

It's Family Time! Parent-Child Interactions by Race and Hispanic Origin

Before and After the COVID-19 Pandemic

Presented at the 2023 annual meeting of the
Population Association of America
New Orleans, LA
April 12-15, 2023

Yerís H. Mayol-García, Ph.D. and PMP
Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division
Demographic Directorate
U.S. Census Bureau

INTRODUCTION

- Parental involvement has positive effects for children and parents, like improved school performance, fewer risky behaviors, reduced odds of being overweight, and improved family functioning.
- Family structure and socioeconomic characteristics may create challenges or advantages for parents as they seek to engage with their children.
- The role these factors play can vary by race and ethnicity.
- The COVID-19 pandemic shocked family routines through school and work shutdowns, illness, death, and the loss of job and wages, with a disproportionate impact on minorities.

DATA AND METHODS

Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)

- 2018: A pre-COVID 19 benchmark less affected by high nonresponse rates and nonresponse bias.
 - 2021: Relevant for current parental involvement trends.
 - Descriptive statistics and logistic regressions.
 - RQ2: Regressions used a combined 2018 and 2021 dataset with year variable.
- Technical: SAS 9.4, weighted public-use data, person and replicate weights, * indicates statistical difference at p=0.10.

VARIABLES

- Population:** reference parents of children.
- Frequent dinners:** 5+ weekly dinners with children ages 0-17.
- Frequent outings:** 2+ weekly outings with children ages 0-5 to a park, library, zoo, store, church, restaurant, or family gathering.
- Frequent reading:** 5+ weekly reading to children ages 0-5 by parent or another family member.
- Race (non-Hispanic alone) and Hispanic origin:** White, Black, Asian, Other (includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and 2+ races), Hispanic.
- Material hardship:** Household experienced any food, housing, or bill-paying hardship.
- Work:** Full-time (35+ hrs.), part-time (1-34 hrs.), no work.
- Other:** Age, coupled (spouse or partner), extra adults in household, education, citizenship, neighborhood hardship.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: Does the association between parental involvement and socioeconomic characteristics vary by race and Hispanic origin?

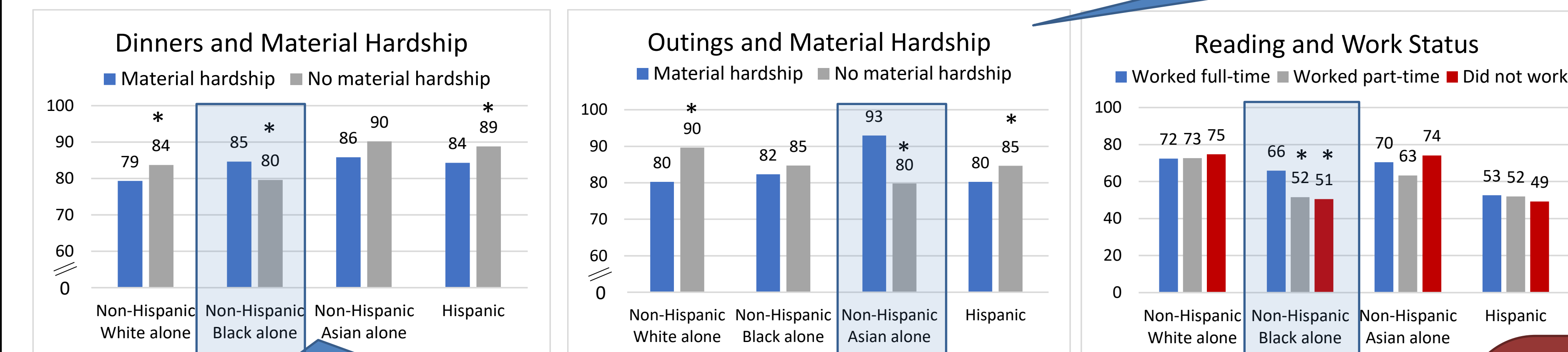
Table 1. Parental Involvement Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin, SIPP 2018

Race and Hispanic Origin of reference parents	5+ dinners per week		2+ outings per week		5+ reading per week	
	Percent	MOE	Percent	MOE	Percent	MOE
<i>Number of reference parents (in thousands)</i>	40,863	547	17,389	399	17,389	399
All reference parents	83.8	0.8	85.1	1.1	65.4	1.4
Non-Hispanic White alone	82.4	1.0	86.8	1.4	73.3	1.7
Non-Hispanic Black alone	81.9	2.2	83.6	3.3	58.0	4.2
Non-Hispanic Asian alone	89.3	2.3	82.8	5.0	71.4	5.4
Non-Hispanic Other race	80.2	4.5	83.1	6.3	59.5	7.7
Hispanic (any race)	87.2	1.3	83.0	2.2	51.0	2.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation 2018 (weighted public-use data).

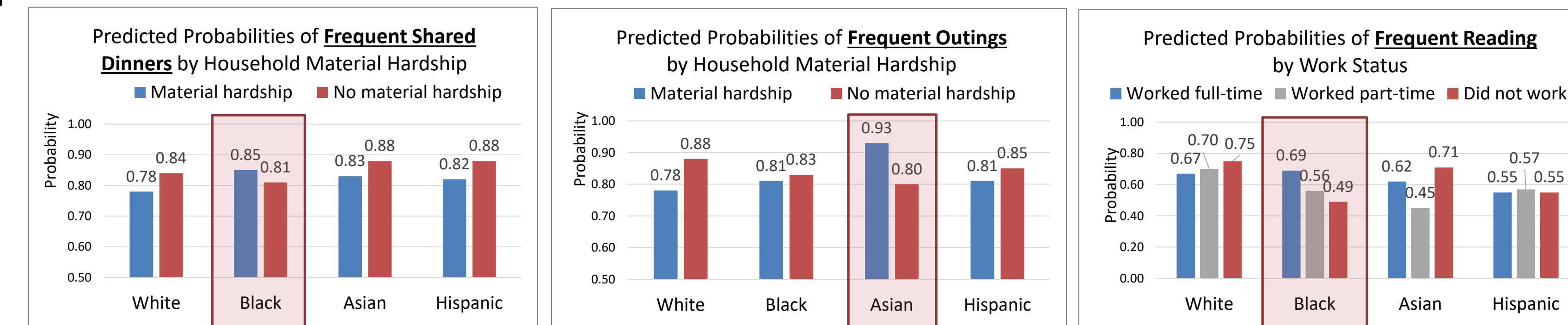
Notes: MOE: margin of error. p<0.10. **Blue:** Higher than all parents. **Orange:** Lower than all parents.

INVOLVEMENT RATES DIFFERED BY CHARACTERISTICS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation 2018 (weighted public-use data).

PREDICTED PROBABILITIES



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation 2018 (weighted public-use data).

More Hispanic and Asian parents had frequent dinners with children compared to all parents, while fewer White parents did so.

Fewer Hispanic and Black parents read frequently to young children compared to all parents, while more White and Asian parents did so.

Among Asian parents, those who experienced material hardship took young children on more frequent outings than other Asian parents.

Among Black parents, those who worked full-time read more frequently to young children than other Black parents.

After controlling for characteristics and including interaction terms:

- Black parents who experienced material hardship had a predicted probability of 85% of frequently **dining** with their own children.
- The highest probability of taking children on **outings** was 93% for Asian parents who experienced material hardship.
- Among Black parents, full-time working parents had the highest predicted probability of frequently **reading** to children.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: Did the COVID-19 pandemic change the relationships between parental involvement, socioeconomic characteristics, and race and Hispanic origin?

Did the COVID-19 pandemic change the relationships between parental involvement, socioeconomic characteristics, and race and Hispanic origin?

In the full models, compared with 2018, parents in 2021 were:

- 1.3 times** more likely to have frequent dinners.
- 53%** less likely to go on frequent outings.
- Similarly engaged with children by race and ethnicity and other characteristics as were parents in 2018.
- ❖ Results for reading and interactions between year and race and ethnicity were not statistically significant.

CONCLUSIONS

- Parents were highly engaged with children, but levels varied by race and ethnicity.
- Socioeconomic characteristics, especially material hardship and work status, were associated with parental engagement in different ways by race and ethnicity.
- The pandemic suppressed outings while increasing the frequency of dinners, most likely due to school and work shutdowns, shift to remote work, and loss of parental jobs and wages.
- Despite stark disparities in health, work, and wages, the pandemic did not affect parental involvement levels differentially by race and ethnicity.