



# Hispanic Immigrant Families: Overcoming Challenges in Your Search for a Better Future

By: Edith Bracho Sánchez, MD

Stories of endurance and determination are common among Hispanic families who migrate to the United States. These families are many in numbers—according to the American Community Survey (ACS) (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>), over 1.2 million new Hispanics arrived in the United States from July 2014 to July 2015. The stories of many of these new immigrants frequently have a common underlying theme: *sacrifice in the search of a better future for those we love—our children.*



**After the journey and facing a new culture and new challenges, how can you best help your children attain that better future you dreamed for them? How can you help them reach their fullest potential?**

Every family—new immigrant, old immigrants, first generation, second, or third—faces their own unique set of challenges. Regardless of what those unique challenges are to you, use the following tips in your daily interactions with your children:

- **Raise your expectations.** Children live either up or down to an adult's expectations of them. If you expect the best, your children will tend to live up to those standards in their own way. It is important to understand, however, that expecting the best doesn't necessarily mean getting straight A's or being the star athlete; it means being a good human being—considerate, respectful, honest, generous, responsible, etc. Many of these character traits are instilled at home.
- **Tell your children they can change the world.** Even from an early age, children can learn the importance of making the world a better place. Inspiring generosity (</English/family-life/Community/Pages/How-to-Inspire-Generosity-in-Children.aspx>) can help your children gain a sense of purpose and motivate them to do good for others. Being an immigrant has given your children tolerance, empathy, and hope—help them see that. Your children can start changing the world right in their own community. Volunteering, for example, will lead to reinforcing "thank you's" and contribute to your children's overall sense of purpose. *See [Creating Opportunities for Children & Teens to Contribute](/English/family-life/Community/Pages/Creating-Opportunities-for-Children-Teens-to-Contribute.aspx) (</English/family-life/Community/Pages/Creating-Opportunities-for-Children-Teens-to-Contribute.aspx>) for suggestions.*
- **Praise efforts and small successes.** Help your children recognize even their smallest successes. When celebrations are in order, celebrate in your own way—honoring your own culture and traditions. Maybe it is homemade meals that have been a part of your child's life from an early age—arepas, empanadas, tamales, buñuelos, pastel, etc. Celebrating your children's accomplishments in this way will feel special and important to them.
- **Make it clear that you always have time to talk and listen.** Many Hispanic parents are juggling many hats and working very hard to make ends meet (</English/family-life/Community/Pages/Struggling-to-Make-Ends-Meet.aspx>). According to the 2016 U.S. Census Bureau (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>), just over 20% of Hispanic immigrants live in poverty—that's 2 in every 10 families. Children can sense when their parents are worried, overwhelmed, or simply burdened by the challenges of daily life. Take time to make time. As children grow, it is important that they know they always come first. Having a good communication (</English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/Improving-Family-Communications.aspx>) system early on can reduce the chances of your children withholding information from you later. Make it clear they are your number one priority. Ask questions. Show an interest. Remember things important to them.

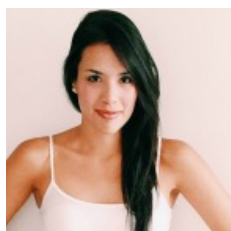
- **Set family goals.** In the same creative way your family works together to overcome challenges, you can sit with your children to set goals for things such as volunteering a couple of hours per week, attending an additional course or class after school, joining a team, etc. Pick the activities together, make them a family goal, and do your best to help your children meet their responsibilities. This will make it clear to your children that their activities are important and again reinforce their sense of purpose. [Back to Top](#)

Remember, as a Hispanic family, you are already set up for success if your children are being raised with a strong sense of family and much love!

## Additional Information & Resources:

- 12 Tips for Teaching Children Gratitude (/English/family-life/Community/Pages/12-Tips-for-Teaching-Children-Gratitude.aspx)
- 10 No-Cost, Screen-Free Activities to Play with Your Preschooler (/English/ages-stages/preschool/nutrition-fitness/Pages/Motor-Activity-and-Self-Play.aspx)
- Childhood Looks Better When Dad is in It: AAP Report Explained (/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Childhood-Looks-Better-When-Dad-is-in-It.aspx)
- How Taking Care of Yourself Makes You a Better Mom (/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/How-Taking-Care-of-Yourself-Makes-you-a-Better-Mom.aspx)
- Helping Children Adjust to a Move (/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Helping-Children-Adjust-to-a-Move.aspx)

## About Dr. Bracho Sánchez:



Edith Bracho Sánchez, MD, is a pediatric resident in Philadelphia. She was born and raised in Caracas, Venezuela and obtained her medical degree from New York University. Dr. Bracho Sánchez is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Med-Peds (SOMP) and Section on Pediatric Trainees (SOPT). She credits her wonderful parents for motivating her and supporting her arrival to the United States. Follow her on Twitter @DoctoraEdith (<https://twitter.com/doctoraedith?lang=en>).

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