

## Summary Report

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# Building Strong Families 2004

***A Study of African American and Latino/Latina Parents in the United States***

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By Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Marc Mannes, Peter C. Scales, Shenita Lewis, and Brent Bolstrom

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The Building Strong Families study is part of an ongoing collaboration between the YMCA of the USA and Search Institute around strong families and parenting. It is part of the larger Abundant Assets Alliance, which combines the resources of the YMCA of the USA, YMCA Canada, and Search Institute—three organizations with proven success in building strong kids, families, and communities. For more information, visit [www.abundantassets.org](http://www.abundantassets.org).

### ***Acknowledgments***

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# Introduction

Parents<sup>1</sup> represent a vital resource for communities and society in their central role in nurturing the children and adolescents. Although other adults and institutions share in this responsibility<sup>2</sup>, parents are essential to the task of nurturing young people's healthy development.

This study was initiated as part of the Abundant Assets Alliance between the YMCA of the USA, YMCA Canada, and Search Institute.<sup>3</sup> It builds on a similar study in 2002 that involved a survey of 1,005 parents in the United States that began to link the YMCA's historic commitment to strong families with Search Institute's groundbreaking research on Developmental Assets, which are building blocks of healthy development for children and adolescents.<sup>4</sup>

A limitation of the 2002 study was that its sample was not large enough to draw conclusions about parents of color. This study focuses, therefore, on the two largest communities of color in the United States: African Americans and Latino/Latinas. In addition to testing whether these original findings held true with these specific populations, this study sought to deepen exploration of key areas that emerged in the previous analyses and to examine some dynamics that are unique to these populations using focus groups and interviews to delve more deeply into their specific realities. When combined, these various information sources give rich insight into the strengths, challenges, and needed supports of African American and Latino/Latina parents in the United States.

The telephone survey included 685 African American parents and 639 Latino/Latina parents. In addition, focus groups were conducted with 16 African American parents and 24 Latino/Latina parents in New York and Chicago. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 of these parents. The "Voices of Parents" sections throughout this report are drawn from these interviews and focus groups. For more information on the study sample and methodology, see Appendix A.

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<sup>1</sup> For this study, we define parents broadly as those **adults with primary responsibility for raising children**. These include biological parents, adoptive parents, guardians, stepparents, grandparents raising grandchildren, or any other type of parenting relationship. We also use the term to show the collective sample of parents polled, whether they are single, divorced, widowed, married, or in a committed relationship.

<sup>2</sup> Scales, P. C. (2003). *Other people's kids: Social expectations and American adults' involvement with children and youth*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers. (Available from Search Institute.)

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the Abundant Assets Alliance, visit [www.abundantassets.org](http://www.abundantassets.org).

<sup>4</sup> Roehlkepartain, E. C., Scales, P. C., Rude, S. P., & Roehlkepartain, J. L. (2002) *Building strong families: A preliminary survey on what parents need to succeed*. Chicago: YMCA of the USA and Minneapolis: Search Institute. Available at [www.abundantassets.org](http://www.abundantassets.org) and [www.search-institute.org/families](http://www.search-institute.org/families).

## Overview of Findings

*The bottom line*—The vast majority of African American and Latino/Latina parents are working hard to raise strong, healthy, and successful children and adolescents, and most feel they are doing well as parents. Yet they are doing so in the face of multiple challenges in their communities and society. Furthermore, most have little support beyond their immediate family to help them as parents. This conclusion is consistent with the findings from the 2002 study, which consisted primarily of Caucasian parents.

*The challenges*—Parents face many challenges in being strong parents. Most of the major challenges are dynamics beyond the immediate family; these parents see fewer challenges in parenting that are related to their own families (such as sharing household chores or bickering among children).

The key challenges these African American and Latino/Latina parents identify involve economic issues (with job loss in community being the #1 challenge) and protecting their child from negative influences in society. In addition, many Latino/Latina parents face a particular challenge by not knowing English well. They are much more likely to name problems that are “out there” as major challenges than they are to point to close-to-home issues.

*The strengths*—Most of the parents surveyed say they feel pretty successful as parents, and they report doing many positive actions with their child. When we look more deeply, we see that the areas where they are most satisfied relate to what we might call “private parenting”—things they do one-on-one with their child. They are much less satisfied with what we might call “public parenting”—those parenting actions that involve connecting with the broader community.

*The supports parents value*—Although there are many things that parents say would really help them as parents, the things that parents most value start with positive relationships. These include relationships within the family and relationships with sources of support and guidance in the community.

For example, 70% of African-American and 84% of Latino parents say spending more time with their children would help them be better parents—more than anything else they identified. In addition, these parents say they are most likely to seek help from their spouse or parenting partner, followed by their extended family. Beyond that, they turn to friends and professionals they trust. Thus, the primary sources of support are relational.

*Conclusion*— This study points to a major—often overlooked—challenge facing America’s parents: They are trying to undertake the critical task of parenting in a complex society with little or no support from their community. That challenge represents a real opportunity for YMCAs and other organizations to step up to build relationships with parents in ways that both affirm their current efforts and provide the supports and guidance they need when things get tough.

# The Challenges of Being a Parent Today

## Key Message

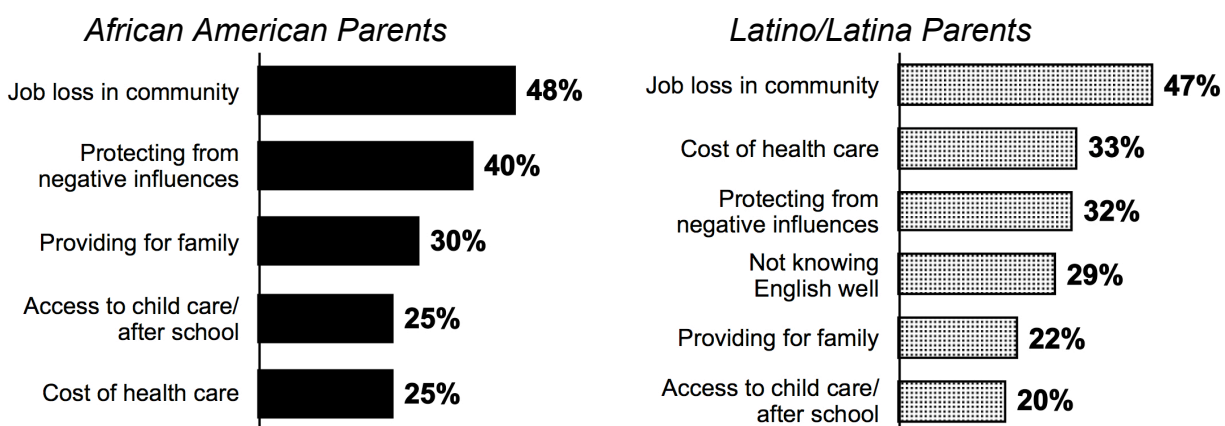
American parents feel like they're facing uphill battles in dealing with economic challenges, negative values in society, and community and neighborhood conditions (Figure 1). These challenges are particularly hard for parents of teenagers, those facing economic stress, those with limited English, and those who are not married or in a committed relationship.

## Survey Findings

- Overall, half of the African American and Latino parents surveyed say it is *very* challenging to be a parent today.
- Being a parent today appears to be especially challenging for parents who are not married or in a committed relationship; parents facing economic stress; parents with limited English; and parents of adolescents.
- Although none of the listed challenges was named a “major problem” by a majority of the parents surveyed, job loss in the community was the most frequently mentioned “major problem” that African American and Latino/Latina parents face as parents.

**Figure 1—The Challenges Parents Face**

African American and Latino/Latina parents both say that job loss in the community is the greatest challenge they face as parents. Other challenges are shown here.



SOURCE: *Building Strong Families 2004*, a study of 685 African American and 639 Latino/Latina parents in the United States by YMCA of the USA and Search Institute. See [www.abundantassets.org](http://www.abundantassets.org).

- “Needing to protect your child from negative values and influences in this society” is a “major problem” for both African American and Latino/Latina parents, though other items ranked higher for Latino parents.
- Parents are less likely to point to the daily tasks of parenting than they are larger social issues that get in their way. For example, while 40% of African American parents surveyed said that protecting their child from negative values and influences was a major problem; only 13% indicated that sibling rivalry is a major problem.
- The more problems parents say they face, the less likely they are to be attentive to their children’s healthy development. The parents in the highest third of problems experienced are significantly less likely to be in the *top* third in how often they do things to build Developmental Assets (Appendix B) in their children. More than 4 in 10 parents (44%) with low problem scores are in the highest asset-building group, compared to just 29% of parents facing the most challenges who are also in the highest asset-building group.

### *The Voices of Parents*

- An African American mother: “Very challenging. Particularly in the economy where both parents do have to work to really be able to hold it down so to speak. We’re fine...right now I’m taking a hiatus. But it can’t last forever! I know I need to get back out there to the grind. Very difficult.”
- A Latina mother: “The weak economy...yeah that’s always something that I find worries...you know, I mean, what’s going to happen to my children when I’m gone...things like that...healthcare is not even affordable right now. I’ve got my medical plan and I have to pay for my medicines...”
- An African American mother: “It’s hard for me to think of the challenges without thinking of the rewards. So I think it’s phenomenally challenging, but I think that the rewards outweigh the challenges.
- A Latino father: “I worry that, tomorrow my wife would feel sick, and I don’t have money to pay for medical care. But from the moment I wake up I think, I’ll go to whoever, and I’ll fix the situation, he could lend me money. I go to the doctor, and I’ll pay later, and that’s how I get by.”
- An African American mother: Most of the challenges are external. They’re not in the relationship with my child. So to that extent I think it would be less challenging if there wasn’t all this other context around you: the context of consumerism, the context of a world that is in disarray in many ways, the context of not having a community feel in the place that you live, and not being able to buy a house in New York without a million dollars. I feel like those are greater challenges than the day-to-day stuff.”

- A Latina mother: “Not having that person there to support me, you know, when it’s needed. Not financially even, just the presence of the father involved in the children’s life is a good thing for the child growing up.”
- An African American mother: “There are also challenges of the world we live in now, where consumerism and commercialism and...everything is consumption. And that’s not something I value. Or at least that’s not a value I want to pass on to my child. . . . Aside from the day to day, trying to instill values when the rest of the world seems caught up in ‘what kind of car am I driving, how many more pairs of sneakers can I buy.’”
- An African American mother: “As a parent you have certain values and morals and principles that you want to instill in your child. But there are so many competing forces out there. There’s so much negativity in the street, there’s so much negativity on television, there’s so much negativity and violence on television. . . . So it’s a constant struggle to keep them on a path that’s positive and constructive.”
- A Latina mother: “It’s difficult to be a good parent. You don’t go to school to learn to be a parent, one has to learn it by trial and error....But now, here, I say, that being a parent is the most difficult career in our lives, be a parent and learn to be a parent.”
- A Latino father: “Sometimes the assignment—maybe because we come from another country. We know the subject, but we don’t understand the way they present it. Then, at times there are certain things that we are not able to help them with. It is going to be the same outcome, but if you try it this way is going to be wrong. I can’t explain it to the child.”
- An African American mother: “Parenting is definitely intended to be two individuals – because the female brings certain characteristics to the child’s development and the male brings the other part, which is what gives you a well-rounded child. So I believe the child that is missing one of their parents, they miss out.”
- A Latina mother: “It’s hard. It’s not easy. There’s certain things that is difficult – like raising teenagers at home is crazy. One day they...you know, they get up in a certain mood, the next day the other. My challenge is just understanding them, basically.”

# Parents' Perceptions of Their Strengths

## Key Message

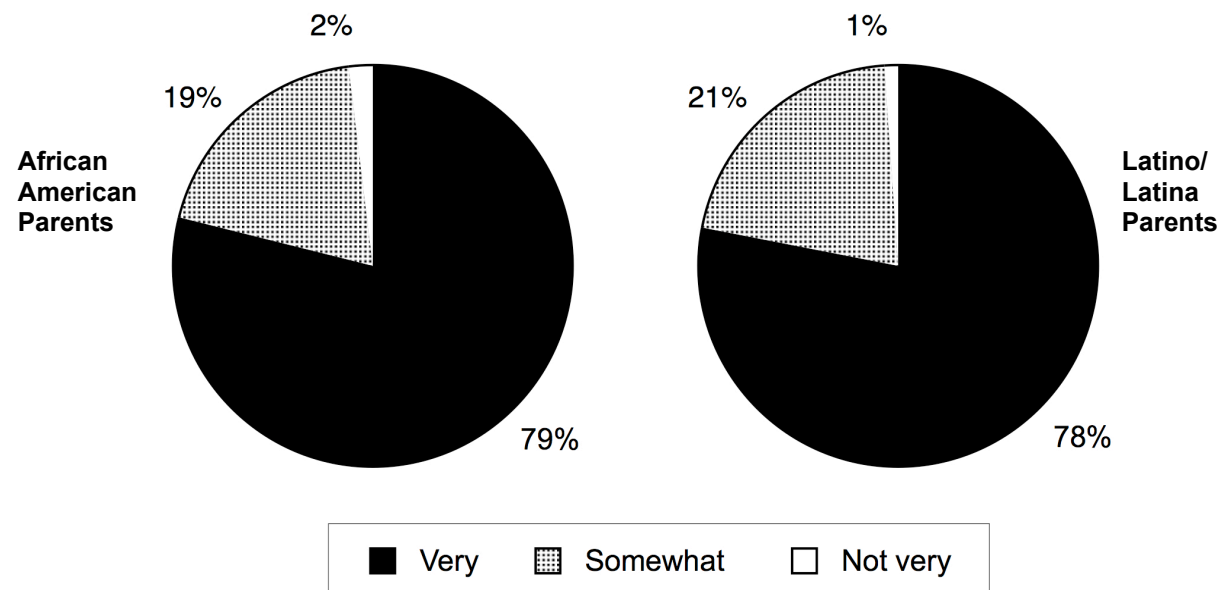
The vast majority of African American and Latino/Latina parents surveyed feel very successful as parents (Figure 2). Furthermore, most feel that they have an excellent relationship with their child.

## Survey Findings

- Overall, 79% of African American and 80% of Latino/Latina parents say they feel very successful.
- African American and Latino/Latina parents who feel more successful in parenting are more likely to engage in asset-building actions, less likely to point to serious problems that interfere with parenting, and more open to support from others. For example, 38% of parents who feel “very successful” have an asset-building score in the top thirds of all parents, but only 26% of parents who feel “somewhat” successful report such frequent asset building.

**Figure 2—Most Parents Feel Successful as Parents**

The majority of African American and Latino/a parents feel very successful as parents.



SOURCE: *Building Strong Families 2004*, a study of 685 African American and 639 Latino/Latina parents in the United States by YMCA of the USA and Search Institute. See [www.abundantassets.org](http://www.abundantassets.org).



- Another item in the survey points toward whether parents are successful. It asks them to rate the quality of their relationship with their child. Overall, at least two-thirds of African American and Latino/Latina parents say they have an excellent relationship with the child that they were asked to focus on during the telephone interview.

### *The Voices of Parents*

- A Latino father: “I try my best to care for my kids, to educate them the best I can. More than anything to be patient...Being patient, more than anything, and try to be involved with them in playing, school, homework. Not all the time, but more or less, I can’t say daily, I am there for them. Sometimes, well, I’m tired, sometimes not. But I try for a little while, half an hour you know.”
- An African American mother: “I think that having had him so young, and he’s never been in trouble with the law, never been in trouble with school, always stayed on the right track...I believe that I did that, I enabled him to get where he is now.”
- An African American father: “...I would say . . . that my personal strength is my capability to nurture my children. Because sometimes we as men are not looked at in the nurturing role or capacity —because a lot of people think that nurturing comes only from the mother. But due to my personal situation I’ve been thrust in the role of being not only the provider but also the role model and a nurturer for my children.”
- A Latino father: “I’m available at all times. I mean I’m a phone call away, if that. Basically, I listen and understand. You know, I nurture her. Besides just disciplining her I also give her nurturing, hug her, play.”
- An African American mother: “I always sacrificed what I needed for what this child needed. So it’s like I sacrificed a lot in order to make sure he had [what he needed]. And it may have ruined him in some ways—because he’s spoiled rotten—but I sacrificed a lot. I didn’t put my needs first; I put his first.”

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# Parents as Asset Builders: Nurturing Healthy Development

## *Key Message*

Most African American and Latino/Latina parents say they do many things as much as they want to support their children's healthy development (building Developmental Assets<sup>5</sup>). But they don't have as many opportunities as they would like to do some things. The biggest gaps appear to lie in building bridges for themselves and their children to relationships, opportunities, and resources in the community (Figure 3).

## *Survey Findings*

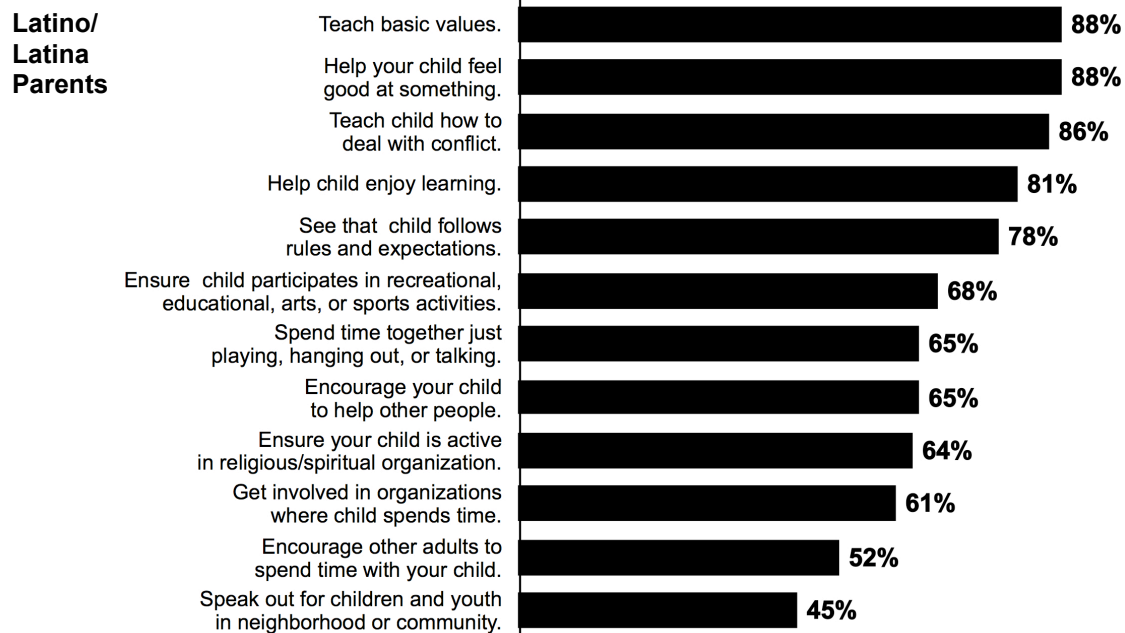
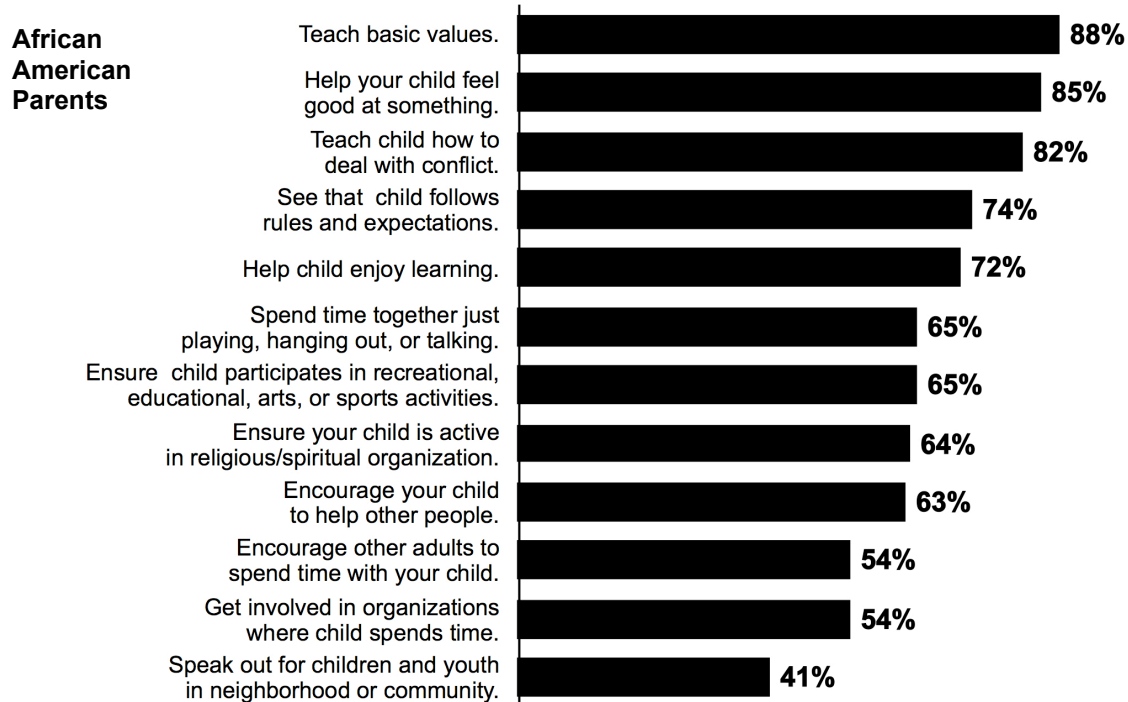
- At least a majority of both African American and Latino/Latina parents say they do all but one of the asset-building actions as much as they would like. The only action that most say they don't do is "speak out for the needs of children and youth in your neighborhood or community."
- The most common asset-building actions for both African American and Latino/Latina parents in this study are: teaching basic values such as equality, honesty, and respect; helping their children know they are good at something; and teaching children to deal with conflict nonviolently.
- The least common asset-building actions (out of the 12 identified in the study) are getting involved in organizations where the child spends time, encouraging other adults to spend time with their children, and speaking out for the needs of children and youth in the community.
- Both African American and Latino/Latina parents in this study tend to do those actions that are within their control within their family. They are less likely to do the actions that connect their child to others and to community.

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<sup>5</sup> Developmental Assets are building blocks of healthy development that have been identified through extensive research by Search Institute. See Appendix B, which includes the framework of 40 Developmental Assets. For more information, visit [www.search-institute.org/assets](http://www.search-institute.org/assets).

### Figure 3—How Parents Support Their Children's Healthy Development

Below are the percentages of African American and Latino/Latina parents surveyed who say they take each action as much as they would like.



SOURCE: *Building Strong Families 2004*, a study of 685 African American and 639 Latino/Latina parents in the United States by YMCA of the USA and Search Institute. See [www.abundantassets.org](http://www.abundantassets.org).

## *The Voices of Parents*

- An African American father: “Well I think it’s valuable to them because they know that they have a father that is actively involved in their lives; and not only their lives, but lives of other children who are in the community as well. We have this saying in our Male Involvement program that ‘in order to be a man you have to see a man.’ And he has this in his life every day.”
- A Latina mother: “I want to be there for them—something different than when I was growing up. . . . I always try to tell them, ‘Any problems you have or anything, try to come and speak to me first about it.’ . . . Instead of me always stepping in, I try to let them be their own person.”
- An African American mother: “What was important for me as a grandparent raising grandchildren, I needed to have a support group for me. But at the same time I had to think about them and what they could benefit from. And so I was fortunate enough to not only find a program for myself, but for the children too.”
- An African American mother: “I grew up where kids were ‘seen and not heard.’ And I mean I turned out to be an okay person, but I really think that kids have a lot of things to say, they have a lot of things on their mind, and they’re constantly restricted as to what they can say, what they can express.

And, in my opinion, to a certain extent, it stifles their growth when they’re not able to really express what they’re feeling, why they did certain things. . . . So I encourage my kids to talk, to say what they feel. And sometimes they go over...they cross the line, right? . . . I let them know when they’re going beyond what’s expected, but I also allow them that freedom.”

- A Latina mother: “I’ve learned that you have to give them options and they have to think for themselves, so they will know if what they’re doing is right or not, because we’re not always going to be right beside them when it comes time to make decisions.”
- An African American mother: “I go to school meetings. I try to participate in the parent-teacher conference. I don’t just look at the small picture with my children, I look at the bigger picture. I try to take them to marches, I try to get them involved in anything political that they may understand. I want them to see both sides of the world and understand both sides of the world.”

# Where Parents Turn for Support

## Key Message

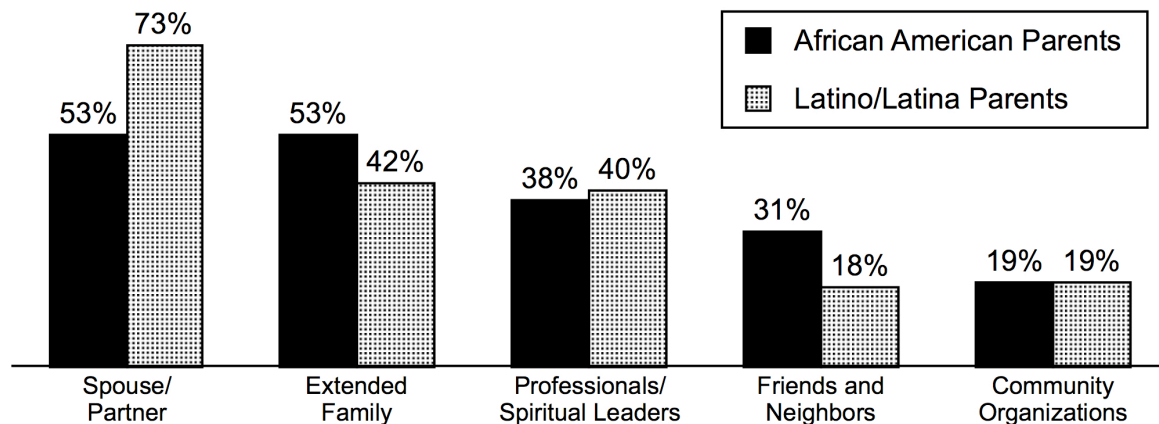
Most of parents' supports are within their own families, with their relationship with their partner/spouse being a key resource for many parents (Figure 4).

## Survey Findings

- The most common source of support in parenting for most African American and Latino/Latina parents in this study is their spouse or parenting partner.<sup>6</sup> It is followed by extended family, professionals or spiritual leaders from community organizations, and friends and neighbors. The least common source of support is community service organizations.
- Most African American and Latino/Latina parents (88%) have at least one source of support they turn to “a lot” around parenting issues. However, the majority (66%) report two or fewer sources of frequent support.

**Figure 4—Where Parents Turn for Support in Parenting**

Having a network of support is an important resource for parents. African American and Latino/a parents are most likely to look close to home for support and encouragement in parents. Here are the percentages of parents who say each source of support helps them a lot as parents. Overall, almost 60% of parents have only one source of support beyond their spouse or partner.



SOURCE: *Building Strong Families 2004*, a study of 685 African American and 639 Latino/Latina parents in the United States by YMCA of the USA and Search Institute. See [www.abundantassets.org](http://www.abundantassets.org).

<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that parents may have a supportive partner in parenting, even if they are not currently married or in a committed relationship. At the same time, the gap between African American and Latino/Latina parents on this item (see Figure 4) is likely due to the higher proportion of single parents in the African American sample. In this survey, 54% of the African American parents are married or in a committed relationship, compared to 84% of the Latino/Latina sample.

- A different perspective comes by excluding the most common source of support: One's spouse or partner. The result is dramatic: nearly 3 in 10 parents (29%) report *no* parenting support from any other source than their spouse or partner—not even from extended family. Nearly 60% have only one source of support other than their spouse or partner.
- The number of supports that parents report is important. For example, 45% of parents in the highest third of number of supports also report high levels of building their child's Developmental Assets, but only 28% of parents with low levels of parenting support report such frequent asset building.
- Different sources of support emerge as children grow older. Whereas the proportion of parents who get support from their spouse/partner and extended family is consistent across the ages of children, parents are more likely to receive support from the community (friends and neighbors, professional or spiritual leaders, and community service organizations) when their children are older.
- Overall, only 33% of African American parents and 43% of Latino/Latina parents indicate that they have an excellent relationship with their spouse or partner. (The difference between the two is attributed to the higher proportion of African American parents who selected "no spouse or partner.") Almost one in five parents indicate that their relationship is fair or poor.
- The quality of a parent's relationship with her or his spouse was associated with a wide range of parenting variables. Parents who report having an excellent relationship with their spouse or partner are more likely to have an excellent relationship with their child, more likely to engage in asset-building actions, and more likely to have a strong network of support.

### *The Voices of Parents*

- A Latina mother: "If it weren't for him [husband], I don't know how I would have adjusted at all to American society. Because it seems as though here everyone seems to be cut off. And I mean I'm living in a different reality, you know. Comparing the reality here right now with the society from where I came: there is an aunt, there is a cousin, there is someone who can help, who can be there to help you through something. There's a grandparent and so on. . . . If I were back home I would have more of a support. And people could see... even though it's a Third World country, . . . people still seem to be able to maintain a close family structure and survive and get by."
- An African American father: "My support group really is my family base—you know, my brothers, my sister, my father. My mom, she was my best...she was my best friend...I use the word 'was' in the past tense because she's no longer with me. But that was my best friend. That was my counselor."

- A Latina mother: “What has helped me with my children is that web of support that I have that includes my mom, my sister, my priest, other professional parents. And when I say ‘professional’: other executive directors who have children, who are going through the same thing that I go through. And also other parents at the school, in the community, friends, family. My husband. And my children!”
- An African American father: Spiritually, church is one of my biggest support groups. . . . I ain’t talking about just the people. . . . I’m talking about just the idea of worshipping with people and listening to a minister, you know. . . . You know, that’s the strongest support group for any family or anybody—because I mean it brings you that little peace.”
- A Latina mother: “I think the best is for both parents to be in agreement. The couple needs to talk seriously how they are going to raise the kids, how are we going to raise the kids, what are the rules we are going to follow. If at one point there should be a disagreement we need to discuss it, the two of us alone, not in front of the kids.”

# The Help that Parents Value

## Key Message

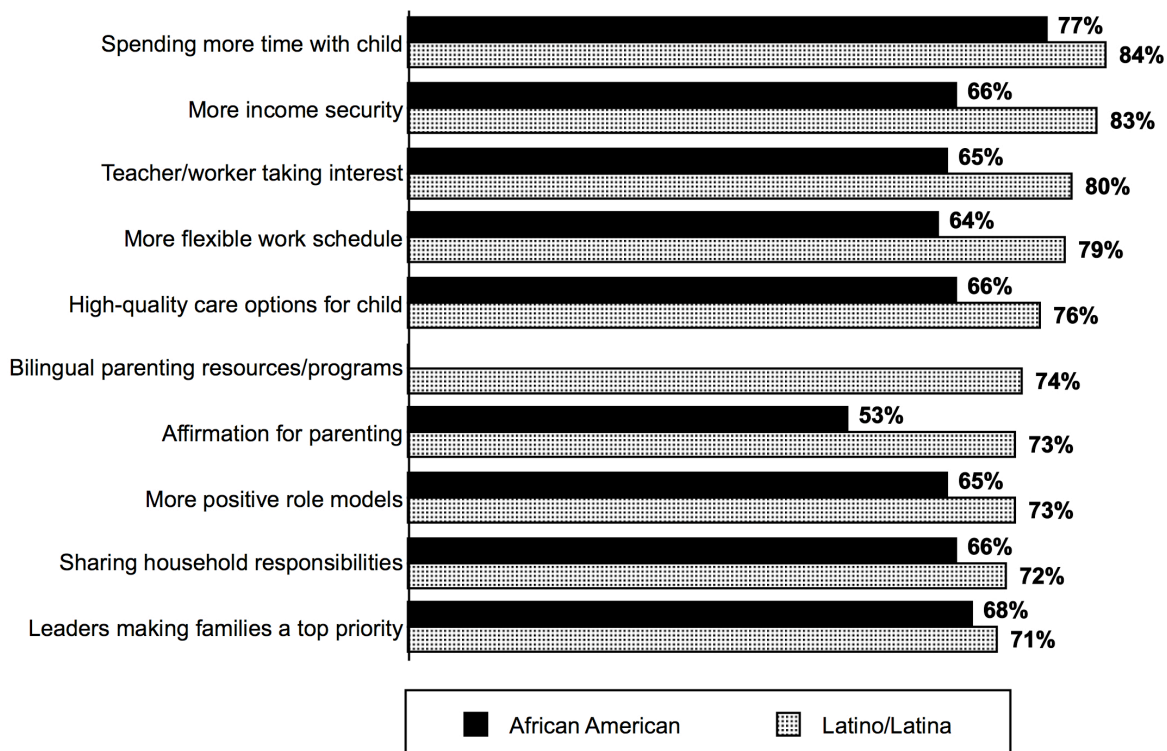
While many parents would benefit from policy changes (economic stability, work flexibility, etc.), they also realize how valuable it would be to strengthen and expand their web of relationships—and their child’s web of relationships—within the community (Figure 5).

## Survey Findings

- Seven in 10 American parents say government officials do not place a high enough priority on families, and most believe it would really help them be better parents if leaders would place a higher priority on families.

**Figure 5—What Parents Say Would Help Them as Parents**

Spending more time with their child is the #1 thing that African American and Latino/a parents say would help them “a lot” as parents. Here are the supports they say would help the most.



SOURCE: *Building Strong Families 2004*, a study of 685 African American and 639 Latino/Latina parents in the United States by YMCA of the USA and Search Institute. See [www.abundantassets.org](http://www.abundantassets.org).



- The change that these parents value most is being able to spend more time with their child. More than 9 out of 10 African American parents surveyed say this change would help them as a parent “some” or “a lot.”
- Interest in multiple forms of help is higher among the Latino/Latina parents surveyed when compared to the African American parents. About 8 out of 10 Latino/Latina parents surveyed say 4 different changes would help a lot: Spending more time with their child; feeling more secure financially; a teacher taking a personal interest in helping their child, and a more flexible work schedule. This overall pattern of Latino/Latina parents saying that most changes would help them “a lot” suggests a particular openness to support for their role as parents. Though the study does not explore the reasons for this difference, it merits further exploration and dialogue to determine whether there is, in fact, a greater openness to support and help from others within the Latino/Latina community or among immigrants to the United States.
- African American and Latino/Latina parents of young children (birth to age 5) place a greater value than parents of school-age children or teenagers on spending more time with their child, having a more flexible work schedule, having more quality child or after-school care, and help in improving the partner/spouse relationship.
- One way to support and encourage parents is for them to be a national priority that is articulated and acted upon by national leaders and elected officials. A strong majority of African American and Latino/Latina agree that today’s national leaders and elected officials do *not* put enough emphasis on the needs of parents, children, and families. In fact, 90% of African Americans assert that children, parents, and families are not a high enough priority in the nation. Furthermore, a majority of parents indicate that government placing a higher priority on families would help them a lot as parents.

### *The Voices of Parents*

- A Latino father: “Help for schools...art, music, everything...more than anything will be educational for parents to improve themselves.”
- An African American mother: “I am their only resource at this moment because there’s nothing in our community. Nothing. And I feel that’s the basic need! They need programs in the community! I mean really some good programs. And they don’t have it. They don’t have it.”
- A Latino father: “To be a good parent, I believe, to continue in the training, to keep trying to better ourselves to help others, not just in our family but to other people too.”
- An African American mother: “It’s very hard to find companies to work for that care about the quality of life—you know, family quality of life. . . . I my

experience, you know, it's like no one cares if your child is sick. You have to be here. Not that they don't feel for you, but the bottom line is 'handle your business and then come to work.' They don't really consider your family life as part... or crucial to your performance at work."

- An African American mother: "I think that kids like my son—and any kid—they need to see African American people in positions of power and authority. Because there's a quote that I keep sometimes; 'A child cannot achieve anything they can't dream.' And if they don't see it then they may not even dream it, because they don't know that it exists. So I think that's important."
- A Latina mother: "We have a lot of support in the groups. Like the reading group: It supports us a lot because after reading we talk and comment about it... By our own experience, listening to other people talking about their things, so we support one another."
- An African American mother: "I just think we definitely need resources and we need more educational programs to go out into the community, more advertisements in the media to let people know—particularly males—that it is okay to become more involved and it is okay to show emotion. And if people just come together in a collaborative type of forum so we can get back to that extended family. Instead of different groups saying, 'Well it's that group's job and that group's job,' that everybody come together and we all get it done."

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# Conclusion: Toward a Positive Vision of Parents and Parenting

This study clearly demonstrates the commitment and effort that parents put into the parenting task—sometimes against the odds. Despite messages in society that blame them for the ills of children, parents manage to maintain a sense of success as they continue to build their children’s Developmental Assets with little support from their community and society. In fact, the greatest challenges they faces are broader social issues—economic trends, pervasive negative values, community violence—not the daily squabbles and chores.

These are not common messages we hear about African American and Latino/Latina parents—the emphasis of this study. Yes, the parents in this study—many of whom are from low-income families—struggle (as is evident from the length of comments from the focus groups on the challenges they face). But the most important story may be that they *are* struggling, not giving up or letting go. They are working hard trying to “do right by” their children with little support and inadequate resources. To be sure, some parents do not effectively care for their children all the time. But that story is told over and over, disproportionately to the powerful story of success and engagement that emerges from this research.

To be sure, this study and other research points to some ways that parents could use more help in being better parents. They need encouragement, skills, and opportunities to connect themselves and their children to the broader community. Some want and need help in strengthening their relationship with their spouse or partner. Others need basic information on effective parenting.

But perhaps the more important message in this study is a call for the broader society to reflect on and rethink how it views and supports parents. Rather than merely blaming them when things go wrong (which they will sometimes), how can we support, encourage, and affirm parents? Instead of leaving them to their own devices, how can we be there for them as trusted friends and allies in the vital task of raising this society’s youngest generation to be healthy, caring, and responsible? The answer to these kinds of questions point toward creating communities, organizations, and systems that recognize strengths of parents, regardless of their family composition, cultural background, or other individual differences, and that understand that parenting is best done in the context of a supportive, engaged community.

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# Appendix A:

## Study Methodology and Sample

This appendix provides information about the study's methodology and samples. More detailed information (including survey instruments) is available in the background report for the study, available at [www.search-institute.org/families](http://www.search-institute.org/families).

### ***The Telephone Survey***

This report presents findings from three separate polls, all of which were conducted simultaneously in September-October 2003. The two major surveys focused exclusively on African American and Latino/Latina parents, respectively. (A third, smaller, survey was conducted of Caucasian parents on selected items. Data from this smaller sample are not included in this report.)

*The Sample of African American Parents*—Sample design and data gathering for the study of African American parents was conducted by Marketing Analysts, Inc., of Charlotte, North Carolina. The African American sample was drawn from telephone directory-listed households located within U.S. census tracts with 30% or greater density of African American households.

*The Sample of Latino/Latina Parents*—The sample was a targeted list of Hispanic surnames in five U.S. regions with the highest Latino/Latino density (and are all covered by Spanish language media). Together, they represent about 70% of all Hispanics in the United States: West (Los Angeles) = 38%; Northeast (New York) = 18%; Midwest (Chicago) = 9%; Southwest (Houston) = 24%; and Southeast (Miami) = 11%

The city in parentheses, the primary market in the region, is the location for the bulk of the interviews. The percentage is the weight of each region in the total sample, mirroring the proportion of Hispanics within the five regions based on Census data. Sample design and data gathering for the study of Latino/Latina parents was conducted by Garcia Research Associates, Inc., Burbank, California.

**Sample Characteristics**—The total sample consists of 685 African American parents and 639 Latino/Latina parents. The samples vary considerably on several key demographics. Here are some basic demographics of the samples:

- The sample consists primarily of mothers (76% of the African American parents and 71% of the Latino/Latina parents).
- African American parents in this study are much less likely to be married or living in a committed relationship than are Latino/Latina parents. In this

study, 54% of the African American parents are married or in a committed relationship, compared to 84% of the Latino/Latina sample.

- The Latino/Latina parents in this study tend to be younger, with 54% of the Latino/Latina parents being younger than age 35, compared to 35% of the African American parents.
- Latino/Latina parents in this study are less likely than African American parents to have more than a high school education. Thirty-six percent of the Latino/Latina parents indicated that they have less than a high school education, compared to 6% of the African American parents surveyed. Moreover, 30% of the African American parents surveyed indicated that they have at least a college education, compared to 14% of the Latino/Latina parents in this study.
- The vast majority of parents are the child's birth or biological parent. However, African American parents in this sample were more likely to be grandparents (11%) or legal guardians (5%) than were the Latino/Latina parents in this study.
- About half of the African American and Latino/Latina samples have household incomes under \$30,000.
- More than half of the Latino/Latina sample of parents indicates that they are of Mexican origin (55%) or Mexican-American (11%).
- Overall, 39% of the parents in the Latino/Latina sample speak only Spanish in the home, with another 29% indicating that they speak mostly Spanish with some English. In comparison, only 14% indicate that they speak mostly or only English.
- Of this sample of Latino/Latina parents, 81% were born outside of the United States. Almost half (44%) have lived in the United States 10 years or less.

Because of differences in sampling methodologies, sample differences, and differences in sample sizes disproportionate to the U.S. population, the three samples cannot be combined to provide a national portrait of parents. However, they provide particularly unique insights into the experiences of African American and Latino/Latina parents.

## ***The Focus Groups and Interviews***

To complement the quantitative telephone surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted with African American and Latino/Latina parents in two major cities with sizeable African American and Hispanic populations. In all, 16 African American parents and 24 Latino/Latina parents participated in focus groups. In addition, 20 in-depth structured interviews were conducted (10 per

site). Focus groups and interviews were conducted between October and December 2003.

## ***Data Analysis***

**Quantitative**—A wide range of data analyses were conducted on the survey data to surface major issues and points of comparison. In this report, we have only highlighted those comparisons that are statistically significant ( $p \leq .05$ ).

**Qualitative**—An inductive grounded theory approach was applied to the focus group and interview data. Two applied research staff served as readers and “coders,” of the transcripts for the purpose of allowing those themes to naturally emerge. Actual transcribed text is provided to document the salience and substance of the themes and subthemes that surfaced.

# Appendix B: Search Institute's Framework of Developmental Assets

External Assets	Internal Assets
<b>Support</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Family support</li> <li>2. Positive family communication</li> <li>3. Other adult relationships</li> <li>4. Caring neighborhood</li> <li>5. Caring school climate</li> <li>6. Parent involvement in schooling</li> </ol> <b>Empowerment</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Community values youth</li> <li>8. Youth as resources</li> <li>9. Service to others</li> <li>10. Safety</li> </ol> <b>Boundaries and Expectations</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Family boundaries</li> <li>12. School boundaries</li> <li>13. Neighborhood boundaries</li> <li>14. Adult role models</li> <li>15. Positive peer influence</li> <li>16. High expectations</li> </ol> <b>Constructive Use of Time</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Creative activities</li> <li>18. Youth programs</li> <li>19. Religious community</li> <li>20. Time at home</li> </ol>	<b>Commitment to Learning</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. Achievement motivation</li> <li>22. School engagement</li> <li>23. Homework</li> <li>24. Bonding to school</li> <li>25. Reading for pleasure</li> </ol> <b>Positive Values</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26. Caring</li> <li>27. Equality and social justice</li> <li>28. Integrity</li> <li>29. Honesty</li> <li>30. Responsibility</li> <li>31. Restraint</li> </ol> <b>Social Competencies</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32. Planning and decision making</li> <li>33. Interpersonal competence</li> <li>34. Cultural competence</li> <li>35. Resistance skills</li> <li>36. Peaceful conflict resolution</li> </ol> <b>Positive Identity</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>37. Personal power</li> <li>38. Self-esteem</li> <li>39. Sense of purpose</li> <li>40. Positive view of personal future</li> </ol>

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