Abstract

This study examined factors influencing the socio-emotional development of Hispanic pre-kindergarten students. In light of the growing Hispanic population in the United States, it is important to understand factors that contribute to Hispanic youths’ development. In addition, because socio-emotional functioning relates to later mental, behavioral, and academic outcomes, it is a particularly crucial area of development. This study grew out of a multi-method evaluation of a pre-kindergarten program. It drew on teacher-completed socio-emotional assessments (from fall and spring) of 776 pre-kindergarteners and used hierarchical multiple regression analyses to determine the contribution of two classroom factors (classroom quality and classroom proportion of Hispanic students) to the socio-emotional development of Hispanic students in the program. It was hypothesized that each of these classroom factors would contribute to greater gains for Hispanic students throughout the school year. Results indicated that classroom quality was important for all students and did not contribute to added benefits for Hispanic (relative to non-Hispanic) students. Results also suggested that Hispanic classroom proportion did not relate meaningfully to Hispanic students’ socio-emotional outcomes. Moreover, examining the interaction of these factors did not contribute to the prediction of changes in children’s socio-emotional development. Implications and future directions are discussed.