

Andrea Flores:

By 2050, Latinas will make up [a quarter of all women in the U.S.](#) We're gaining in education, participating in the labor market, accumulating wealth, and embracing entrepreneurship. The future of the United States is irrevocably tied to the health and well being of Latinas. I'm Andrea Flores, a journalist based in the Chicagoland area, but more specifically, Waukegan where I was born and raised, and where this episode takes place.

Waukegan is nestled between some of the country's wealthiest towns. Think: where Home Alone and Ferris Bueller's Day Off were filmed. [But Waukegan is one of the poorest cities in Illinois.](#) More than half of the city identifies as Latino, and while the majority of that population is Mexican, there are also Hondurans, Salvadorans, Puerto Ricans, Belizeans and other Latinos. The Latino community is thriving in Waukegan, and the clearest way to figure out where someone is from, without being too intrusive, is by listening to how they speak Spanish. Regional accents, colloquialisms, slang, and intonation all play a part in how native speakers adapt to and evolve their language. That may be why, for Wendy Miralda and José Paz, talking in Spanish to their infant daughter has invited a lot of questions, many shared by Latinos around the country when deciding to raise their children bilingual.

Wendy Miralda:

[singing in the bathroom] No me quiero bañar, no me quiero bañar, así cochina me voy a quedar. No me gusta el shampoo, no me gusta el jabón, así cochina me siento mejor.

Flores:

Wendy is preparing her baby girl Jelyani for bed. Their night time routine includes bathtime with toys and a song about avoiding showers and preferring a more stinky alternative.

Miralda:

So she likes that song because when she was a baby, she did not like to shower.

Flores:

27 year-old Wendy Jahayra Miralda and 28-year old Jose Paz are navigating the early stages of parenthood with their 9-month old daughter Jelyani Dora. When I visited them, I was captivated by Jelyani's big eyes.

Miralda:

Oh my god, sus ojitos, y sus cejas!

Flores:

Wendy thinks Jelyani got Jose's big eyes and thin eyebrows. But as I look at Wendy, I actually think Jelyani looks more like her, with her plump cheeks and twinkling eyes. Over the last 9 months, the couple has worked to build bonds with their daughter. Wendy, in particular, has found it helpful to bond with Jelyani during bath time.

Miralda:

Like at first I would bathe her. So that was, interesting at first, cause I would say I didn't know how to bathe the baby, but then I started like incorporating toys, singing to her, dancing with her while she was bathing. I like to read to her at night, and... like at first, like obviously she just gives me that blank stare, has no clue. But lately, now that she's a little older, you can see she smiles. Or when I bring out a book, like you can see this, her, her face just glows up. So I think she likes it. I hope she does.

[Jelyani babbles during bathtime]

Flores:

[According to the Centers for Disease Control](#), activities such as speaking, playing and caring for a child support healthy brain growth. These activities enhance cognitive development: basically how children think and problem solve.

Miralda:

We like to, what else do we like? I like to, she likes to play on the floor. Sometimes she likes to play by herself and sometimes simply by like me or dad, like just sitting there. She likes that. She does not like to be alone. She loves to go to the kitchen when I'm in the kitchen. So sometimes I like pull out all the Tupperware and all that stuff so she can just play. Cuz that's what she's gonna do and end up doing anyway.

[Sound of Wendy reading to Jelyani]

Flores:

[Bonding through reading](#) and bathtime are crucial to an infant's well-being. Research shows that a critical stage for brain development actually starts in the womb and then throughout the first year of life. [During this stage](#), babies want to be loved and cared for. These small meaningful interactions set the foundation for children to become resilient and independent adults.

By developing a secure attachment with Jelyani, Wendy and Jose are setting the groundwork for their daughter to develop a strong sense of self and positive social skills. The science shows that [interactions between adults and babies](#)—whether it be babbling, facial expressions, and gestures—can actually strengthen the infant's brain. Responding to non-verbal cues such as babbling or crying [validates the baby's experiences](#). Talking is a [milestone](#) infants tend to hit after their first birthday, so it'll be a while before Jelyani forms words and sentences. But her brain is [constantly absorbing information](#) all around her.

Adriana Weisleder:

Infant brains are just amazing.

Flores:

That's Adriana Weisleder, [a Northwestern University Professor](#) in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. She is also the director of the Child Language Lab.

Weisleder:

You know, now that I have a little one and she's three months old, and I just like am looking at her all the time and thinking of all the things that she's learning. It's so amazing to think about.

Flores:

Adriana's lab focuses on how babies, toddlers, and preschool children learn to communicate from their environments.

Weisleder:

What's happening in the first year is that infants' brains are kind of, they're growing, they're forming connections.

Flores:

[As early as 3 months](#), infants are able to understand language patterns and categories. It is similar to how a bear cub is learning to differentiate between edible and poisonous berries, not by trying them, but rather observing the mother. In that same way, infants are learning to categorize objects. Like the difference between a dog and tree, or apple and car. They might not be able to tell the difference between a cat and a dog, but they know they share similar characteristics to form the category of animal. In other words, they are learning how to recognize differences and similarities.

Weisleder:

They're specializing to the environments that they're in. So, one of the most amazing things about, you know, about humans, about babies is that they're very, very, very adaptable. And so, you know, babies are born with a lot of, kind of early capacities.

Flores:

As they discussed what language to use around Jelyani, her Honduran parents found the decision easy to make. You might hear Jelyani trying to get a word or two in here.

Paz:

Pues es una como conversación que tuvimos porque pues así la niña entiende más a los de dónde viene los papás a mis pa, mi papá, mi a los papás de ella. Entonces, como que no como para tener más con vivo, me entiendes para para que no esté perdida por, más que todo, más que todo por eso.

VO translation:

Well, it's a conversation we did have because that way the baby understands more about where my parents come from, my wife's parents. So more for the baby to feel part of the family, know what I mean? So that she's not lost, more than anything.

Flores:

For the Paz family, passing down Spanish is central to Jelyani understanding “de donde viene,” where she comes from. For Wendy, teaching Jelyani Spanish is synonymous with raising her to be Honduran.

Miralda:

So I am Honduran. I was born here. My parents are Honduran. My husband's fully Honduran. He was born in Honduras, so that's, I'm very big on that as far as culture. Like, I'm proud to say that I'm Honduran, especially because there's just, it's like a minority here.

Flores:

Waukegan, Illinois, is 45 minutes north of Chicago. According to the 2020 Census, [almost 60% of the Waukegan population identifies as Latino](#).

Miralda:

So it's always interesting when you tell people, oh, you're Honduran. And it's like, oh, you're Honduran, you're not Mexican, which is usually what people think of when they see a Hispanic.

Flores:

Hondurans in Waukegan make up roughly 4% of the total Latino population.

Miralda:

So that's very big and important for me, for her to know that she's Honduran and to speak Spanish and like just follow our traditions and stuff and just continue them.

Flores:

Growing up in Waukegan myself, I had to learn that not everyone was Mexican, like my family.

Flores:

You know, I came in and the way that you were talking to your daughter, for me it's like, it's different.

Miralda:

Yes. So I think Mexicans say "ven", right? We say veni. So I'll say “veni, veni”.

Flores:

Wendy recalls a recent visit to a local Mexican breakfast spot where she asked the waiter for sour cream, which in Honduras is called “mantequilla”. But “mantequilla” in Mexico is “butter.”

Miralda:

So he came and brought me butter and my brother's like, you dummy. He's like, that's not, he's like, that's not what they call it. And I'm like, oh my god. So I think she's gonna struggle with that.

Flores:

Will Jelyani struggle with words like “mantequilla”? How do we even know what is happening in her brain when she can’t speak? In her research, Adriana found that [when parents direct their speech to their children](#), they are more likely to develop greater vocabularies. In other words, talking to your child, even if they don’t talk back, matters. Even more than screen time.

Weisleder:

Because early on, you know, we kind of don't think a lot about language and people, you know, sometimes don't think a lot about language until kids start to talk. But they have to learn a lot of things before they can actually talk and say those first words.

Flores:

Adriana’s research uses something called eye-tracking, which follows infants’ eye movements relative to the words and images they are exposed to. I came to check it out for myself at the Northwestern University lab.

Weisleder:

We track baby's like eye movements to see sort of where they look. So this is kind of how we do it .

Flores:

The children in Adriana’s study will typically sit on their parent’s lap. The eye tracking device looks sort-of like a Wii sensor bar, thin and rectangular, except it is black and fits exactly across the bottom of a laptop.

[Sound of tracker being plugged in.]

Flores:

When Adriana connects the eye tracker to the laptop, two white eyes appear on the screen.

Weisleder:

See, do you see those little, those are my eyes. Do you see them?

Flores (in recording):

Whoa, whoa. Wait. Oh my.

Flores:

Adriana let me sit in front of the eye tracker. Before the test can begin, the eye tracker needs to calibrate with my eyes. Adriana runs a calibration test with duck images. The tracker will start to understand where my eyes will be looking at the screen.

[Electronic beeping]

Flores:

Those are duck sounds playing as duck images appear on the screen. You might hear some feedback given all the electronics in the room.

Weisleder:

It's creating like a model of your eyes.

Flores:

After the eye tracker senses where my eyes are located, the actual testing begins. Adriana sits in another corner of the room and draws a curtain for privacy. She's the only one that can see the white eyes moving. And so the test begins with someone on the screen saying...

Test Sound:

Hi friends. I have some things I want to show you. I'm going to show you some of my things. Are you ready?

Flores:

Two images pop up on the screen but only one object is mentioned at a time.

Test Sound:

Where's the dog? Do you see it? Look at the doll. Do you like it? Where's the hand? Do you see it?

Flores:

Adriana runs the test in Spanish as well.

Test Sound:

Hola amigos! Tengo unas cosas que les quiero mostrar. Les quiero mostrar algunas de mis cosas. Estan listos?? Y mi naranja, y mi jugo, y mi nariz. Y mi juguete...

Flores:

In some cases, it might be hard for children to distinguish between words that sound similar like dog and doll, but if dog and hand are paired together, it might be faster for children to identify.

Weisleder:

This shows us that they're kind of using the sounds even before the end of the word.

Flores:

The point of this test is to answer one simple question, where are children looking when they hear the name of an object. Currently, this test is meant for 2 to 3 and a half year-olds. A similar test can be conducted with infants as young as 6 months.

Weisleder:

You can kind of tell a little bit about what they're thinking, you know, we try to sort of read their minds based on where they look.

Flores:

Adriana hopes that her research can inform future pediatric practices, especially when it comes to bilingual families.

Weisleder:

For bilingual kids or kids from bilingual backgrounds or Spanish speaking backgrounds, or just pediatricians don't always know how to answer parents' questions because we know less about their development. And pediatricians don't get training, always, on bilingualism. And so that's one of the gaps that we're trying to bridge.

Flores (in tape to Jelyani):

Hi, mamas!

Flores:

When I enter the Paz home, Jelyani's eyes look straight at me, and whenever I look at her and talk, her eyes remain laser-focused on me as she cracks a toothless smile. Despite not having an eye tracker in the room with the Paz family, I couldn't help but notice whenever Wendy would look at her daughter and speak to her, Jelyani's eyes would [lock on to her mother's eyes and light up as well.](#)

Miralda:

Hola deci, hola. Veni.

Flores:

Jose swears he heard Jelyani say "tata" once, which is the closest he's gotten to hearing the word "papa." So he says he's been saying it back to her in an effort to hear it again. He also calls her "Nani," for Jelyani.

Paz:

Pues ella cuando estaba mas [Tataaa]... ella dijo tata, así nada más. Entonces de allí nada más yo le empecé a decir Tata, le digo Nani.

Flores:

[At the nine month mark,](#) most infants react to their name being called, and even start to babble words like "dada", or "tata" in Jelyani's case.

Paz (to Jelyani):

Tata? Tata! Tata?

Flores:

And Jelyani already understands the word for bottle.

Miralda:

For bottle, we say “pepe” and it's funny cuz like my closer Mexican friends are always like, no, it's “mamila”, “mamila”. But we call it “pepe” so I can hear her sometimes like, utter words, like, you know, trying to say it. And we like when we say, “oh, pepe, el pepe is here,” or, “pepe pepe,” so she knows, I think she knows it. Like she sees it and like, especially when she's hungry, like she'll grab onto it and she knows what we're talking about.

Flores:

Adriana says, knowing what different words mean to different people and communities pushes our brains to think and consider other cultures and contexts.

Weisleder:

If I call it like “mantequilla” and I mean sour cream because they call it something different. And so it's actually sort of showing kids something that is an important skill, cognitive skill to develop. So, si! It's a cool thing!

Flores:

As a Costa Rican living in the United State's Mexican majority, Adriana has also adjusted to learning new words in Spanish.

Weisleder:

When you have to think about those things like, oh, like my family calls it this, but other people outside call it this...it's like you're forced to learn this meta thing about language, which is like, oh, things can have different names. And so bilingual kids, there's some research that suggests, are developing like, these perspective taking skills, right? It's something that bilingual kids early on develop more quickly [that's called meta-linguistic awareness.](#)

Flores:

When I was growing up, I remember my mom being worried that she was confusing my siblings and me by speaking Spanish at home. But she really didn't have a choice since it was the only language she could speak at the time. [Parents often hear myths](#) that exposing children to more than one language in the household will confuse a child or cause developmental and speech delays. [But the research says otherwise.](#)

Weisleder:

A lot of times I know parents can hear a lot of messages that are kind of a little bit around fear of like, you know, what if they'll be confused or it'll be harder for them to learn English later, or this. But the science just doesn't support that at all. I wat that to be sort of like, one of the things, you know, it's like



there's, it's been debunked! You know, there's no confusion. There's lots of parts of the world where bilingualism is like the normal, you know, and it's like weird if you're not.

Flores:

[43%](#) of the world's population is bilingual. In the U.S, [1 in 5 adults](#) is bilingual. Compared to the European Union where it's [3 in 5 adults](#). [Adriana's research](#) supports the idea that infants have the capacity to learn two languages at the same time. It's what we mean when we say infants are global citizens, because [their brains are able to process multiple languages](#) they are regularly exposed to, while adults might struggle to reach that same level of fluency.

Weisleder:

One of the things that we don't realize is that as adults, our brains have already kind of – if you're sort of born in a monolingual environment right, in a single language environment – then your brain has kind of already adapted to that environment to some extent. And so learning a second language as an adult can be harder. But babies, the world is kind of wide open. So babies that are born into a dual language environment or a multilingual environment, their brains are adapting and specializing to that environment, to all of the sounds that they hear in that environment and to kind of the communicative needs of that environment.

Flores:

Wendy isn't so afraid of Jelyani being confused by two languages, as much as the fear that she's not teaching her proper Spanish. Wendy feels scared that she might pass on words that aren't fully correct.

Miralda:

My older brother, he's probably better at Spanish, I'm sure he's better at Spanish than me. So sometimes, like, I'll say words that are incorrect, or words that aren't even words. And then he'll say, that's not ... like "parqueadero," that's, I think that's not a word and people use it.

Flores:

But according to Adriana's research, while Wendy might sprinkle in the occasional English word, it won't impact Jelyani as much as Wendy thinks it will. Jelyani's brain will come to understand the difference between the two languages and adapt to her unique environment.

Weisleder:

Like they have the capacity to learn the language and communication. They need to adapt to the environment that they're in, right? So if you are born into an environment that speaks one language or another language, you know, you have to learn somewhat different things. And the amazing thing that, you know, we do is that we really kind of adapt to those environments.

Flores:

For Wendy, it is important that Jelyani learn both languages to enhance future career opportunities. [According to a 2017 report by the New American Economy](#), the number of online job listings for bilingual

Spanish-English speakers more than doubled from 2010 to 2015. Capitalizing on her language skills is exactly what Wendy has done for herself – she’s a nurse in Illinois, where the demand for healthcare workers who speak a language other than English [grew by 74% in 2020](#).

Miralda:

I feel like when you know more languages, your value just like – what did they say? “Vales como dos”. So I think there is truth to that. I think a lot of doors will open up if she knows Spanish, so that's important to me.

Flores:

Many first and second generation Latinos may struggle to raise bilingual children. [Research shows that](#) as immigrant connections weaken over time, parents tend to speak less Spanish to their children, resulting in [a decline in language use](#). This is exactly what Wendy hopes to avoid.

Miralda:

To me, it's very important for her to be able to communicate, like with her family members, her grandparents, and not be like the “no sabo kid.”

Flores:

Wendy says she doesn't want her daughter to be a “[No Sabo Kid](#),” a term commonly used to describe people who are Latino but do not speak Spanish, or rather do not speak it fluently. [The idea behind this term is](#), if someone were to come up to these individuals and speak Spanish to them, they would respond with “no sabo” which is an incorrect way of saying “no se” for “I don’t know”.

Many first- and second-generation Latinos actually consider “no sabo kid” to be [a derogatory term](#) used to deny someone of their own ethnic identity and to minimize their experiences as Latino people within the U.S. Those who dislike the term, [argue that Spanish is a colonizer language anyway](#), because it was forced upon Indigenous people in the Americas, and therefore should not be used as a measure of Latinidad. Also, [there are hundreds of Indigenous languages](#), like Guarani, Nahuatl, K'iche', Quechua– to name a few– that are still [spoken by millions in Latin America](#). So, to associate Latinidad with just speaking Spanish would erase the present-day experiences of Indigenous people of the Americas.

But some U.S. Latinos are reclaiming the term “no sabo kid”. They are [redefining what the term means](#) and owning their identity as separate from speaking the Spanish language, similar to how late Tejana singer Selena Quintanilla navigated Spanish-language interviews. Take for instance, [this interview for a TV show in Miami](#). The host Christina is asking Selena about dress sizes, and Selena responds that designers usually call a size 16, a size 14...

TV CLIP:

[Selena speaks to the host in Spanish]

Flores:

Instead of saying “catorce” for fourteen, Selena says “diez y cuatro,” ten and four. The host teases her for it, saying she’s so Tex Mex... and Selena replies “But you understand me, right?” and laughs. Wendy considers herself to be a no sabo kid, especially since she was born in the United States whereas her husband was born in Honduras and lived there until he was 10. For Wendy, identifying as a no sabo kid is almost a sign of respect for those like her mother who might only know Spanish.

Miralda:

I would feel weird. I would feel bad saying that I'm not a No Sabo kid because there's words that I don't know. I will talk to my mom and I will say, I will talk. So I talk Spanish to her. But sometimes I'll be like, “oh, maybe” like I put in some English words, but I really, I think I know my Spanish pretty well. But that's why I call myself a no sabo kid because I don't wanna be the one that's like, “oh, she thinks she's fluent, but she's not”. I would say I'm 99% fluent.

Flores:

Wendy understands that as Jelyani gets older she will be exposed to English at school. Adriana says that while it might take a while for a Spanish speaking child to learn English, they actually tend to pick up the language fast.

Weisleder:

What the data kind of show is that kids, let’s say, who are learning a home language, like Spanish—once they enter school, they are very fast to pick up on the majority language, so on English, right? Because again, language is for communication and the minute kids enter school and realize that, you know, to communicate with the people around them, they need to speak in English, you know, they need to learn English, then, then they learn that very quickly, when they're young.

Flores:

Jose agrees, English will always be there. It’s the retention of Spanish that is their biggest worry.

Jose Paz:

El inglés siempre está y es—yo viendo las cosas porque yo aprendí español en la Honduras e inglés aquí—el inglés es como más fácil de aprender. Y pues ya estás aquí en los Estados Unidos, donde la mayoría del tiempo se habla inglés y el español es más difícil de aprender.

VO translation:

English will always be there. The way I see it, because I learned Spanish in Honduras and English here, is that English is easier to learn. And well, you’re already here in the United States, where the majority of the time you talk in English, and so Spanish is harder to learn.

Flores:

Adriana agrees with José. She’s actually more worried about what happens to a child’s Spanish after they enter an English-only environment like school.

Weisleder:

Sadly, you know, a lot of kids, kind of don't keep up with their Spanish because there's so much pressure to learn English in schools. Right? And that's kind of the message that they're getting. And so I'm actually less worried about, you know, whether kids will learn English, 'cause I know they will learn English 'cause that's the majority language. And I, we sort of care more about understanding, what can we do to support kids in continuing to learn Spanish?

Flores:

So if infants like Jelyani are able to adapt to environments with multiple languages, AND they are able to learn English in a school setting, why has the myth that speaking two languages will confuse children and cause developmental delays persisted?

While the United States has no official language, there have been several movements to promote [English-only mandates across various states](#). Since the 1950's it is widely documented that [many Spanish-speakers were oppressed both in and out of school for speaking the language](#). Older generations of Spanish-speakers recall a time where they were physically beaten for speaking it at school, FORCING them to let go of Spanish in an effort to avoid being a target of abuse.

LA Times columnist Jean Guerrero, [spoke in LWC Studios' podcast Latina to Latina about her own experiences](#) growing up in Southern California, during what she said was an era of intense anti-immigrant, anti-Mexican hysteria. This happened in the 1990s. As of 2021, it is reported that [43% of the Californian population speaks more than one language](#). Jean describes how she internalized English language supremacy, from the educators at her private school.

Jean Guerrero:

It was against the rules to speak Spanish. Most of the students were Mexican American and children of immigrants and they wanted us to assimilate or learn English as quickly as possible, and so they said it's just against the rules. It was to the point where if we were caught speaking Spanish, we had to stay in detention and we had to write, "I will not speak Spanish. I will not speak Spanish," 100 times.

Flores:

She goes on to say that she internalized speaking Spanish as bad, and stopped speaking it altogether while developing a belief that English was superior. But despite the United States' efforts to wash away the vast linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity and enforce the use of one language, [more than 41 million people speak Spanish at home](#), according to the 2021 American Community Survey.

Jonathan Rosa:

All of this is deeply racialized...

Flores:

Jonathan Rosa is [Associate Professor at Stanford University in the Graduate School of Education](#) and the Center of Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity. Jonathan is a linguistic anthropologist who studies the overlap between racial and language categories.

Rosa:

I'm interested in not just, you know, maintaining language intergenerationally and really challenging a, a monolingual hegemony in the United States. The imposition of the English language and the idea that you should leave languages other than English to the side in order to be incorporated into the United States.

Flores:

Jonathan is interested in uncovering how Spanish becomes stigmatized when spoken by a racialized Latino community...

Rosa:

Unless you're wealthy and then you're allowed to attend dual language schools and your multilingualism is framed as making you "economically competitive"...

Flores:

... and how it is [championed when spoken by wealthy, typically white communities](#). And that is why the term that Wendy brought up earlier, about being a "No Sabo Kid," is fascinating to him. Jonathan argues that in this scenario, even when Latinos speak Spanish— it is framed as incorrect, and when they speak English, it is framed as incorrect.

Rosa:

And at what point do we start to connect the dots and recognize that for some populations we just imagine them as being linguistically deficient altogether?

Flores:

This can have concrete, damaging effects on multilingual families. For instance, in getting access to needed healthcare. [In one case written up by The Hechinger Report](#), a nonprofit newsroom focused on education, a mother in Providence, Rhode Island, was concerned by her 3-year-old daughter's struggle to speak. At that age, [toddlers should start forming recognizable words and sentences](#), but the mother could not make out what her daughter was saying. The pediatrician dismissed her concerns, saying her daughter's speech delays were due to her household speaking both English and Spanish. A few years later, her daughter was diagnosed with autism and cognitive delays, but the family had missed a critical window of time to help in her development. Rhode Island, like many states, [including Illinois](#), has what's often called [a Birth-to-Three program](#). It's an early intervention service that provides medical, therapeutic, and educational support to families with infants who have a developmental disability or cognitive delay.

The bias in the medical profession against bilingual households led to a missed diagnosis, and shifted the blame on the mother for her everyday language practices. Jonathan argues:

Rosa:

Is this really about language, or is language serving as a convenient rationalization for racism and, and for class stigmatization and, and, and class antagonism?

Flores:

Wendy and Jose's decision to pass down Spanish to Jelyani is all the more powerful when you realize how many forces and stigmas are pushing against it.

Flores (in tape):

Hey Wendy, hi!

Flores:

I came to visit the Paz family a month after my initial visit.

Flores (to Jelyani):

Hi. Oh my God. Mamas, how are you? You remember me?

Flores:

Jelyani is now 10 months, and there's a few updates on her development.

Miralda:

She's talking a lot... Well, not talking but babbling ... we noticed the other day that she was saying like, um "vaya vaya vaya vaya"..

Flores:

Hondurans say "vaya" to mean "go"

Miralda:

I'll put her in the car and go "vaya, vaya el carro". And be like "vamos por el carro". Things like that. So I noticed she was saying like "vaya vaya" so I repeat it when she says it and then she continues to do it. Jelyani! Vaya vaya vaya vaya.

Flores:

And even though she doesn't know the meaning of it, she's basically learning to call for her parents now.

Miralda:

She does say "Papa papa." Jelyani! (Jelyani coos)

Flores:

She hasn't quite said mama yet, but she's at least learning mom's nickname. The family calls Wendy by her middle name, Jahayra...

Miralda:

My nephews call me Yaya. So she does say yaya, yaya.

Flores:

She's also starting to hit some other milestones at 10 months

Paz:

She stands more, like she's about to walk...

Flores:

With just two months away from Jelyani's first birthday, the Paz family is already planning the cutest little party.

Miralda:

So she likes oranges, she likes, she loves cuties. So, that's gonna be the theme.

Flores:

And of course, they are bringing in the staple Honduran party foods: rice, chicken sandwiches. And if there's cake, then there also HAS to be Coca Cola and Pepsi.

Paz:

Tienes que tener coca cola o pepsi Porque el pastel no se toma sin coca cola o sin pepsi.

Flores:

For the Paz family, this upcoming day of celebration is also a marker in their life as new parents.

Paz:

Como que el pasado no me lo recuerdo sin ella. Como que desde que ella nació ya mi pasado, como que ella ya está ahí. It's hard to explain...

Miralda:

Like, she's a part of us, like, you can't remember not being without her. That sorta thing. Yeah.

Paz:

I'm excited para su primer año.

Miralda:

Like walking. I'm like hoping she knows how to walk when for her birthday, just so she could be, you know, walking around...

Flores:

For now, the Paz family is preparing their birthday songs.

[The Paz family singing her birthday song in the background]

...and eagerly awaiting the days Jelyani says her first real word but she's done so much work to get here already. It'll be the culmination of so much learning, adapting, and engaging by everyone in the family.

Credits:

"100 Latina Birthdays" is an original production of LWC Studios. It is made possible by grants from the Healthy Communities Foundation, Woods Fund Chicago, Field Foundation of Illinois, Pritzker Foundation, and the Chicago Foundation for Women. Mujeres Latinas en Acción is the series' fiscal sponsor.

This episode was reported by Andrea Flores. Juleyka Lantigua is the show's creator and executive producer. Paulina Velasco is the editor. Anne Lim is associate producer.

Fact checking by Kate Gallagher. Mixing by Samia Bouzid and mixing and sound design by Kojin Tashiro, who is LWC Studios' lead producer. Michelle Baker is our photo editor. Amanda De Jesus is our marketing assistant. Theme music is Labradoodle by Blue Dot Sessions. Cover art by Reyna Noriega. Thanks to Roberto Flores for the voice over.

For more information, resources, photos, and an annotated transcript of this episode and a Spanish translation, visit [100latinabirthdays.com](http://100latinabirthdays.com). That's the number 100 - latina - birthdays. And follow us on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook at [100latinabirthdays](https://www.instagram.com/100latinabirthdays).

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Thank you for listening.

CITATION:

Flores, Andrea, reporter. "The Myths and Gifts of Bilingualism in Babies." *100 Latina Birthdays*. LWC Studios. October 2, 2023. [100latinabirthdays.com](http://100latinabirthdays.com)