

Mariana Garcia Torres, Ph.D

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EDUCATION

University of Illinois at Chicago

Chicago, IL

Ph.D., Disability Studies

Department of Disability and Human Development

December 2021

Dissertation: *Evaluation of the Program Parents Taking Action for Parents of Pre/adolescents with ASD in Colombia*

Advisor: Fabricio Balcazar

The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina,

Charleston, SC.

M.A., Psychology.

Psychology Department

May 2016

Thesis: *Perceptions of Overweight in Latino Populations in Colombia, Mexico, and the US*

Advisor: William Johnson

The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina

Charleston, SC.

B.S., Biology

May, 2014

Minor: Spanish

magna cum laude

The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina

Charleston, SC.

B.A., Psychology

May 2014

magna cum laude

AREAS OF RESEARCH

Fields: Psychology, Disability Studies. || **Topics:** Disability, Latino communities, Americans with Disabilities Act, caregiving, sexuality, adolescence, developmental disabilities, parent education, community education, cultural adaptation, knowledge translation, community participation, diversity, and inclusion. || **Theories:** Socio-ecological theory, social theory, disability studies || **Methods:** Qualitative research methods, mixed methods, knowledge translation practices, program evaluation, scoping reviews, and curriculum development.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of Illinois at Chicago

Research Assistant Professor,
Department of Disability and Human Development

Chicago, IL
August 2025 – present

University of Illinois at Chicago

Post-Doctorate Research Associate.
Department of Disability and Human Development
Advisor: Sarah Parker Harris

Chicago, IL
December 2021 – August 2025

PI and Co-PI of multiple research projects within two five-year NIDILRR-funded center grants- the ADA National Network Knowledge Translation (ADAKT) Center and the ADA National Network Great Lakes Center

- Co-PI of four key projects: A mixed-methods national project on Spanish Language Outreach and the ADA; a qualitative project on Mental Health and Employment; scoping reviews of COVID-19, disability, health, employment, and education; and a qualitative project on Hispanic Outreach for Employment and Disability.
- In all projects, co-led project conceptualization and design; IRB preparation; project execution; literature reviews and scoping reviews; qualitative and quantitative data collection; data analysis; drafting of reports, articles, briefs, infographics, and other plain language documents; preparation and delivery of academic and community-based presentations and trainings; and supervision of multiple (8) graduate student research assistants.
- Worked independently and as part of different projects, including working with faculty across multiple universities and community-based sites, staff members, and students.

University of Illinois at Chicago

Doctoral Researcher. Dissertation
Department of Disability and Human Development

Chicago, IL
August, 2016 – December 2021

- Developed a curriculum for parents of preadolescents with autism using intersectional approaches from disability studies, social science, and rehab science.
- Culturally adapted the curriculum to Latino communities in the US (Austin, TX and Chicago, IL) and Colombia.
- Delivered community training to Latino communities in the US and Colombia to understand the program's impact in both countries.
- Used different research methodologies, including qualitative and quantitative methods, to test the program's effectiveness in Bogota, Colombia.

University of Illinois at Rockford

Chicago, IL

Research Specialist

April 2022

- Conduct focus groups with the Latino community to understand their healthcare needs in the Rockford area during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Analyzed qualitative interviews and developed reports to summarize the needs of the Latino community.

National University of Colombia.

Bogota, Colombia

Research Specialist

April 2022

- Assisted the group of investigations GITEI (Grupo de investigación en Tecnología) in supporting the virtualization of an educational program for rural areas regarding inclusion and disability.
- Helped create a national strategy for implementing the “Tejiendo Saberes” educational model to deliver across Colombia.

University of Illinois at Chicago.**Great Lakes ADA Center.**

Chicago, IL

Research Assistant

May- August 2020

- Developed the pre- and post-evaluation questionnaires for the online ADA Coordinator Training Certification Program (ACTCP).

National University of Colombia**Office of the General Comptroller of the Republic of Colombia**

Bogota, Colombia

Research Specialist

August -December 2019

- Analyzed data from 24 counties in Colombia, including more than 700 participants in the education community.
- Provided a general overview of the national situation regarding inclusive education and what has been missing in implementing this legislation.
- Presented results to a national conference that executives from different counties and leaders in the disability community attended.

University of Illinois at Chicago.

Chicago, IL

Family Support and Resource Training Center

August 2016 – July 2018

Research Assistant

- Conducted eight focus groups and collaborated in qualitative data collection and analysis in the project “Public Transportation and Community Participation for Latinxs with Disabilities.”.
- Conducted pre-post assessments to test the effectiveness of a program for Latino Families of Children with Autism
- Conducted four focus groups, worked in data analysis (quantitative and qualitative), and collaborated in manuscript development.

The Citadel College.

Charleston, SC

Department of Psychology

May 2016

August 2014-

Research Assistant.

- Collected data in a study involving perceptions of overweight in Hispanic populations in Colombia and compared it to the Hispanic population in the US and Mexico.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE**University of Illinois at Chicago**

Chicago, IL

Lead Instructor, Department of Disability and Human Development

2025-2026

- DHD 403. Disability in Latino Communities. Course development and solo instructor for mixed undergraduate/graduate seminar class.
- DHD 201: Disability Rights and Culture. Course development and principal instructor.

Lead Instructor, Department of Disability and Human Development

2024-2025

- DHD 403. Disability in Latino Communities. Course development and solo instructor for mixed undergraduate/graduate seminar class.

Teaching Assistant, Department of Disability and Human Development

August 2018-

2021

- Experience with undergraduate and graduate students, mixed research methods, disability-related policy and law, disability in world cultures, health and disability, disability in the family
- Experienced in developing and teaching seminar classes (e.g., 10-20 students), large lecture classes (e.g., 100-200 students), online (asynchronous and synchronous), and in-person.
- Preparing material for class, advising students, and grading assignments

- DHD 203: Disability in World Cultures

2017

- DHD 204: Disability in the Humanities

2018

- DHD 201: Disability Rights and Culture

2018/2019

- DHD 401: Foundations in Disability & Human Development (Online)

2019/2020

- DHD 206: Disability, Urban Planning and Geography (online)

2020

- DHD 301: Disability Research Methods (Online)

2020

Community-based Teaching**2017- Present**

- Developed curriculum and teaching in community-based organizations for Latino parents of children with disabilities.
- Delivered over 20 educational sessions and trained more than 150 people, including people with disabilities, specifically Autism, and their families, to

increase their participation in the community by providing skills, tools, and training.

- Delivered various online training and workshops for staff members of community-based organizations on sexuality and disability.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed Publications

Garcia-Torres, M., & Martinez, A.M. (2025). "We are afraid to talk about Sexuality': Empowering Colombian Caregivers of Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder Using Parent Training. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*.

Gould, R., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Harris, S. P., Satterthwaite, A., Budiarta, G., & Harniss, M. (2025). The Transforming National Landscape of Disability Rights, Mental Health, and Employment: Qualitative Interviews with ADA Policy Experts. *In Disability and the Future of Work* (pp. 179-198). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Garcia-Torres, M. (2024). Experience of caregivers of preadolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder during COVID-19 in Colombia." *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gould, R, Abelleira, J., & Parker Harris, S (2024). Transforming Inclusion: The Experience of Employers and Employees on Workplace Flexibility Policies and Practices and ADA Title I Implementation. *Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education*.

Garcia- Torres, M, Condón, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (2023). COVID-19 and the Americans with Disabilities Act: Implications for Employment and Higher Education. *WORK: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment & Rehabilitation*.

Garcia- Torres, M, Magaña, S., & Balcazar, F (2023). Brief Report: Evaluation of a program for parents of pre/adolescents with autism spectrum disorder in Colombia. *Autism Journal. Autism Research in a Global Context. Special Issue*.

Suarez-Balcazar, Y., Balcazar, F.E., Garcia, C., **Garcia-Torres, M.** & Arias, D. (2022). Goal-Setting with Latinx Families of Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Case Studies. *Behavior and Social Issues*

Magaña, S., Dababnah, S., Xu, Y., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Rieth, S.R., Corsello, C., Rangel, E., Brookman-Frazee, L., & Vanegas, S.B. (2021). Cultural adaptations of a parent training program for families of children with ASD/IDD: Parents Taking Action. *International Review of Research in Developmental Disabilities*.

Magaña S, Lopez K, Salkas K, Iland E, Morales MA, **Garcia-Torres M**, Zeng W, Machalicek W. (2020). A Randomized Waitlist-Control Group Study of a Culturally Tailored Parent Education Intervention for Latino Parents of Children with ASD. *J Autism Dev Disord.* Jan;50(1):250-262. Doi: 10.1007/s10803-019-04252-1. PMID:

31606887.

Magaña S., Tejero-Hughes, M., Salkas, K., Gonzales, W., Nuñez, G., Morales, M. **Garcia-Torres, M., & M., Moreno** (2019). Implementing a Parent Education Intervention in Colombia: Assessing Parent Outcomes and Perceptions across Delivery Modes. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*.

Garcia-Torres, M. (2018). Animal-Assisted Therapy. Disability in American Life: An Encyclopedia of Concepts, Policies, and Controversies. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Manuscripts in Progress

Garcia-Torres, M., Condón, O., Parker Harris, S.K., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (Accepted for publication 2025). COVID-19 and the Americans with Disabilities Act: Implementation in Healthcare and Community Living Policy Domains. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S.K., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (in review). Spanish Language Outreach and the ADA: Understanding national and regional context. *Journal of Community Practice*.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Horowitz, E., Waitkuweit, K.H., Manteca Gacho, C., & Jones, R. (in review). Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment. *Journal of Vocational Rehab*.

Research/Technical Reports

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., and Harniss, M. (2023). *ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project. Stage One National Report: Understanding the National and Regional Context* (pp. 1-225). Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., & Harniss, M. (2023). *ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Report. Understanding the Regional Context: New England ADA Center, Region 1* (pp 1-37). Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., & Harniss, M. (2023). *ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Report. Understanding the Regional Context: Northeast ADA National Network Regional Center, Region 2* (pp 1-37). Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA; ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., & Harniss, M. (2023). *ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One*.

Research Report. Understanding the Regional Context: Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, Region 3 (pp 1-39). Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA; ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., & Harniss, M. (2023). *ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Report. Understanding the Regional Context: Southeast ADA Center, Region 4* (pp 1-44). Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA; ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., & Harniss, M. (2023). *ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One: Understanding the Regional Context. Great Lakes ADA Center, Region 5* (pp 1-42). Chicago, IL: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., & Harniss, M. (2023). *ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Report. Understanding the Regional Context: Southwest ADA Center, Region 6* (pp 1-41). Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA; ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., & Harniss, M. (2023). *ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Report. Understanding the Regional Context: Great Plains ADA Center, Region 7* (pp. 1-36). Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA; ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., & Harniss, M. (2023). *ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Report. Understanding the Regional Context: Rocky Mountains ADA Center, Region 8* (pp 1-37). Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA; ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., & Harniss, M. (2023). *ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Report. Understanding the Regional Context: Pacific ADA Center, Region 9* (pp 1-44). Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., & Harniss, M. (2023). *ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Report. Understanding the Regional Context: Northwest ADA Center, Region 10* (pp 1-37). Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA; ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center

Research Briefs and Infographics

Garcia-Torres, M., Condon, O., Gould, R. & Parker Harris, S. (2022). ADA Research Brief: Community Living, COVID-19, and the ADA (pp.1-7). Chicago, IL: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Garcia-Torres, M., Condon, O., Gould, R. & Parker Harris, S. (2022). ADA Research Brief: Health Care Access, COVID-19, and the ADA (pp.1-7). Chicago, IL: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Condon, O., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Waitkuweit, K.H., Herrera, A., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. National Research Brief: Understanding the Context (pp. 1-2). Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Herrera, A., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Waitkuweit, K.H., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Brief. Understanding the Regional Context: New England ADA Center, Region 1. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Herrera, A., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Waitkuweit, K.H., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Brief. Understanding the Regional Context: Northeast ADA Center, Region 2. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center

Herrera, A., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Waitkuweit, K.H., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Brief. Understanding the Regional Context: Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, Region 3. Chicago, IL and Seattle WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Herrera, A., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Waitkuweit, K.H., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Brief. Understanding the Regional Context: Southeast ADA Center, Region 4. Chicago, IL and Seattle WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center

Herrera, A., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Waitkuweit, K.H., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Brief. Understanding the Regional Context: Great Lakes ADA Center, Region 5. Chicago, IL and Seattle WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center

Herrera, A., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Waitkuweit, K.H., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Brief. Understanding the Regional Context: Southwest ADA

- Center, Region 6. Chicago, IL and Seattle WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.
- Herrera, A., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Waitkuweit, K.H., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Brief: Understanding the Regional Context. Region 7 Great Plains ADA Center. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.
- Herrera, A., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Waitkuweit, K.H., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Brief. Understanding the Regional Context: Rocky Mountain ADA Center, Region 8. Chicago, IL: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.
- Herrera, A., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Waitkuweit, K.H., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Brief. Understanding the Regional Context: Pacific ADA Center, Region 9. Chicago, IL and Seattle WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.
- Herrera, A., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Waitkuweit, K.H., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., & Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Research Brief. Understanding the Regional Context: Northwest ADA Center, Region 10. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.
- Abelleira, J., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., & Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. National Infographic. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA. ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.
- Abelleira, J., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., & Harniss, M. (2023). Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Infographic. New England ADA Center, Region 1. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA. ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.
- Abelleira, J., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., & Harniss, M. (2023). Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Infographic. Northeast ADA Center, Region 2. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA. ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.
- Abelleira, J., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., & Harniss, M. (2023). Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Infographic. Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, Region 3. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA. ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Abelleira, J., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., & Harniss, M. (2023). Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Infographic. Southeast ADA Center, Region 4. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA. ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Abelleira, J., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., & Harniss, M. (2023). Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Infographic. Great Lakes ADA Center, Region 5. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA. ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Abelleira, J., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., & Harniss, M. (2023). Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Infographic. Southwest ADA Center, Region 6. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA. ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Abelleira, J., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., & Harniss, M. (2023). Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Infographic. Great Plains ADA Center, Region 7. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Abelleira, J., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., & Harniss, M. (2023). Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Infographic. Rocky Mountains ADA Center, Region 8. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Abelleira, J., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., & Harniss, M. (2023). Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Infographic. Pacific ADA Center, Region 9. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA: ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

Abelleira, J., **Garcia-Torres, M.**, Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., & Harniss, M. (2023). Spanish Language Outreach Project Stage One. Infographic. Northwest ADA Center, Region 10. Chicago, IL and Seattle, WA. ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center.

PRESENTATIONS

Peer-reviewed Conferences – paper presentations

Garcia Torres., “NIDILRR ARRT: Project HOPE – Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment in the Great Lakes ADA area.” ACRM 2025 Annual Fall Conference: Progress in Rehabilitation Research. Chicago, IL

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., and Harniss, M. (June 2024). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project. ADA Symposium. Minneapolis, MN.

Garcia-Torres, M (April 2024). "Experience of caregivers of preadolescents with autism spectrum disorder during COVID-19 in Colombia." In Panel: Latino and Latin American Families of Youth with IDD: Experiences with Health and Healthcare. Gatlinburg, Kansas City, MO.

Garcia-Torres, M (May 2023). Evaluation of the Program Parents Taking Action for Parents of Pre/Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Colombia. Dissertation Award presentation. INSAR Annual Meeting, Stockholm, Sweden.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., and Harniss, M. (March 2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project. Stage One National Report: Understanding the National and Regional Context. NARRTC. Washington, Dc.

Garcia- Torres, M, & Balcazar, F. (2021). The COVID-19 Crisis and the Support of the Program Parents Taking Action for Parents of Pre/Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Colombia. In Symposium presentation: COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable populations: The nexus between race, disability, health, and community action. Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) Biannual virtual conference. Virtual.

Garcia-Torres, M, and Magaña, S. (2019). Adaptation of the program Parents Taking Action for Latino Parents of Pre-Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). INSAR Annual meeting: Montreal, QC, Canada.

Peer-reviewed conferences - Poster presentations

García-Torres, M. (2025) Acompañando a su hijo en la etapa de la pubertad y entendiendo la sexualidad. California Caregiver Disability Conference

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Manteca-Gacho, C., Waitkuweit, K, Horowitz, E, and Jones, R. (2024). Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment in the Great Lakes ADA area. NARRTC. Washington, DC.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gonzalez, O., Parker Harris, S., Gould, R., Herrera, A., Condon, O., Abelleria, J., and Harniss, M. (2023). ADANN Spanish Language Outreach Project. Stage One National Report: Understanding the National and Regional Context. AUCD. Washington, DC.

Garcia-Torres, M., Gould, R., Parker Harris, S., and Abelleria, J. (2023). Transforming Inclusion: The Experience of Employers and Employees on Workplace Flexibility Policies and Practices and ADA Title I Implementation. NARRTC. Washington, DC.

- Garcia-Torres, M.**, Condon, O., Gould, R., Parker Harris, S., and Harniss, M (2023). COVID-19 and the Americans with Disabilities Act: A Review of the Current State of Evidence in Four Different Policy Domains. NARRTC. Washington, DC.
- Garcia-Torres, M.** (2022). Evaluation of the Program Parents Taking Action for Parents of Pre-Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Colombia. Society of Social Work Research. Washington, DC.
- Garcia-Torres, M.** (2022) The COVID-19 Crisis and the Support of the Program Parents Taking Action for Parents of Pre/Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Colombia. INSAR Annual meeting: virtual conference. Boston, USA.
- Garcia Torres, M.** Evaluation of the Program Parents Taking Action for Parents of Pre/Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Colombia (2022). INSAR Annual meeting: virtual conference. Boston, USA.
- Garcia-Torres, M.** and Magaña, S. (2019). Adaptation of the program Parents Taking Action for Latino Parents of Pre-Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). INSAR Annual meeting: Montreal, QC, Canada.
- Garcia Torres, M** and Yue, X (2017). Autism Campus Initiative. Dennis H. May Conference on Diversity Issues and the Role of Counseling Centers. Urbana-Champaign, IL.
- Garcia-Torres, M.** (2014). Bullying among Elementary School Students: The Impact of Verbal and Physical Bullying on Children. The Citadel Student Research Conference (CSRC).
- Garcia-Torres, M.** (2014) Analysis of antibiotic resistance profile of environmental E. coli strains to determine animal or human origin. The Citadel Student Research Conference (CSRC).

INVITED/COMMUNITY-BASED PRESENTATIONS

Americans with Disabilities Act

- Sexual Education, Disability, and Law: Understanding the ADA's Role. *ADA Audio Webinar* (Garcia Torres, M) September 2025.
- Connecting Hispanic Communities for People with Disabilities in Employment with the Americans with Disabilities Act. *Great Lakes ADA Center Webinar*. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.), June 2024
- Outreach to underserved communities: examples from the ADANN. Invited Webinar Presentation (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.) *The Administration for Community Living*, Washington, D.C. March 2024.

Awareness Raising. ADA and Employment for Spanish Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *IL District 04 Townhall* May 24.

Presentation. ADA and Employment for Spanish Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *NAMI MN Support Group* April 24.

Awareness Raising. ADA and Employment for Spanish Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *LOV Inc. Family Fair* March 2024

Awareness Raising. ADA and Employment for Spanish Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *Governors State University Conference*. February 2024.

Presentation on the ADA and Employment for Spanish-Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *Catholic Multicultural Center*. February 2024.

Awareness Raising. ADA and Employment for Spanish Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *IL District 04 Townhall*. February 2024.

Presentation on ADA and Employment for Spanish-Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *Cambiando Vida*. January 2024

Presentation on ADA and Employment for Spanish-Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *Centro Multicultural La Familia*. Pontiac, Michican. November 2023.

Presentation on ADA and Employment for Spanish-Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *Wisconsin FACETS Spanish Support Group*. October 2023.

Awareness Raising. ADA and Employment for Spanish Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *Indiana Family Employment Awareness Training* October 2023.

Presentation on ADA and Employment for Spanish-Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M.,

González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *Indiana Immigrant Welcome Center*. October 2023

Awareness Raising. ADA and Employment for Spanish Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *Medical Organization for Latino Advancement*. September 2023.

Webinar Presentation on ADA and Employment for Spanish-Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *The Arc of Illinois* September 2023.

Awareness Raising. ADA and Employment for Spanish Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *Parents of Extraordinary Children Support Group* September 2023.

Awareness Raising. ADA and Employment for Spanish Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *Indiana Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers Coalition* August 2023.

Awareness Raising. ADA and Employment for Spanish Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *Ignite Carnival Kickback* August 2023

Awareness Raising. ADA and Employment for Spanish Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *IL District 04 Townhall* June 2023.

Presentation on ADA and Employment for Spanish Speaking Communities. Hispanic Outreach for People with Disabilities in Employment Project. (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.). *Grupo Salto* Conference. June 2023.

Stage One Report, Spanish Language Outreach Project, Understanding the National and Regional Context. Invited Presentation, (Garcia Torres, M., González, O., Parker Harris, S., & Gould, R.) *Bi-Annual ADA National Network Directors Meeting*, Washington D.C., April 2023.

Disability and Sexuality Trainings

Sexual Education, Disability, and Law: Understanding the ADA's Role. ADA Audio Conference Webinar. *Great Lakes ADA Center in collaboration with the ADA National Network*

Discapacidad y Sexualidad. 5-Webinar series. *Parents Helping Parents, California 2024*

Discapacidad y Sexualidad. 3-Webinar series. *Conexiones California. March 2024*

Puberty, sexuality, and disability: Workshop for Parents. Frequent concerns and challenges for caregivers of preadolescents with disabilities. Webinar Series. *The Arc of California, November 2023*

Sexuality and disability: Workshop for Parents, Congreso Familiar. *California October.2023*

Puberty and disability: Workshop for Parents: Supporting Kids with Disabilities. *The Arc of Illinois. May 2023*

Sexuality and Healthy Relationships: Supporting Kids with Disabilities. *VELA. Austin, TX. Spanish and English. June 2022*

Staff training on Disability and sexuality for community-based organizations. *EL VALOR. Chicago, IL. May 2021*

Virtual workshop for Latino parents. Project PUENTE. *Austin, TX, and Chicago, IL. May 2021*

Community-based training: Disability and Sexuality. *Progress Center Forest Park, Illinois May, 2020*

Community-based Training Parents Taking Action Phase 3 *Liga Colombiana del Autismo. Bogotá, Colombia. February 2020*

Community-based Training Parents Taking Action Phase 3 *Fundación Avante. Bogotá, Colombia. February 2020*

Community-based Training Parents Taking Action Phase 2. *Grupo Salto. Chicago, Illinois. April 2019.*

Community-based Training Parents Taking Action Phase 2. *Grupo Vela. Austin, Texas. July 2018*

HONORS & AWARDS

NARRTC. Best Poster Presentation Award	2024
INSAR Dissertation Award	2023
NARRTC. Best Poster Presentation Award	2023
University of Illinois at Chicago. Department of Disability and Human Development. Dissertation Award	2020
INSAR Summer Research Internship in Autism Spectrum Disorder.	2018
Southern Conference (SOCON) Bob McCloskey Insurance Graduate Scholarship Award.	2015

The Citadel College Outstanding Undergraduate Psychology Award.	2014
The Citadel College Outstanding Undergraduate Biology Award.	2014
The Citadel College Outstanding Undergraduate Award School of Science and Mathematics.	2014
Academic Honors. Student-Athlete Southern Conference	2011-2013
Dean's List (GPA > 3.2) The Citadel College	2010-2014
Gold Stars (GPA > 3.7) The Citadel College	2011-2014
Student-Athlete Scholarship. The Citadel College	2010-2015

GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

NIDILRR-Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) Fellowship Department of Disability and Human Development.	2022-2025
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University of Illinois Chicago

2020

Department of Disability and Human Development.
Dissertation Award (\$1000)

International Society of Autism Research (INSAR)

2017

Summer Research Internship in Autism Spectrum Disorder and Cultural Diversity
(\$4000)

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Peer-Reviewer.

Autism in Adulthood	2025
Journal of Child and Family Studies	2024
Child: Care, Health & Development Journal	
2023	

Department committees.

Department of Disability and Human Development
Bridge to Faculty Selection Committee
2023

National Committees

Americans with Disabilities Act Knowledge Translation (ADANN) Center Spanish Language Outreach Committee	2021- Present
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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Volunteering

Grupo Salto. Chicago, IL	2016-Present
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- Collaborate with community-based organizations to support families of people with Autism in the Chicagoland area
- Offer training and educational sessions to families
- Help organize community conferences since 2018 to provide information to Latino families
- Support community events such as fairs, conferences, banquets, etc.
- Assistance with grant writing for organizational funding.
- Get involved in city-wide initiatives as part of the diverse efforts of the city government.

Dream Center, North Charleston, SC

Fall 2013- Spring 2014

- Offer medical translation in a Free clinic for immigrants from Latin America
- Support general tasks such as registering new patients, helping them understand their needs, and offering overall support.
- Participated in events hosted by the Dream Center

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Sigma Delta Pi, the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society

2013

Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology

2015

International Society for Autism Research -INSAR

2018-Present

CERTIFICATES

University of Illinois at Chicago

Inclusive Education Scholars Certificate Program

2024

Fundación Universitaria Sanitas. Colombia.

Animal-Assisted Intervention with Dogs.

2019

LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

Spanish: First Language

English: Full proficiency