Low-SES Parent Perspectives on Early Childhood Care and Education: Direct Reports on Experiences, Expectations, Beliefs and Values

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Background
- The field of early childhood care and education (ECE) spends considerable resources on developing and implementing interventions, programs and policies intended to enhance engagement and improve child outcomes
- Yet, there is a significant gap in our understanding of how ECE tends to influence parents' experiences, beliefs, values and needs surrounding ECE
- As a consequence, researchers and practitioners run the risk of developing programming that does not meet parent expectations, beliefs or needs
- As a leading local ECE stakeholder and funder, the Kenneth Rainin Foundation commissioned a study to obtain the perspectives of low-SES families with 0 to 5-year-old children in diverse, primarily low-income neighborhoods in Oakland, CA.
- The goal of the study was to hear directly from families so that the Foundation could inform local ECE stakeholders, and strategically target funding towards programs and interventions that parents would actively want to engage with, setting the stage for the largest possible impacts on child outcomes

Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Household Income

- 61% of respondents were born outside the US
- 49% spoke more than one language

Language Spoken in the Home

- Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Spoken</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Languages</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
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</tbody>
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Community

- The local library emerged as a good place to reach families
- Very few respondents knew of local organizations to turn to for help
- Half of all respondents did not believe that their local park was safe for children during the day

Home

- Almost 40% of Oakland children scored in the bottom 10% percentile on nationally-normed vocabulary measures
- A large majority of parents did not believe that children's intelligence was the result of a healthy adult is 4.5 (Range 1.0 - 7.0)
- Yet, more than half of parents did not recognize the importance of early education in their children's later academic success

ECE

- 5% of families place their child (0-3 months old) in ECE, which increased to 36% for children with toddlers (2-5 years old) and 62% for families with preschoolers (5-7 years old)
- 15% of families with infants and 20% of families with toddlers and preschoolers have less than one ECE service
- Of those who receive ECE services, 52% of families have personal relationships with their ECE provider, decreasing to 50% of families with toddlers and 49% with preschoolers

Conclusions

- The results of this novel, community driven survey, provided ECE stakeholders in Oakland, CA, with invaluable information about local families, enabling better informed decision-making about programming, parent engagement and resource allocation.

Acknowledgements/Contact

Contact
- Marc Hernandez: Hernandez.Marc@norc.org
- Susan True: Susan TRUE@foundation.org
- Learn more: http://foundation.org/organization/initiatives/research/
- Collaborators
  - Greg Norman & Karen Smith (Department of Psychology, University of Chicago)
  - Dana Suskind (Department of Surgery, University of Chicago Medicine)

We thank those Oakland, CA families who so generously shared their time and perspectives for this study.

¹ NORC at the University of Chicago; ² Kenneth Rainin Foundation

Children who had access to ECE had significantly larger vocabularies than those who did not.

Children aged 5-6 are on average 14.0 on the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). The average score of a healthy adult is 10.8 (Range 0-44).

Vocabulary Size x ECE

Key Take Aways
- Community
  - Few key responses from local organizations to turn to for help
  - The local library emerged as a good place to reach families
  - Half of all respondents did not believe that their local park was safe for children during the day

- Home
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  - A large majority of parents did not believe that children's intelligence was the result of a healthy adult
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- ECE
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