

## **ABSTRACT**

### ***Autismo Latino Families' Perspectives and Their Children with Autism.* By Angela Delgado Viencek**

There is a small amount of literature on Latino families of children with autism. Many studies have focused on autism, but few qualitative studies have focused on families of children with autism and even less on Latino families of children with autism. The goal of this research is to uncover the experiences and perceptions of Latino parents of children with autism. In this study, seven Latino families of children with autism were interviewed about their experiences rearing a child with autism. All participants were referred through a non-profit organization in San Bernardino County. The Vice President of a non-profit support organization, who herself has a son with autism, helped recruit these Latino families was also interviewed. Using an interpretivist lens, parents were encouraged to begin their stories where they felt most comfortable. The results from the research suggest Latino families of children with autism experienced marginalization of their children with autism in educational settings, with their extended families and in the Latino community. This study revealed families experienced difficulties obtaining an autism diagnosis for their children, resulting in delayed interventions and services. Lastly, these Latino families of children with autism revealed their reliance on faith to guide them rearing a child with a disability. This study showed these Latino families of children with autism were not passive waiting for professionals to help rescue them or their children. They were proactive, educating themselves to better serve their children with autism.

