

Design Strategies for Power Sharing in Early Childhood Math

Insights from Dialogues with Latinx Families and Educators

Context

This work shares insights from a design-based, bilingual parent-educator dialogue group focused on early childhood mathematics. Grounded in equity and participatory practices, the program supported Latinx families and educators to reimagine math learning and co-create a shared vision grounded in relationship-building and power sharing.

Design Strategies for Power Sharing

- Co-designing group norms – Set expectations together to support trust and shared ownership.
- Starting with storytelling and icebreakers – Build connection and shifted power dynamics.
- Creating artifacts – Support shared meaning-making across contexts.
- Multilingual facilitation – Center Spanish, translated fully, and valued all forms of expression.
- Connecting to everyday math – Validate families' knowledge and broaden ideas of math.
- Centering families' funds of knowledge – Position families as co-teachers and leaders.
- Frequent reflection and iteration – Integrate feedback to adjust structure in real-time.
- Share meals and informal time – Support relationship-building beyond structured sessions.

“Cuando terminábamos cada actividad, me gustaba interactuar con todos. Todos teníamos la oportunidad de hablar. Me gustó que no éramos muchísimas mamás, era algo mas íntimo y pequeño. Todas teníamos la oportunidad de hablar y conversar. Conocernos y participar.” [I liked interacting with everybody after we were done with the activities. We all had opportunities to talk and I liked that it was more intimate. There weren't that many other moms, it was small. We all had opportunities to share and talk, participate and get to know each other.]

“Pues yo me sentí muy cómoda porque hablaban español e inglés. Una persona se siente cómoda cuando escuchas tu idioma. Eso estuvo bien. Si toda la sesión fuera inglés y sólo hablas español no entiendes. Te quedas “Ni qué”. La convivencia, y pasar tiempo con las maestras estuvo muy bien. Tienes confianza en tí mismo con tus compañeras como madre y aprendes otras cosas que ni idea tenías.” [I felt really comfortable especially because we talked in English and Spanish. When you hear your own language you feel comfortable. If the session was in English and you only speak Spanish you would be “Like what?”. I liked spending time with the teachers. I felt confident with the other moms and we learned things I didn't even know.]

Discussion Questions

- What assumptions do we make about families when designing learning experiences?
- How do you intentionally shift power in your family/educator partnerships?
- How can we support educators and families to co-design learning experiences together?

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