Background

Parent feeding styles are considered effective targets for obesity prevention programs. Self-assessments can inform programming. However, there are few validated tools that allow self-assessment of parent feeding useful to federally funded nutrition education programs. Moreover, higher rates of obesity in Hispanic and Latino children warrant the development of such tools in Spanish.

Objective

Validate Mi Niño a la Hora de Comer (Mi Niño), a Spanish language self-assessment tool with low literacy demands.

Aim 1: Test the factor structure of the Mi Niño responses.
Aim 2: Assess association between Mi Niño responses and self-assessments of parenting and household functioning.
Aim 3: Evaluate the correspondence between Mi Niño scores and observed mealtime behaviors.

Description

Participants

Hispanic parents with a preschool aged child (N=244) recruited from WIC and Head Start sites in the Sacramento, CA region. A subsample (n=59) completed the videotaping. All measures and coding were completed in Spanish.

Procedures

Mi Niño All parents completed the Mi Niño tool in the presence of a researcher. The Mi Niño tool assesses 27 behaviors based on the English version of My Child at Mealtime (Ontai et al., 2019). All behaviors are rated on a 4-point scale from "No/Rarely" to "Very Often."

Parenting: All parents completed the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire – Short Version (PSDQ-Short; Robinson et al., 2001).
Household functioning: All parents completed the 6-item CHAOS Home Environment questionnaire (Johnson et al., 2008).

Mealtime observations: A sub-sample of families (n=59) had a mealtime videotaped in their home within 2 months of the completion of the tool. Families were asked to select a mealtime that was typical to have in their household together as a family. Researchers set up the camera and were not present during the mealtime.

Nine parent behaviors were coded based on criteria adapted from the English version of My Child at Mealtime tool (Ontai et al., 2019). All parents completed the English version of My Child at Mealtime tool (Ontai et al., 2019). All parents completed the Mi Niño tool in the presence of a researcher.

Results

Validation of Mi Niño Responses with Observed Mealtime Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed Behaviors</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Parent Centered</th>
<th>Child Centered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical manipulation</td>
<td>Physically moves child in chair.</td>
<td>3.15 (0.81)</td>
<td>3.07 (0.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bargaining</td>
<td>&quot;Eat four more bites then you can have dessert.&quot;</td>
<td>3.05 (0.78)</td>
<td>3.02 (0.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand to eat</td>
<td>&quot;Hurry up and eat.&quot;</td>
<td>3.05 (0.78)</td>
<td>3.02 (0.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand feed child</td>
<td>Uses spoon to feed child soup.</td>
<td>2.90 (0.76)</td>
<td>2.88 (0.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement about eating</td>
<td>&quot;Try your mashed potatoes.&quot;</td>
<td>3.05 (0.78)</td>
<td>3.02 (0.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating inquiry</td>
<td>&quot;Did you eat your bell pepper already?&quot;</td>
<td>2.90 (0.76)</td>
<td>2.88 (0.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction to eat</td>
<td>&quot;Come and eat.&quot;</td>
<td>2.90 (0.76)</td>
<td>2.88 (0.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement about food</td>
<td>&quot;The apples are sweet.&quot;</td>
<td>3.05 (0.78)</td>
<td>3.02 (0.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement about food preference</td>
<td>&quot;How would you like your tostada?&quot;</td>
<td>3.05 (0.78)</td>
<td>3.02 (0.77)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


correlation (p) **<.01, ***<.001

Conclusion & Implications

Aim 1: The factor structure of Mi Niño replicates the structure of the English language My Child at Mealtime.
Aim 2: Responses to the Mi Niño tool reflect self-reports of general parenting suggesting that the items reflect underlying parenting behaviors. The significant associations with household functioning suggest that household climate is an important factor to consider in self-reports of parent food-related behaviors.
Aim 3: Responses to Mi Niño items corresponded to parent-centered behaviors at mealtimes.

Mi Niño is a valid tool to assess parent food-related behaviors of Spanish-speaking parents of preschool aged children. The tool allows obesity prevention programs to identify critical parenting behaviors needing support in order to effectively create healthy home environments for young children.

References


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