first-time parents, we don't have a lot of experience—any advice we get, great."
>
> *—Father of a fourth-grade boy (age 9)*

> "Se me hacía como que era necesaria en la casa y luego después me gustó porque podría hacer pagos por Internet, checar la cuenta del banco, compra[r] los boletos de avión. O sea, cosas así especiales que puedes agarrar por Internet, eso fue lo que nos gustó.
> I thought it was needed at home, and then I liked it because I could make payments online, check my bank account, buy plane tickets. I mean, special things like those that you can get online, that's what we liked."
>
> *—Mother of a seventh-grade girl (age 11)*

> "De repente llega la computadora a la casa… se me pone enfrente y… quería usarla para todo. Quería aprovecharla al máximo… O sea, sí nos cambió mucho; nos ayudo muchísimo… O sea sí nos dio una cambio en la vida, por practicidad, por seguridad.
> Suddenly, the computer gets home… it sits in front of me and… I wanted to use it for everything. I wanted to take full advantage of it… I mean, it changed things; it helped a lot… it changed our lives, in practicality, in safety."
>
> *—Mother of a fifth-grade girl (age 10)*

Parents' perspectives on Connect2Compete

Of the 52 families interviewed, 34 (66%) only purchased the desktop computer from the C2C offer; 13 families (25%) purchased the desktop computer and signed up for the $9.95/month Internet offer; 2 families only signed up for the Internet offer; and 3 families did not sign up for any part of the C2C offer. Only two families were getting Internet at home for the first time through C2C.

Parents often reported that they had discussed the C2C offer with their partners or with other family members (including children) before deciding to sign up for the Internet offer, the computer offer, or both. Their decisions were generally based on assessments of how important it was to have computers and/or the Internet in the home for educational purposes, and on the affordability of the offer.

All parents interviewed in Chula Vista had attended an informational meeting about the C2C offer. As a result, they were more knowledgeable about the program than parents in Arizona and Colorado who were not always aware of the program, even though they were eligible for it. This pattern shows how important emphatic rollouts of digital equity programs are, since informed parents fully recognized the benefits to themselves and their families, and acted on the opportunity. Many parents found out about the

program through the school, but others were alerted by friends, family members, and other organizations in the community, sometimes in combination with school outreach efforts as well.

Parents' general understanding of the C2C program's purpose was that it would provide educational benefits to children via access to technology and the Internet. Consistent with the implications of the name "Connect2Compete" —i.e., that being online is necessary to compete in today's learning environments—parents expressed a sense of urgency that technology is quickly becoming a necessity for children's success in and out of school.

> "I think [the C2C offer] was being made so children will learn more about technology, because we're in the 21st Century, for them to be able to do research."
>
> —*Mother of a fifth-grade boy (age 10)*

Parents also saw the C2C program as a way to promote continued learning at home. Having a home computer with Internet access signified that children's learning would no longer be limited to the classroom.

> "Según nosotros, para que... si le dejaban algún tipo de tarea al niño, que lo pudiera hacer en el Internet, cosas así por el estilo; que teníamos que estar conectados para la ventaja del niño.
> We thought that it would... if my child had an assignment, he could use the Internet to do it, things like that; that we had to connect for the child's advantage."
>
> —*Father of a fourth-grade boy (age 9)*

It also meant that parents and children could learn together, as parents could gain more skills and confidence to help their children with schoolwork. Having Internet at home was particularly attractive because it facilitated fast, reliable translations.

> "Ahorita andamos... con las traducciones para saber lo de los niños de la escuela, y como lo dejan todo en inglés... rápido en el Internet, la computadora rapidito ahí saco... las respuestas que ocupo.
> Now we're... with the translations, to find out about children's school stuff, and since they assign everything in English... I quickly use the Internet, the computer, to get... the answers that I need."
>
> —*Mother of a first-grade boy (age 6)*

Parents appreciated the C2C program because it symbolized the schools' support for their investment in their children's success. The initiative was praised and clearly appreciated by parents.

> "I know some parents financially wouldn't be able to afford it, so for the schools to have this program, I have to shake each and every one of their hands that they did this... I was really impressed that they cared that much. They really pushed technology and computers and this principal made it known to all the parents—Parents, if you don't have email, get one. This is a new world we're living in. Your kids, they already know how to do this, so you do it. So he got up and pushed the parents also, which I thought was fantastic."
>
> —*Mother of a seventh-grade girl (age 12)*

It is important to note that a few families had difficulties signing up for the C2C Internet offer. About one-third of parents reported that they did not qualify for the offer because they already had Internet service through Cox or because they did not have documentation required to establish their eligibility. A few parents also mentioned that the reduced-cost service from Cox was too slow, limiting their ability to stream online content. Some parents also feared that the C2C offer was a marketing ploy, citing the end date of the reduced-cost offer as a potential financial trap. This fear was heightened when some parents called Cox to sign up for the offer and were upsold to pricier plans.

Children's perspectives on Connect2Compete

Children were often aware of the C2C program if their families had signed up, and those children felt positively about the offer. They could quote the price for the computer and the monthly Internet cost without prompting, suggesting both family discussion about the offer and children's acute awareness of their families' finances.

Children's involvement in family decisions about C2C depended partly on age, as older children were more likely to have participated in adoption decisions, and were more capable of elaborating on why their parents had opted for the Internet, computer, or both. Younger children may not have been directly consulted in the decisions, but were often aware of the conversations their parents had had about adoption and could recount them in detail.

> "My mom is like, "Should we get it?" Because we already have the iMac. But [she] noticed it was… going to break or something, because it was starting to make noise… So my dad was like, "Yeah, you should." Because if this one breaks you can't go back to the library to do your homework… Yeah, I [told them] it was a good idea… because sometimes my sister is using the iMac, so I was like, "Can I please use it?" And I barely got on… So I wanted another one for myself."
>
> *—Girl in sixth grade (age 11)*

> "Es una idea muy buena. Y más de $60 compré la computadora. Porque muchas familias no tienen tanto dinero y nada más la pueden comprar así.
> It's a very good idea. And even more so for $60 to have bought the computer. Because many families don't have that much money and they can only afford it this way."
>
> *—Girl in fifth grade (age 10)*

Children viewed the main utilities of the new computers and the Internet as related to submitting homework, playing learning games like Cool Math, and completing research assignments. For some children, adding another computer to the home was an attractive opportunity. Sometimes, the new computer replaced one that was older and slower, but more often, a new computer meant less time waiting or arguing with siblings because they wanted or needed to use it.

Children were aware of filtering software on the computers that came through C2C; for some, it was frustrating to be limited to more educational content. Others saw the filters as an indicator that the computer's main purpose was for completing schoolwork.

> "[The computer] is from the school and the school doesn't just give you like ordinary games that you type a game and it pops up and it's like a video game or something. It's like school games in there."
>
> *—Girl in third grade (age 8)*

families' media environments

Children's interviews began by asking them to map out the technology in each room of their home, including stationary media devices (e.g., televisions, computers, DVD players, landline phones, video game consoles), the usual locations of mobile media (e.g., cell phones, smartphones, laptops, e-readers), and non-digital media (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers, board games; see examples in Figure 1).

The maps clearly showed that children's homes were generally more media-rich than would be presumed for working poor families. Most families had multiple televisions, as well as at least one tablet, smartphone, laptop, computer, and/or video game console.

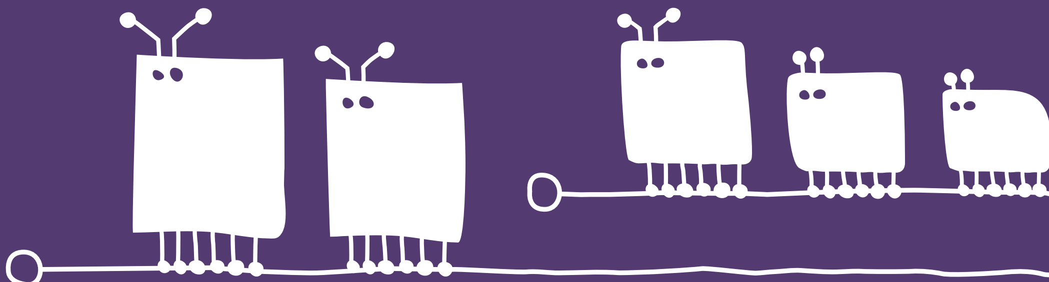
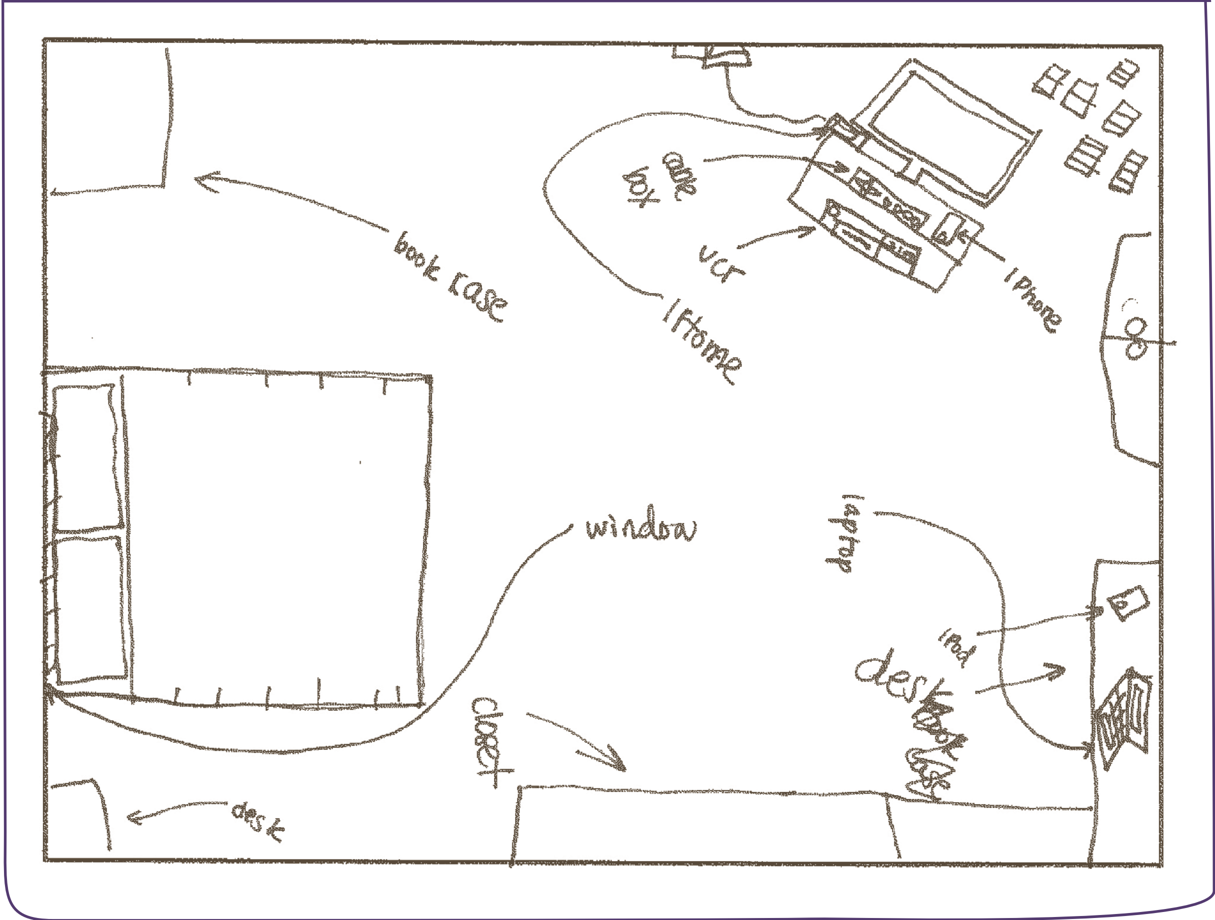


Figure 1: Media environment map: Bedroom of a seventh-grade girl (age 12)



After mapping out all of the media in their homes, children were asked to identify the most important media forms in each room and to describe their media use habits (i.e., who used them most and for what purposes). In living rooms, children most often chose the television or the computer (often a C2C computer). In their own bedrooms, which were often shared with a sibling, children's choices varied between televisions, computers, game systems, chapter books, and other reading books, but most used these media alone. In their parents' rooms, children selected televisions and parents' cellphones most often. They watched TV in this room primarily or exclusively in Spanish (whereas TV content in living rooms was more likely to be in English). Children also often indicated that tablets and parents' smartphones were kept in parents' bedrooms, and while they viewed these devices as belonging to parents, children were often allowed to use them while in their parents' rooms and presumably under close supervision.

Stationary media devices were most often identified as belonging to the whole family, whereas mobile devices were more likely to be owned by individuals. Media ownership of mobile devices was more clearly delineated in families who had multiples of one type of device. Arguments related to technology generally centered on members' clashing needs or desires to use shared devices.

“I don’t like to use [my dad’s phone], cause I have my own phone. But, my sister likes to use it to play Candy Crush… My dad and sister argue when my dad needs to have his phone for the work and my sister just won’t give it to him, cause she’s busy playing Candy Crush.”

—Boy in fifth grade (age 10)

Parents’ perspectives on family tech use

Parents’ own technology use

Parents described varying levels of personal computer and Internet use. Approximately one-third of all parents used the Internet on a daily or near-daily basis. By contrast, only a few parents said that they rarely or never used the Internet.

When asked what the Internet is useful for, most parents mentioned learning new things. Some families referred to this as “researching.” This learning was sometimes framed as school-related, for example, when using Google or YouTube to help with school assignments or with general vocabulary questions.

“Oh, it’s made it a lot easier. If we need information about… a word, sometimes I won’t know what a meaning of a word is… Really, it helps me learn… Like I said, it’s used to give the definition of words, and how to spell them correctly.”

—Mother of a second-grade boy (age 7)

“The way we utilize it the majority of the time is research. If my daughter is sick, we go to WebMD symptoms, or “Mommy, I have a question and can’t answer it,” I Google it. Research, mostly for that… We look it up, and that’s how I’m able to show them and I, myself, learn it also.”

—Mother of a seventh-grade girl (age 12)

Parents also viewed the Internet as useful for connecting with health resources, such as healthy recipes, home remedies, information on symptoms and medicines, or information about medical providers in the area. Having this information readily available made seeking medical care easier for these parents. This is an important finding, given that low-income Latino families are disproportionately likely to report difficulties accessing healthcare when they need it (e.g., Katz, Ang, & Suro, 2012).

“[El Internet es] bastante útil, te ahorras de estar yendo de clínica en clínica, manejando, estar esperando que te puedan atender… Nomás te metes a esa página, buscas clínicas cerca de tu área y vas… filtrando clínica por clínica hasta que llegas a la adecuada.
[The Internet is] very useful, you spare yourself from going from one clinic to another, driving, waiting for somebody to help you out… All you do is log into that website, search for clinics near your area, and you go there… filtering clinic by clinic until you find the proper one.”

—Mother of a first-grade girl (age 6)

The Internet also helped families communicate with friends or family in Mexico, as they used Skype or Facebook to connect with them. These low-cost and free services have made communication and coordination with family members across borders much more convenient for many families.

> “… y como estoy en contacto también con mi familia, toda mi familia está en México, entonces, no tengo que gastar más en tarjetas de teléfono para hablar con ellos… Por ejemplo en Facebook compartimos fotos, compartimos comentarios, nos ponemos de acuerdo hacer algo, una reunión, y estoy encantada yo.
> … and since I'm also in touch with my family, all my family is in Mexico. So then, I don't have to buy more phone cards to speak with them… For example, in Facebook we share photos, comments, we make plans to do something, meet up, and I'm delighted.”
>
> —*Mother of a second-grade girl (age 6)*

Parents were also asked which devices they used to access the Internet, and the responses were quite evenly balanced between using computers and smartphones to do so. Parents sometimes preferred to use the computer because the larger screen was easier to read and it facilitated co-viewing content with their children. On the other hand, some parents viewed smartphones as more useful for looking up information quickly and from different locations, which was usually described as an individual activity.

Seeking help from children

When we asked parents if their children helped them to use computers or the Internet, many responded with a lighthearted laugh, admitting that their children knew more about technology than they did. When asked how often they did online activities with their children, 49% of parents reported that they did so often or very often. Children, however, felt that this happens less frequently, with only 33% reporting that they do online activities with their parents often or very often.

Parents described different kinds of technology help from their children, including basic computer usage, Internet searching, and translating web content. Parents often welcomed their children's help because it gave them an opportunity to learn from and with their children.

> “He knows more than me, obviously, because he learns a lot of that in school… And in fact I expect to be learning more about it, and especially with him going back to school. Because… every year they give him this stuff where he can learn on the Internet.”
>
> —*Father of a third-grade boy (age 8)*

Language barriers complicated technology help between some parents and their children. Spanish-dominant parents often tasked their children with simultaneously interpreting both the technology and language, which at times created a tense dynamic between them. This dynamic could be heightened when parents had very limited experience with computers, as their children struggled to teach them the technology's basic functions, in addition to translating content for them.

> “Sí [le pido a mi hija que me ayude], pero en veces se molesta. En veces no quiere ayudarme, en veces anda "de luna"… con sus ideas, como todos los niños. Y no me gusta forzarla. Entonces yo, porque en veces trato de hacerlo por mi misma pero no lo hago bien. "Ama, ¿qué le hiciste? ¡Ya le moviste a algo que no es!"
> Yeah, [I ask my daughter for help], but she gets annoyed sometimes. Sometimes she doesn't want to help me, sometimes she's in outer space… with her ideas, like all children. And I don't like to force her. So then, sometimes I try to do it by myself, but I don't do it right. "Mom, what did you do? You changed something you shouldn't!"”
>
> —*Mother of a fifth-grade girl (age 10)*

In addition to language constraints, parents' comfort going online on computers was often hampered by their limited knowledge about the device. Parents mentioned wanting to learn more about how computers function, and some were taking computer classes at the time that we interviewed them. This suggests that programs

that combine language and computer skills training may be very beneficial and relevant for parents.

> “Learning more about how to use computers [would make me feel more confident]. Maybe I should take a computer class just to... So that way I can also teach my kids.”
>
> —*Mother of a fourth-grade boy (age 8)*

Parents' technology concerns and strategies
Parents were mostly concerned about their children's access to inappropriate content online, but some also reflected on how technology can disrupt family time. Parents mainly dealt with these concerns by limiting children's technology use and monitoring their online activity. In general, we found that parents usually managed their children's technology use by monitoring their activities, rather than by engaging with devices and content together.

This dynamic was also reflected in both parents' and children's responses to fixed-answer questions about parents' mediation of children's technology use. While 58% of parents reported that they sit and watch what their child is doing on the Internet either often or very often, only 24% of children reported that their parents do so as frequently as parents said they did. Similarly, 77% of parents reported that they stay nearby when their child uses the Internet either often or very often, as compared with 41% of their children.

These stark differences between parents' and children's reports reflect the "backgroundness" of these parents' mediation strategies, in that children appeared less aware of parents' efforts to monitor their media activity. While technology rules were generally established and understood within the family, parents mostly monitored children's technology use discreetly, either because they were engaged in other household tasks simultaneously or because they modified their strategies so as to avoid discouraging their children from using technology they viewed as critical to their school success.

Parents' mediation strategies also involved controls on both spatial and temporal aspects of their children's technology use. Many parents placed the computer(s) in a location in the home where they could see the screen from multiple vantage points. They also had specific rules that limited time on particular devices, or a set time in the evening when all technology had to be turned off or handed over to them. These time-centered rules were especially useful when devices were being shared between multiple family members.

> “Mi hijo tiene videojuegos, tenemos Wii, tenemos el iPad, tenemos la computadora en mi cuarto. Tengo la computadora de los niños, tengo televisión. Pero sí hay veces nos damos el tiempo de irnos al parque, irnos a comer una nieve, ir a comer juntos.
> My son has videogames, we have Wii, we have the iPad, we have the computer in my room. I have the kids' computer, the TV. But yeah, sometimes we take the time to go to the park, to go get an ice cream, eat out together.”
>
> —*Mother of a second-grade girl (age 7)*

> “I have the computer in my room. That way I know he's not up at night, even if he's not going to look at something he's not supposed to, I don't want him on the Internet at three o'clock in the morning... It's good for him to learn, but there's time for sleeping and a time for learning.”
>
> —*Father of a third-grade boy (age 8)*

Children's perspectives on family tech use

Children's own technology use
Children most enjoyed using technology for Minecraft and Cool Math, followed by Fireboy and Water Girl (which are part of Cool Math), Territory War, Sum Dog, Slender Man, Candy Crush, Starfall, and Achieve 3000. They also reported spending time on YouTube, Google, Instagram, and searching for music that they like. Older children mentioned Facebook accounts, but generally with more

parental restrictions than was the case for their other online activities.

Children used the Internet mostly in English. They were most likely to complete school-related activities alone, including a lot of educational game play. Games that children perceived as being primarily for entertainment (like Minecraft) were played either alone or with siblings. Younger children were more likely to report watching Minecraft videos on YouTube or watching their older siblings playing Minecraft, as opposed to primarily playing the game themselves.

> “In Cool Math games there is like a game where there is Fireboy and Water Girl, and my brother and I are always fighting because the Fireboy has the better controls than the Water Girl. So we are fighting which one we're gonna get.”
>
> —*Girl in fourth grade (age 8)*

> “I usually play Minecraft with my brother. Like with [the] laptop and the other computer from school I have Minecraft, so we join games.”
>
> —*Boy in third grade (age 8)*

Few children referenced going online with their parents. Those who did were most likely to do so when connecting with relatives using FaceTime or Facebook. Children were most likely to solicit parents' help and involvement in their online activities to avoid or manage dangers related to viruses and pop-up ads, which were prominent concerns for both children and parents. Younger children sometimes turned to their parents for help with technical issues like starting the computer or setting it up.

> “[I go online] by myself, but they warn me about websites and stuff like that and what not to click so we don't get like, viruses. And my mom told me to watch out for pop-ups... She says not to click on anything I don't know about... just stay focused to what you want to do on the computer. Don't get distracted by those little things.”
>
> —*Girl in seventh grade (age 12)*

Children's perspectives on parental mediation

Children reported that parents routinely asked them to confirm what they were doing online from a distance, but seldom walked over to check. One form of parental monitoring that children were more acutely aware of was parents' decisions to keep laptops and computers in living rooms and shared space.

> “Sometimes she's just sitting [on] the couch and... she's just staring [at] what I'm searching. Mostly she doesn't see what I'm watching, because she has things to do, so she just tells me, "what are you going to search on?" And I just tell her music, or games, she was OK. But she always tells me to not [play] games that you have to pay for.”
>
> —*Girl in fifth grade (age 10)*

> “She's sometimes at the dinner table and when I'm on the computer watching something she says, "What are you watching?" or, "What are you playing?" I say what I'm doing or watching.”
>
> —*Boy in fourth grade (age 8)*

Restrictive mediation was most likely around games that cost money or fears of viruses that were costly to remove.

> “No, [she doesn't encourage me to explore new things] because, she doesn't want to mess around with the computer... Because the last time... it had a virus, so we couldn't do that much stuff on it. So now, since we got it fixed, she doesn't want to mess with stuff with it, so we could get a virus again.”
>
> —*Girl in sixth grade (age 11)*

Views on how the Internet impacts family life

Children were also asked questions about what they feel having broadband Internet makes easier and more difficult for their families. Children provided detailed explanations for how broadband makes it easier to complete schoolwork, for their parents to look up information for work, and to save time by mapping out directions and buying goods online. Others discussed how much easier it is to find entertainment options that the whole family enjoyed. And for many, broadband access provided better and more cost-effective ways to stay in close contact with loved ones in Mexico. Children viewed technology as useful for all of these purposes: everyday activities, entertainment, and staying connected.

Everyday activities:

> "My mom, she buys things on eBay, like makeup and stuff, so it makes it for her life easier. And for me... it makes it easier because I have homework on my iPad."
>
> *—Girl in seventh grade (age 11)*

> "Internet helps us get to destinations. Internet helps me with book reports and everything like that. It helps my dad with his job. It helps my mom with her job. Uh... Internet includes Wi-Fi, right? It helps my phone... It helps my mom with her phone. So, pretty much all of that."
>
> *—Boy in fifth grade (age 10)*

Entertainment:

> "[Having broadband] makes it more entertaining so if there's nothing to do they'll just go on the computer and play... if you're using the iPad you know... you always need Wi-Fi... We'll use the Wi-Fi so we can go on YouTube and Netflix."
>
> *—Boy in fifth grade (age 10)*

Staying connected with loved ones:

> "I think it helps my mom to talk with my dad's grandma, and his mom... They're somewhere in Mexico. And they, they really don't know us, like, [because] we were born over here... She talks to them on Facebook."
>
> *—Girl in fifth grade (age 9)*

> "It's easier... [to] communicate with other people. Like my mom has Facebook and sometimes when my aunt in TJ [Tijuana] is online, she lets us go on it and talk to our cousins."
>
> *—Girl in sixth grade (age 10)*

In terms of difficulties that broadband might introduce to family life, a number of children cited concerns about maintaining privacy and security. They specifically mentioned fears of encountering online predators, stumbling upon inappropriate content, or downloading viruses accidentally. Some children were quite frank about ways that they felt adopting the Internet had disrupted time that they spent with their parents—either because online access distracted their parents, or because they felt distracted from family time themselves.

> "Whenever they're on the Internet I can't really hang out with them, [because] they're mainly on the computer. So I can't really be with them that much, like hang out."
>
> *—Girl in fifth grade (age 10)*

> "Yeah. It distracts me... It basically distracts me a lot... Like, when I'm doing something, I'm just playing, when my mom says she's calling me and then she comes in the room finally, she says, "I've been calling you," and I've never heard her. I didn't hear her."
>
> *—Boy in fifth grade (age 10)*

Other children countered this perspective by providing examples of how online resources facilitated time spent together, either directly (e.g., by watching online contact together) or indirectly (e.g., by making it easier to locate places to go spend time together).

> “My mom usually wants us to turn off the computer when we're going to go watch a movie or something. So we turn it off to watch [it] together.”
>
> ***—Girl in sixth grade (age 11)***

> “It helps us spend time together. Like if we see something—if my mom sees something online, like a board game, she either buys it or we play it on the computer.”
>
> ***—Girl in sixth grade (age 10)***

home-school connections

Children's learning trajectories are heavily influenced by their families' relationships with their schools and teachers. Researchers have long documented how strong home-school relationships benefit students. For parents with limited formal education, connections to trusted educators are especially critical for locating resources that directly support their children, in addition to finding opportunities to augment their own skillsets so that they can better support their children's progress (Katz, 2014; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Valdés, 1996).

In this section, we cover key themes from parents' and children's interviews related to working together to complete homework, including how they use technology to do so. We also explore parents' feelings about interacting with their children's schools and teachers, as well as parents' and children's perspectives on educational media use at home.

Helping with homework

Parents' perspectives

Parents reported that they try to help their children with homework assignments as much as possible, and that they feel especially comfortable with math. Whether parents are English or Spanish speakers, they often feel confident helping their children with math assignments, particularly in the early grades and when they can rely on the Internet for additional support.

> "A mí se me complica mucho con el inglés... Matemáticas creo que le entiendo poquito más porque todos son números, ¿no? Pero, cuando hemos tenido problemas con matemáticas... me voy al Google luego, luego.
> I have a lot of trouble with English. I think I understand math better because it's just numbers, right? But, when we have problems with math... I go straight to Google."
>
> *—Mother of a third-grade boy (age 8)*

While Spanish-dominant parents see math as an opportunity to help their children with school assignments, they often have trouble following the school's methods for completing calculations. Because their children are learning problem-solving strategies in a different education system from the one their parents experienced in Mexico, parents' ability (and confidence) to help with math homework is consequently reduced.

> "A mí algunas cosas sí me parecen un poquito difíciles... Por ejemplo, las cuentas... No sabemos la misma técnica de aquí, [sino] la de México.
> I find some things a little hard... For example, how to count...We don't know the same technique they use here, [but] the one we knew in Mexico."
>
> *—Father of a fourth-grade boy (age 9)*

Some parents discussed different skill levels with regard to different subjects; for example, that they or the other parent might be better suited to help with math or English homework, and they traded these responsibilities back and forth accordingly.

> "Pues sí, las matemáticas a mí se me hacen difíciles para, para poder la ayudar pero mi esposo pues él sí, sí la ha ayudado.
> Well, yeah, I think math is hard for me, for me to be able to help. But my husband, he has been able to help her."
>
> *—Mother of a seventh-grade girl (age 11)*

Formal English made it difficult for some parents to help with homework as well. Several parents, including U.S.-educated parents, reported relearning grammar, spelling, and other elements of formal English alongside their children. Some parents used these moments as opportunities to promote critical thinking, by encouraging their children to teach the material in their homework.

> "Sometimes in reading, like certain subjects like when they're teaching about compound and verbs and all that, I didn't really learn it that well when I was going to school... So sometimes she'll ask me [things I don't know]... I won't tell her I don't know it, but I just have her explain it to me and then she thinks about it and she does her own critical thinking out loud so I can hear her and it sounds good to me so I agree with it."
>
> *—Mother of a fifth-grade girl (age 10)*

Parents whose children were taking Spanish classes at school felt homework time provided ideal opportunities to support their children's language development. Spanish-speaking mothers in particular appreciated being able to offer help in an area where they felt comfortable and confident.

“Yo le ayudo en unas cosas que sé. Como ahorita le dejaron una investigación sobre los mayas, los incas, todos esos [grupos], pues algo que yo sé, yo le ayudé con eso.
I help her with some things I know. Like now, she has to do research about the Mayas, the Incas, all those [groups], things that I know, so I helped her with that.”

—Mother of a seventh-grade girl (age 11)

Parents reported that they augment their abilities to provide homework help in two ways: by engaging the support of their older children, or by seeking resources online.

“Porque él ahorita está en puras clases de inglés, yo no le ayudo. Pero mi hijo el más grande, él le ayuda.
Because right now he's only taking English classes, I don't help him. But my oldest son, he helps him.”

—Mother of a sixth-grade boy (age 11)

Parents often mentioned the Internet as a tool that supported them helping their children with homework, or when they wanted to foster their children's independent learning. Parents most often mentioned YouTube and Google as resources for these two purposes.

“His homework is pretty simple. It's pretty much easy and a lot of things, whenever I can, I do refer him to the Internet... You've got to learn how to find things out by yourself. So that's why whenever I can, I tell him, "You need to Google it."”

—Father of a third-grade boy (age 8)

“Siempre le he ayudado y si tengo dudas pues ya sabes, ahí está el Internet (risas). Es un fácil acceso si tengo alguna duda... le digo, "No estoy segura, no quiero que vayamos a cometer un error". Pero es porque a veces yo no le entiendo, o si tengo dudas.
I've always helped her, and if I have questions, the Internet is right there (laughs). It's easy to access if I have questions... I tell her, "I'm not sure, I don't want us to make a mistake." But that's because sometimes I don't get it, or I have questions.”

—Mother of a second-grade girl (age 7)

In general, parents reported more confidence helping younger children with homework than their older children. They also expected that their capabilities to provide assistance would decline as their children got older and transitioned into higher grades at school.

“Pues como van en kínder y en primero todavía no hay ningún problema. Pero ya cuando van como en sexto o más adelante, a lo mejor sí. Pero ahorita realmente no he tenido problema en... ayudarles en su tarea.
Well, since they're still in kinder and first grade, there's no problem. But when they get to sixth grade or higher, then maybe yeah. But for now, I haven't had problems... helping them with their homework.”

—Mother of a first-grade girl (age 6)

“Ahorita con el que se me hace un poquito más difícil es con el de 11 años... Y más que todo son las matemáticas, que yo la verdad no soy muy buena [par]a las matemáticas. Con los otros más chicos sí, todavía los puedo ayudar y no tengo que investigar. Pero con el grande de hecho yo misma me meto al Internet para ver cómo se hacen unas cuentas.
Right now it's a little more difficult with my 11-year-old... And more so with math, and I'm really not that good at math. With the younger ones, yeah, I can still help them without having to do research. But with the older one, in fact, I get on the Internet myself to see how to do some calculations.”

—Mother of an eighth-grade girl (age 8)

Children's perspectives
Children generally described asking parents for help with homework as the start of a collaborative process. They would often only go online with their parents, translating content for them as needed. But going online together to address homework questions only happened when children actively requested assistance; this was not an everyday experience, and parents did not initiate these activities.

"Sometimes when there's a problem, when my mom's helping me with my math, whenever I don't understand a question we'll mainly go on the Internet to see what something's about... My mom will go on the Internet with me."

—Girl in fifth grade (age 10)

"Sometimes she doesn't get it, so she helps me look for it on the Internet... She used to be a secretary when she was young, so she's really good at the computer... She sometimes wants me to translate it for her, because she doesn't really understand it. So I put it in Spanish for her."

—Girl in sixth grade (age 11)

Parents on campus

The majority of parents felt very comfortable visiting their children's schools, speaking with their teachers, and even volunteering for school activities. Parents with multiple children at a single school felt particularly welcomed on campus, since they had generally developed personal relationships with staff members over time.

"Me siento así como pez en el agua [en la escuela]. O sea, me siento súper bien, no tengo yo ningún problema ni restricción, nada. Y sé que me van a escuchar.
I feel like a fish in water [at the school]. I mean, I feel really good. I don't have any problems or restrictions, nothing. And I know they will listen to me."

—Mother of a fifth-grade girl (age 10)

"Me siento bien recibida, sobre todo aquí pues... ya pasaron los tres por aquí entonces ya conozco a mucha gente verdad. Y me gusta involucrarme, algunas veces he sido voluntaria en actividades diferentes.
I feel well-received, especially here since... my three [kids] went through here, so I know a lot of people, right? And I like to stay involved, sometimes I've volunteered in different activities."

—Mother of a third-grade boy (age 8)

Parents reported that the schools helped eliminate language barriers to participation by providing interpreters, which increased their comfort levels on campus.

"Sí. Cualquier ayuda que hablen inglés y pues como yo no lo sé, pues yo le pido ayuda a una persona que esté, que me traduzca.
Yes. When they help they speak English, and since I don't know [the language], well, I ask someone in there for help, to translate for me."

—Mother of a fourth-grade girl (age 9)

"Pues, estoy bien... Es muy buena escuela... Y en español, ellos te dicen qué idioma prefieres.
I'm fine... It's a great school... And in Spanish, they ask which language you prefer."

—Mother of a seventh-grade girl (age 11)

However, parents reported very little technology use to communicate with schools or teachers. Only a few parents mentioned using the Parent Portal or communicating with teachers via email.

“Por ejemplo la computadora es más fácil para mí porque mantengo comunicación directa con los maestros por email. Hay un programa… yo hago mi *sign up*, pongo la información, con la de mi hijo, y ya automáticamente me llega mi correo y me dice… "se portó tu hijo a 100 porciento, 60 bueno, 40 malo," o dependiendo cómo haya sido el día. Entonces, facilita [la] comunicación con la escuela.
For example, the computer is easier for me because I maintain a direct communication with the teachers through email. There's a program… I sign up, type the information, along with my child's, and there, I automatically get my mail and it tells me… "your son behaved at 100%, 60 good, 40 bad," depending on the day. So then, [it] facilitates communicating with the school.”

—Father of a first-grade boy (age 5)

Educational media use at home

Parents and children were asked complementary questions about educational media use, which was defined in the interview as any form of media they felt was helpful for learning or doing well in school, that could teach children important lessons, or that could help parents teach their child lessons that they felt were important. Specific questions followed to ascertain which media, if any, had been useful for their child's English language learning, for school-related learning, for parents learning alongside their children, or for teaching children Spanish or about parents' home country or culture.

Parents' perspectives
When asked about media that are broadly useful for learning, parents most often mentioned television, books, and digital technologies they could use to go online or to download games and apps. Parents considered television networks—such as PBS Kids, Discovery, Nickelodeon, and Sprouts—to be educational. While many parents listed educational television programming, others selected educational content on YouTube, suggesting shifts from traditional media consumption to more selective online engagement for learning on particular topics.

Parents specifically mentioned the following programs as useful for teaching their children English: *Sesame Street*, *Barney*, *Dora the Explorer*, *Baby Einstein*, and *The Electric Company*. These programs were most helpful for younger children, and parents reported co-learning English alongside their children. Parents relied on these programs for educational support and to reinforce language skills at home. Many parents volunteered that public television programming had been a valuable educational resource for their families before they had had Internet or before their children could navigate the web.

“Well, my son used to watch a lot of *Barney and Friends* and *Sesame Street* and all those shows. My daughter, she started watching Sprout. So that's how I think they learned a lot from that. And from us, that we speak, and I would speak to them in English too.”

—Mother of a fourth-grade boy (age 8)

“Ella aprendió cuando estaba chiquita pues miraba… los programas de *Dora [la exploradora]*, todos [programas] que hablan inglés y español. Y le ayudó mucho a ella eso. Porque pues en ese tiempo ella todavía no sabía usar el Internet… pero fue la televisión que le ayudó.
She learned when she was little, watching *Dora [the Explorer]*, and all [programs] that speak English and Spanish. And it helped her a lot. Because at that time she didn't know how to use the Internet yet… so the TV helped her.”

—Mother of a seventh-grade girl (age 11)

For help with schoolwork or to reinforce classroom learning, parents found computer games and educational websites most useful. Parents were aware that teachers sometimes recommended particular educational websites, but they were generally less familiar with this content than

with the television programming they described as educational. Parents seldom restricted use of computer games or websites promoted by teachers because of their perceived educational value. Parents were most aware of computer games for math learning.

Some parents classified non-fiction or reality television content as educational, such as *Storage Wars*, *Cake Boss*, the Biography Channel, Smithsonian, home improvement shows, and nightly news broadcasts that they watched with their children. Parents used these programs to introduce their children to particular subjects or skills, and as prompts for discussing them.

Parents also often used media as a means of introducing their children to their native culture, and sometimes as a way to teach them Spanish. Spanish-language TV programming (including the news) and movies were the most used resources, followed by books.

> “Les leo mucho en español porque es mi lenguaje. Es el lenguaje... nativo de nosotros y no quiero que se pierda... Eso es la fuente principal de lo cultural. Um... las películas, las caricaturas [en la casa]—todo es en español. Todo. Absolutamente, todo es en español... el lenguaje es lo principal.
> I read to them a lot in Spanish because that's my language. It's... our native [language] and I don't want them to lose it .... That's the source of our culture. Um... the movies, cartoons [at home]—everything is in Spanish. Everything. Absolutely everything is in Spanish... Language is what matters most.”
>
> *—Mother of a third-grade girl (age 8)*

Parents encouraged their children to visit websites with Spanish content, and to listen to the radio and watch movies in Spanish, but admitted that their children were likely to resist such efforts, especially as they got older.

Children's perspectives

Children provided detailed accounts of the kinds of media they found educational. When it came to learning English, many recalled reading books with their parents and watching TV on their own or with siblings; children spontaneously recalled *Sesame Street* and PBS shows in particular. Some elder children said that they still watched Sesame Street with younger siblings in English, and that they translated words and ideas for them as needed. Television had helped many children learn how to pronounce English words correctly; for some, songs on the radio served this purpose as well.

> “Books usually helped me [to learn English,] and TV, and I used to watch Sesame Street when I was little and it helped me understand a little bit, so that's what actually taught me. My little sister, she uses a new word she hears [on Sesame Street], she tries to say it. Sometimes she turns around and [asks] me "What does that mean?"”
>
> *—Girl in sixth grade (age 11)*

> “La computadora a veces me ayuda a aprender unas palabras [en inglés], a decirlas... A veces miro Sesame Street con mi hermana y mi hermana... aprende más palabras en inglés. O miran las caricaturas que te dicen, "Oh, esta palabra significa esto y esto." y "Para hacer esto, tienes que hacer esto.".
> The computer sometimes helps me to learn some words [in English], to say them... Sometimes I watch *Sesame Street* with my sister, and my sister... learns more words in English. Or they watch cartoons that say, "Oh, this word means this and this," and "To do this, you need to do this."”
>
> *—Girl in fifth grade (age 10)*

When assessing which media were most useful for school-related learning, computers and online resources were central to children's experiences. Specific websites like Imagine Learning, Cool Math, and First in Math were referenced by

multiple kids. The Internet was also important as a resource for school-related research, as were books, textbooks, and reference books.

“Books help me a lot [for] school, [they] are very important. They help you [with] book reports, cause in fifth grade I think I'm gonna do a lot of book reports and research.”

—Boy in fifth grade (age 10)

“Sometimes my mom puts me like a song of multiplication [on the computer]. There's a song that goes... “Multiplication, multiplication, you better know your 9s.” And there's this teacher and she's like, “Everybody, we're gonna learn the multiplication of 9s,” and... they keep going [to]... the 11s: 11, 22, 33, 44.”

—Girl in fourth grade (age 9)

Parents' efforts to teach their children Spanish were often most pronounced with younger children, and often involved technology. Television was key to these efforts, as a prompt for family conversation in Spanish. Children reported that parents focused primarily on developing their verbal proficiency in Spanish, as opposed to teaching them to read and write. Older children were usually exposed to Spanish-language content through watching television with their parents; specifically sports, news, telenovelas, and movies. Children also recounted that their parents used technology to show their children their hometowns and places in Mexico that were important to them; parents would use Google Maps, for example, to show them a particular location in their hometown and to tell them more about it.

“[My dad] talks to me in Spanish. When like we watch TV together he puts it in Spanish so I can learn and stuff like that. He talks to me in Spanish. He tries to teach me words in Spanish. If I mess up, he's like, “You say it like this, not like that.””

—Boy in fifth grade (age 10)

“[My parents] give me books, not newspapers. And sometimes TV and sometimes radio [in Spanish] ... they made [me] read Spanish stories when I was like in second grade.”

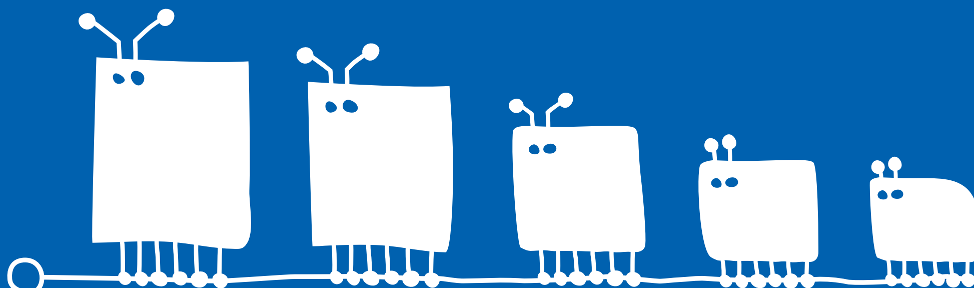
—Boy in sixth grade (age 11)

“They go on maps... on their phones to [show us] places there... and the music [they play].”

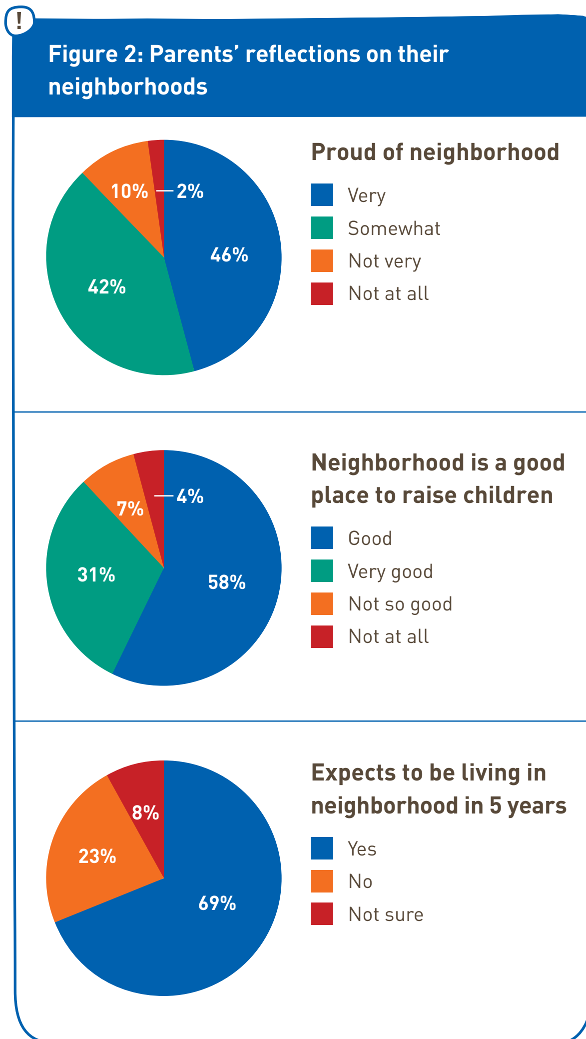
—Boy in seventh grade (age 11)

parents' perspectives on community life

Parents were asked about their community perceptions in a fixed-answer portion of the interview. The majority of their parents (88%) said that they were either very or somewhat proud of living in their neighborhood. About a third (31%) felt it was a very good place to raise children, with an additional 58% feeling it was a good place to raise children. When asked if they expected to be living in the neighborhood five years from the time they were interviewed—a question that is considered a measure of residents' likely investment in the community in the near future[6]—69% of parents said yes (see Figure 2).



[6] These questions have previously been used in a series of quantitative surveys conducted by the Metamorphosis Project at the University of Southern California.



When we asked parents what worries them about raising children in the U.S., they most often mentioned general safety concerns, such as gangs, drugs, sex offenders, and school shootings. Parents also raised technology-related concerns often, such as worries about the amount of time that children spend with technology, the content they are exposed to, and their online safety.

> “I guess I don't really worry too much, because in other countries there's just so many things to worry about. Right? Except for, lately on the news you hear a lot of stuff about shootings in schools... I think that's one of the worst things, knowing that that kind of stuff happens in schools.”
>
> —*Father of a third-grade boy (age 8)*

> “La seguridad, sí, por ejemplo todo el bullying que se empezó a manifestar... En la escuela, sí. Es lo que más, más me preocupa ahorita. Security, yes; for example, all the bullying that has started to come up... In the schools, yes. That's what most worries me at the moment.”
>
> —*Mother of a first-grade girl (age 6)*

> “But TV lately, the Disney Channel, I want to change it. [She] watches that a lot and it's got a lot of teenagers or kids that supposedly look like teenagers and they're not really teenagers. And [in] every episode, "Oh, my boyfriend. I like him." And I'm like—What are they teaching the kids?... That's my struggle right now, with the Disney Channel.”
>
> —*Mother of a fifth-grade girl (age 10)*

Education was also a common child-rearing worry for parents, who expressed concerns about the rising costs of higher education and that their children were not learning enough about morals and values in school. Immigrant parents expressed this concern very strongly, describing frustrations with U.S. culture when it comes to teaching children respect and discipline. This concern is fairly common among Mexican-origin

parents (e.g., Reese, 2001). Children losing their Spanish proficiency was also raised by Spanish-dominant parents.

“Pues, a mí sí me preocupa mucho [el costo de] la educación. Me gustaría mucho que ellas llegaran al colegio. Y a veces sí me preocupa porque digo, “bueno, si ellas no pueden agarrar las becas, pues uno tiene que apoyarlos económicamente para que ellas puedan seguir estudiando.”
Well, I do worry a lot about [the costs] of education. I would like for them to go to college. And sometimes I do get worried, because I think, “well, if they can't get scholarships, one has to economically support them so that they can continue their studies.””

—Mother of a seventh-grade girl (age 11)

“Pues, una de mis mayores preocupaciones es el idioma... yo no quiero que pierdan el idioma. Y otra de las cosas y que sí me preocupa muchísimo es que en general, los niños aquí en Estados Unidos crecen como... como que ellos se merecen todo... porque... se les da todo. Gracias a Dios hay recursos y todo, pero eso les, en su interior, les afecta como que todo. Entonces, yo con mis hijos lo mantengo en línea. Les digo, “No, no, no, espérate. Tienes que trabajar por tener esto, no es fácil”.
Well, one of my greatest concerns is language... I don't want them to lose the language. And another thing that does worry me a lot in general [is that] children in the United States grow up like... like they deserve everything... because... they get everything. Thank God there's resources, but that, internally, it affects them. So I keep them in line. I tell them, “No, no, no, hold on. You need to work for that. It's not easy.””

—Mother of a third-grade boy (age 8)

While education was a concern for many parents, they also highlighted educational opportunities as the primary reason that they were raising their children in the United States. Almost half of interviewed parents spontaneously compared the educational opportunities available in the U.S., favorably, to what was available in other countries. Education was viewed as the pathway to good careers and financial security, with parents feeling hopeful that their children's hard work in school would translate to a brighter future.

“Here there is just so many opportunities, whether you're Black, White, Mexican, Chinese—it doesn't matter what religion or anything. I mean that's the beautiful thing about the United States. Because here, if you try, if you really go out there to learn many things and find out what you're good at and what you really love to do, you can get a good education. You can get not just a good job, but a good career. In fact, [that you're] doing something that doesn't even feel like work, because you love to do it so much.”

—Father of a third-grade boy (age 8)

“Qué oportunidad, a pues primero te digo, [es] la tecnología que está a su alcance. Cuando yo estaba en Tijuana no era fácil agarrar una computadora. Se tenía que ir a una biblioteca, tenía que agarrar un camión. Ahora todo está más fácil, todo está más renovado. Y se nos hace más fácil para hacer más cosas.
About opportunities, I tell you, [it's] the technology that is at his reach. When I was in Tijuana, getting a computer wasn't easy. You would have to go to a library, take a bus. Now everything is easier, more updated. And it feels easier to do more things.”

—Father of a first-grade boy (age 5)

“Pues siempre le he dicho que el que estudia bien, trabaja bien (risas), si logra sus metas pues... ¿verdad? Van a tener mejor todo en la vida. Escalar hasta donde quieran.

I've always told him that if you're a good student, you'll have a good job (laughs), if they achieve their goals, right? They'll have everything better in life. Climb up to where they want to. ”

—Mother of a sixth-grade boy (age 11)

“ La calidad de educación es completamente diferente [aquí]. Hay un poco más de respeto a ellos como persona, como individuo, como ser humano. Los hacen que se les refuercen los valores de amor a sí mismos, de que ellos son personas que deben ser respetadas... que tienen derechos... Aquí, dicen, es el país de las oportunidades y el que no aprovecha las oportunidades que se le ponen enfrente, es porque no quiere hacer nada. Yo veo a mis hijas con un mejor futuro, a que si me hubiera quedado yo en Tijuana, en México.
The quality of education is completely different [here]. There is a bit more respect for them as people, as individuals, as human beings. [The schools] make them value themselves, and teach them that they deserve to be respected, that they have rights. This, they say, is the country of opportunities, and if people don't take advantage of the opportunities provided to them, it's because they don't want to do anything. I see a better future for my girls than the one they would have had I stayed in Tijuana, in Mexico. ”

—Mother of a fifth-grade girl (age 10)

conclusions and implications

We shared and discussed the findings presented in this report with parents, children, and district administrators in meetings between November 3 and November 6, 2014, approximately 14 months after the interviews were conducted. During these conversations, parents reflected on their experiences with the C2C program over the previous year, any changes in how their family was using the computer that they had received through the program (if they had), as well as any significant technology purchases or changes to how their family had used digital devices and the internet over the past year.

Unfortunately, quite a few families reported difficulties with the C2C computers and Internet offer, citing slow connection speeds and malfunctioning hardware. Some parents were able to reach out to someone at their child's school to try to resolve these difficulties, but most did not know where to go for help. One notable frustration for parents was that the $9.95 Internet offer through C2C only covered an Ethernet connection for a single device. As a result, many families had paid additional fees for a wireless modem that connected all of their devices to the Internet.

Despite these difficulties, parents appreciated district efforts to bring more technology into their homes. They also noted increased technology use in the classroom over the past year, describing how their children used iPads and laptops for in-class assignments. A few parents had also introduced new technologies into the home since their original interview. One mother said she had given each of her children a laptop for Christmas after saving up money she earned from a second job. Other parents described how their children used mobile devices at home if their C2C desktop computer was too slow or not working properly.

When asked what kinds of programs would help them to best support their children's learning, parents echoed the sentiments they had expressed in their original interviews. While they did help with homework and continued to keep track of their children's academic performance through an app called Edmodo, parents felt that free computer workshops at the schools would boost both their skills and confidence levels to more meaningfully engage with technology at home. They noted that these workshops would need to be held in the evening and involve their children if they were going to be able to attend regularly.

Finally, there are opportunities for schools to help support children's learning at home. Parents with less education are more likely to be unfamiliar with how media can stoke their children's curiosity and facilitate enriching learning experiences. Media-based school assignments can be consciously designed as to encourage (and perhaps require) parental involvement. These efforts could be fruitfully supported by schools providing expanded access to parent computer and language classes, further building their capacities to meaningfully engage technology with their children for a broad range of learning goals.

In fact, our follow-up meeting with administrators revealed existing strategies and new ideas for how the district can help parents become more comfortable with technology. To avoid families feeling disconnected, literally and figuratively, the district is focusing on both technology access and meaningful connections—brainstorming hybrid programs that combine language development and tech skill development, while encouraging participation of the family unit. Such comprehensive approaches to technology adoption can reinvigorate the role of schools as sources of social support for low-income families and communities.

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