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## **Jefferson Ready Start Network Releases Impact Report on State of Early Childhood Education Among Latino Families**

*Working with Advancing Communities for Equity, the nonprofit plans a way forward for Jefferson Parish to reach the underserved community*

**METAIRIE, LA** (July 6, 2022) – In partnership with Advancing Communities for Equity (ACE), today [Jefferson Ready Start Network](#) (JRSN) released results from an impact study to better understand the lack of participation in the early learning sector by Latino families in Jefferson Parish and develop a path forward to increase equitable access.

U.S. Census Bureau data from 2019 estimated that 14.9% (or 64,441) of Jefferson Parish residents identified as Hispanic and more than 36% (or 15,801) were enrolled in Jefferson Parish schools. Despite this population density, only about 905 Latino children under the age of 5 currently participate in registered, certified or licensed publicly funded early learning in Jefferson Parish as of Feb. 2022. In response to these startling statistics, JRSN, a subsidiary of Jefferson Parish Schools, developed a report to examine the current state of Latino families' participation in JRSN.

"The need to increase access is clear," said JRSN Executive Director Sarintha Stricklin, Ph.D. "JRSN is driven by local data and context, and the report aided in identifying barriers and exploring the local needs of Jefferson's Latino community, allowing us to make informed recommendations."

The report findings conclude that to increase participation in the early childhood system by Latino families, a three-pronged approach is needed. These approaches are to:

- Build awareness of the benefits of early childhood learning in the Latino community
- Increase quality early learning options for families that best meet their needs
- Expand the early childhood workforce with Spanish-language speakers and Latinos

With this in-depth understanding of the state of early care and education in Jefferson Parish, JRSN will continue its work with key stakeholders to target the following goals:

- Develop a culturally and linguistically responsive outreach and engagement strategy specific to the Latino community

- Engage leaders within Jefferson Parish Schools to fully leverage community relationships to increase supply
- Cultivate relationships with Latino-serving organizations
- Develop an outreach plan and resources that explicitly provide options for families based on immigration status
- Recruit and build a diverse, bilingual workforce
- Advocate for bolstered efforts at the state level to fully utilize federal funding for early learning families

“This report is a great step toward building awareness in the community for how we should go about increasing access to quality early childhood options for Latino families. It’s going to take all of us to come to the table, with resources and energy to turn this challenge into an opportunity,” said Emmy O’Dwyer, ACE Founder and Principal. “We look forward to continuing our work with JRSN to increase culturally and linguistically responsive care as we simultaneously build relationships with Latino families, inform families of publicly funded opportunities and encourage their participation in existing services.”

The complete Jefferson Ready Start Network & Service to Latino Families with Young Children report can be downloaded [here](#). For additional information about JRSN, visit [jeffersonreadystartnetwork.com](http://jeffersonreadystartnetwork.com). To learn more about ACE and its work across the United States, visit [aceforus.com](http://aceforus.com).

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***About Jefferson Ready Start Network:*** Under the authority of Jefferson Parish Schools, the Jefferson Ready Start Network works to create a culture of high-quality, comprehensive early childhood services (birth to 5 years) through engagement and partnerships with families, educators and community members. For more information, visit [www.jeffersonreadystartnetwork.com](http://www.jeffersonreadystartnetwork.com).

***About Advancing Communities for Equity (ACE):*** ACE consults with systems organizations and individuals to maximize positive outcomes for children and families through thoughtfully designed policies, initiatives and strategies. For more information visit [www.aceforus.com](http://www.aceforus.com).